

## Getting the Results that you Care About

*“If you want to touch the past, touch a rock.  
If you want to touch the present, touch a flower.  
If you want to touch the future, touch a life”.*

**Why do you work for a Non-Profit** when there is more money to be made in the “For Profit” world? It is probably because you care deeply about some societal concern that isn’t otherwise being adequately addressed. It might be in the field of social services, the environment, the arts or in the provision of non-partisan data for decision making. Whatever it is, the mission of the organization speaks more loudly to you than the money you could be making elsewhere.

As a leader of a Non-Profit you are responsible for ensuring that the mission of the organization is delivered, for the benefit of those that the organization was set up to serve. You touch the lives of people in a particular and important way, each and every day, and a large part of the reward that you receive, lives on the faces and in the thanks of those that you serve.

Yet, unless you are very lucky, you are doing this in an environment of scarce resources. Money for sure, but also the skills and time of those who are employed by the organization and those who care deeply enough about your mission to give money and donate their time to the cause.

**As a leader then, you are responsible** not only to ensure that your organization is mission-focused, but also that it makes the most effective and efficient use of resources that do come its way. You work hard enough to attract funders and donors for your programs and to run the organization; you don’t want to waste any of those resources on ineffective programs or inefficient operations.

Yet curiously that is what often happens. It is almost as if the genes that bring the care and passion that you have for the mission are different from those that keep organizations focused and efficient. Yet it doesn’t have to be that way. It is not genes, but practices that promote and deliver happy, effective and efficient organizations.

**There are two leadership skills and practices that you can bring to your organization**, that will keep your organization moving in the desired direction.

So what are these skills? Well first we need to understand a little about how we coordinate effective action through the conversations that we have and the selves that we bring to those conversations.

Most of us are engaged in delivering services and support, rather than manufacturing something tangible like a bolt or an automobile; although even in those cases there are still important conversations that need to take place to ensure that the right things are being done in the right way at the right time, in order to be successful.

**RICHARD J. HEWS**  
*Leadership and Change Coach*  
165 State Street, #208 • New London, CT 06320 • 860-857-3588 •  
richard@pathwaysofgrowth.com

**The first leadership skill** is to ensure that everyone in the organization is aligned in their activities. Just as automobiles steer better and the tires wear less, when the wheels are in balance and in alignment, so an organization performs more effectively when everyone understands what is required of them AND is committed to delivering that. When this happens then the things that are important to everyone are harnessed to deliver the overall “Care” or mission of the organization.

You’ve probably spent a long time thinking about the strategic direction of your organization and the strategies and goals for delivering the mission - based on the current situation of your organization. All that thinking and planning comes unraveled if you don’t have everyone understanding what is required and all “pulling” in the same direction.

This requires a carefully designed series of conversations that first bring awareness, then understanding and finally, commitment to the cause. You can’t assume that just because people have been told what is required, that they have understood and made a commitment. Individuals need to be enrolled not cajoled, understood not talked at and encouraged rather than left in the dark. Plants grow when tended, fed and watered – not thrust into the ground and told to get on with it!

Once everyone understands what is required of them and has bought into the direction of the organization, then they need to produce the required results by bringing all of their talents and experience to working effectively with others. You want great teamwork, yet many non-profit leaders shy away from the accountability that lies at the heart of great teamwork. Somehow holding people accountable seems too cut-throat and suited to “For-profit” organizations rather than the more caring world of mission-led organizations. This is particularly the case when working with volunteers – after all you can’t afford to upset them and discourage them from donating their valuable time by raising the thorny issue of accountability.

**There seems to be a paradox here.** Yet there is an approach which is respectful of all those involved and allows agreements to be made and held with trust, dignity and integrity in service of your mission. The way forward lies in understanding the way that agreements are structured and made and that take into account the needs of everyone involved; followed by helping and supporting each individual to be accountable for the agreements they have made and help them to succeed. In fact, real shifts in performance can be achieved by shifting the focus from the actions everyone is taking (or not) to the agreements and commitments that lead to those actions. The steps involved in conversations of action are straightforward to learn, but require a lifetime of practice to deliver the best teamwork, the most effective collaborations and outstanding results.

**Is it time to upgrade your organization?** Your customers and clients will thank you – as will your funders and donors.

To learn more about how to adopt, learn and embody these core skills of leadership throughout your organization, please contact Richard Hews, Pathways of Growth, for a free consultation and without any obligation. I care about helping leaders like you, who are doing important work, deliver their visions for their organizations.

**RICHARD J. HEWS**  
*Leadership and Change Coach*  
165 State Street, #208 • New London, CT 06320 • 860-857-3588 •  
richard@pathwaysofgrowth.com