

## The Non-Profit's Double-Edged Sword: When Change Becomes Chaos

If you have been around the block as long as I have, you've likely heard the phrase *"if it ain't broke, don't fix it."* But you are likely working with a group of people approximately 2-3 generations younger than you and maybe an older generation or two. They think very differently than you, and the thing about a nonprofit is that it belongs to everyone; not just one generation or another. So, for these dynamic times, change is inevitable. The question is, *how much* change can your organization absorb before it loses its way? Another phrase, *"don't throw out the baby with the bath water"* comes to mind. I have personally witnessed a group that went through so much change, they became unrecognizable, and they lost their mission along the way. Soon they will be gone as they are now a shoestring of their former selves.

### **IMPORTANT: do not lose your mission!**

When a non-profit's mission remains constant, but its operations, leadership, or programs undergo rapid transformation, it can have a ripple effect on the entire organization. Here are some potential risks to watch out for:

- Member Fatigue: Frequent changes can erode existing members trust and confidence. If your organization is constantly shifting its focus or approach, existing members may question whether their time and contributions are being used effectively.
- Officer Burnout: Too much change can lead to officer exhaustion, decreased morale, and increased turnover. Your team is the backbone of your organization; keep them invested in the mission.
- Loss of Identity: Constant change can cause your non-profit to lose sight of its core purpose. Make sure your mission remains the guiding force behind every decision.
- Community Disconnect: If your organization changes too quickly, you risk alienating the very community you're trying to serve.

So, how can you strike a balance between innovation and stability?

- **Communicate openly**: Keep stakeholders informed about changes and their rationale.
- **Assess and adjust**: Regularly evaluate the impact of changes on your organization and make adjustments as needed.
- **Prioritize your mission**: Ensure that every change aligns with your core purpose.

By being mindful of the potential pitfalls of too much change, you can navigate change while preserving the essence of your non-profit's mission.