

Force Multipliers: The Secret Behind High-Performing Nonprofit Organizations

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A White Paper for Fulcrum Nonprofit Leadership

One of the most important responsibilities of a nonprofit leader is building a team capable of advancing the mission. Yet many organizations approach hiring with a fundamentally flawed objective: filling vacancies.

They ask questions such as:

- *Can this person perform the job?
- *Do they have the required experience?
- *Will they fit within the team?

These are important questions, but they are incomplete. Great nonprofit leaders ask a different question:

Will this person make everyone around them better?

The answer to that question often determines whether an organization merely functions or truly thrives.

The most effective leaders intentionally seek and hire what can best be described as **Force Multipliers**.

A force multiplier is someone whose impact extends well beyond their own role. They perform their responsibilities exceptionally well, but they also elevate the capabilities, effectiveness, and performance of everyone around them.

Not all hires create equal value. Some employees complete assignments. Some managers supervise teams. Force multipliers strengthen entire organizations. They amplify the talents of colleagues. They identify opportunities others miss. They create systems that improve efficiency. They strengthen communication between departments. They solve problems before they become crises. They bring strategic



insight, execution capacity, and organizational awareness that create ripple effects throughout the institution.

Their influence is rarely confined to a single job description. A gifted force multiplier in finance improves decision-making across the organization. A force multiplier in development creates systems that improve donor engagement, stewardship, and reporting.

A force multiplier in operations removes friction that allows every department to function more effectively.

A force multiplier on an executive team helps leaders see around corners and prepare for challenges before they emerge.

The result is multiplication, not addition.

One exceptional force multiplier often creates more organizational value than several average hires combined.

Unfortunately, many nonprofits unintentionally hire for competency rather than multiplication. They focus on credentials instead of curiosity. Experience instead of initiative. Technical qualifications instead of organizational impact.

The outcome is predictable. Positions get filled, but the organization never becomes stronger.

Force multipliers are different.

They are proactive rather than reactive.

They take ownership without being asked.

They improve processes that no one assigned them to improve.

They build relationships across departments.

They create tools, systems, and networks that continue producing value long after the initial work is complete.

Most importantly, they make other people more successful. Their presence raises the performance of entire teams.



This is one reason why high-performing nonprofit organizations often appear to accomplish more with similar resources. They have intentionally assembled teams filled with individuals who multiply the effectiveness of others.

The lesson for nonprofit leaders is straightforward.

When evaluating candidates, do not simply ask whether they can do the job.

Ask whether they can elevate the organization.

Ask whether they make others stronger.

Ask whether they create value beyond their immediate responsibilities.

Ask whether their influence will extend across teams, departments, and initiatives.

In a sector where resources are often constrained and expectations continue to grow, force multipliers represent one of the most valuable investments a leader can make.

Great organizations are not built by filling positions. They are built by hiring people whose impact multiplies throughout the entire enterprise. That is the difference between staffing an organization and strengthening one.

For more information about Fulcrum Nonprofit Leadership, please visit our website at www.fulcrumleader.com or reach out to us directly via email at hello@fulcrumleader.com.