

GETTING FOCUSED

Professional Development for Fundraisers

Association Membership

The resources available to nonprofit fundraisers have grown exponentially over the past 20 years through the development of associations targeted to specific fundraising roles and functions. The [Association of Fundraising Professionals](#) (AFP), [Grant Professionals Association](#) (GPA), [National Grant Management Association](#) (NGMA), and the association/nonprofit section of the [Public Relations Society of America](#) are just a few examples.



The value of membership in these organizations cannot be overstated. Many provide extensive professional development opportunities as part of membership, whether classes and courses or conferences and workshops. Most have local chapters where you can connect directly with those nearby who are performing a similar function/role. They are also a great source of resources, benchmarking, research, and more to help you do your job better and more efficiently.

Workshops/Webinars/Conferences

In this time where so much focus has been placed on online learning and its role in educating students, the same can be said for adult education. While the mantra “you get what you pay for” certainly can be true for some online workshops and webinars – especially those that are really more of a sales pitch by a company to get you to purchase their product – there can be extreme value in these opportunities as well.



Benefits of short online workshops include a focus on highly targeted areas of growth such as one specific topic in social media, or a focused presentation on a specific challenge. They are often quite reasonable in price and don't require travel or preparation. They are regularly recorded and provide an opportunity to engage with the speaker directly to ask questions.

Conferences also provide a more robust opportunity to do a deep dive into a single topic or focus area – or you may explore a variety of subjects throughout the agenda. They also provide a great way for both seasoned professionals and those new to their roles to network with peers, learn

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industry trends, or round out knowledge in areas less often utilized. Even if the main theme of the conference seems tangential to your role, you can often find great nuggets of information to share with your team or make what you do easier.

Be sure to check out these leading events: [AFP ICON](#), [GPA National Conference](#), [Nonprofit Storytelling Conference](#), [Nonprofit Innovation and Optimization \(NIO\) Summit](#), and [RAISE](#). Pro tip: keep a running list of “action items” throughout the conference to create an implementation list for when you return to the office – it’s easy to forget all the great information once you’re back to the daily grind of email and meetings.

Mentorship/Coaching

Approaching fundraising from a mentorship/coaching philosophy makes good sense because the very nature of fundraising is relationship-building. Getting to know your team and investing in their professional development along the way are great ways to ensure your organization’s ongoing success. Mentorship and coaching are often thought of as end-of-career give back opportunities. However, there are so many ways to grow professionally and personally at any stage through the connections and compelling experiences that mentors and coaches provide. Mentoring an intern who has yet to decide if fundraising is their selected pursuit can also help define your own internal goals – or what to focus on in the next strategic plan. In addition, fundraising mentors/coaches can help you strategize your next campaign or provide feedback on what your audience is hearing.



TAKE ACTION TODAY!

Determine a plan of action for growing your skills, learning a new role, or identifying the next strategic step in your professional development.

RBW Strategy regularly [presents](#) at conferences, and offers [trainings](#), and other resources (such as our newsletter and social media) that provide fundraisers with ongoing professional development resources. Feel free to [get in touch](#), we're happy to help!



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