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What Wikipedia Can't Tell You About Nonprofit Leadership

Fifty top nonprofit CEOs share their secrets for building leadership skills, improving an organization's culture, developing coalitions and campaigning on many fronts--all for greater impact.

November 7, 2017
New York, New York

Over 10% of Americans work in the nonprofit sector, and leadership gurus mostly ignore them. That is why Vivien Hoexter and Linda C. Hartley, principals of H2Growth Strategies LLC, decided to research nonprofit leadership by interviewing 50 top nonprofit change-makers. They talked with CEOs of organizations such as the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Ford Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Goodwill Industries International, Share Our Strength, Nature Conservancy, Skoll Foundation and PBS.

Hartley says, "We were amazed by how willing these busy leaders were to share with us what was in their hearts and minds. We asked them challenging questions, and they responded with candid, insightful answers that were moving and enlightening."

The authors asked, "Thus far, what have been the worst and best events in your life, and what did those experiences teach you?"

Larry Kramer, president of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, answered, "The worst thing that ever happened was my father's death. After my dad died, I realized how relationships make your life. I could never replace the relationship I had with my father.

"This sense of the importance of relationships is something I take into my work. I spend a lot of time trying to create a sense of community at Hewlett. I really dislike the phrase "work-life balance." There is just life, and work is part of it. I want the people at Hewlett to have three-dimensional relationships with me and with each other, to feel that they are part of something that is more than just a job. When we disagree about work, there should be more than just work in our relationships to fall back on."

Another question Hartley and Hoexter asked was, "What is the one thing you would say to your colleagues seeking foundation funding?"

Amy Houston, managing director for management assistance at the Robin Hood Foundation, said, "Have confidence in and clarity about the product you are delivering. Do one thing incredibly well versus trying to do a little bit of everything. People with clear vision win the game."

A third question the authors asked was, "After the election, *The New York Times* reported, 'the widening political divergence between cities and small-town America reflects a growing

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alienation between the two groups and a sense, perhaps accurate, that their fates are not connected.' What role could the nonprofit sector play to help the two groups find common ground?"

Leon Botstein, president of Bard College, answered, "We improve the conversation by providing services, opening lines of communication, and working collaboratively with communities with which we may actually disagree. For a long time, to our peril, we ignored communities of faith, believing somehow that religion was a dying phenomenon. We have to communicate with people who legitimately find comfort in faith and in communities of faith."

Together, Hartley and Hoexter have over 40 years of experience in leadership roles and as consultants to nonprofits. Their firm, H2Growth Strategies, advises nonprofits and foundations on planning, fundraising and board building. They have partnered with over 100 organizations raise more than \$1.5 billion. Both have MBAs from top schools. Hartley attended the Stern School at New York University, and Hoexter went to the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

Their book is titled *Big Impact: Insights & Stories From America's Non-Profit Leaders*. *Big Impact* is about nonprofit game-changers who have found solutions to some of the world's greatest, most vexing societal problems. The book explores how these change-makers are implementing solutions in their communities, across the U.S., and around the world. Hartley and Hoexter explore the qualities these leaders possess, their profound insights on lessons learned, and the solutions they are implementing.

The book combines the authors' findings on what drives social change with 21 in-depth interviews with some of the most compelling, successful social change leaders.

David Callahan, founder and editor of *Inside Philanthropy*, writes, "[Big Impact is] a deep and nuanced look at top leaders of foundations and nonprofits in an era when civil society is more influential than ever. If you want to know how the grand masters of the social change sector think—and how they're attacking the biggest problems in America and the world—read this book."

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Visit www.h2growth.com/bigimpact for more information about the book and about H2Growth Strategies LLC.