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Communication Strategies for Increasing Nonprofit Organizations' Fundraising Revenues

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Walden University
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Abstract

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MBA, American Public University, 2016

BS, Augusta University, 2014

Consulting Capstone Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

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Abstract

Some nonprofit organization (NPO) leaders lack communication strategies to improve fundraising revenues and ensure financial sustainability. Failure to obtain the funds necessary to support operations affects the NPO's ability to achieve the organization mission and positive social change for organization recipients. Grounded in stakeholder theory, the purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies senior leaders of NPOs use to improve fundraising revenues. The three study participants included the founder and two senior leaders of one NPO located in San Antonio, Texas. The data collected included the NPO's website and organizational documents, public data, governmental data, and semistructured interviews. Data were analyzed using the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program criteria and Yin's 5-step thematic analysis process. Key themes that emerged were (a) using their positive workforce environment to improve fundraising, (b) the need for improved strategic communication, and (c) greater fundraising and marketing strategies. A key recommendation for NPO leaders is to incorporate effective data-driven analysis to improve their marketing fundraising processes. Improving marketing fundraising processes could result in positive social change by providing increased academic resources to underfunded schools and providing students opportunities to attain or achieve higher levels of education.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study first to my father, Joseph Asmin Mirville, my mother, Marie Myrtha Mirville, and a father figure, Gerald Desmarattes, all of whom taught me the value of education. Second, I dedicate my work to my wife Joelle Mirville who has been by my side encouraging and supporting me through every stage of my graduate studies journey. Her understanding, patience, and encouragement throughout this journey has been paramount to my success. Lastly, I dedicate this work to my adult children Rebekah, Taylor, Angelo, Anthony, and Anyssia. I have striven to always live my life so that I am an example they can emulate as they discover their own paths to success. My hope is that the completion of this journey will demonstrate to them that there is nothing in life they cannot accomplish with perseverance, dedication, and support.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Background of the Problem

Nonprofit organizations (NPOs) have an essential role in society, providing services to local and national communities. In 2015, the nonprofit industry in the United States included more than 1.5 million NPOs with an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax-exempt status (McKeever, 2018). Although data indicates the number of NPOs has since dropped to 1.3 million, NPOs continue to function as essential sources of strength and support in many communities within the United States (Carter et al., 2019). Therefore, significant financial resources are necessary to ensure the leaders of NPOs can provide services and maintain the sustainability of their organizations. Given the volume of organizations in the nonprofit sector, NPO financial leaders may find it necessary to be increasingly attentive to acquiring necessary financial resources.

An analysis of available statistical data on NPOs suggested that many NPOs struggle to acquire necessary financial resources. The 2019 Nonprofit Impact Matters report (Carter et al., 2019) published by the National Council of Nonprofits reported that around 50% of NPOs had less than 1 month of necessary cash on hand. Seventy-nine percent of NPOs have reported that the demand for service is continually increasing, and 65% of NPOs that serve the low-income community have reported that they cannot meet the demands (Carter et al., 2019). These percentages reveal that NPO financial managers struggle to meet the financial needs of NPOs.

The lack of finances to maintain operations can lead to the insolvency of NPOs.

One crucial definitive factor in the success of a nonprofit is financial sustainability (Schatteman & Waymire, 2017). For NPOs funded by the government, the lack of financial sustainability is directly related to a lack of funding available (Clear et al., 2018). NPOs rely on funding from contributors and donors to sustain their operations (Ilyas et al., 2020). Therefore, nonprofit leaders should consider communication strategies that could convey value to their stakeholders. Increasing communication strategies may assist NPO leaders to become more effective fundraisers. Effective communication with stakeholders could make the organization more attractive and increase the likelihood of receiving donations (van Wissen & Wonneberger, 2017). Access to a broader array of funds could lead to financial stability, which allows NPOs to provide the necessary services in meeting the demands of the communities they serve.

Problem Statement

NPO leaders experience challenges in gaining charitable donations in competitive markets with limited resources (Paxton et al., 2020). According to the IRS (2020), the number of NPOs registered with the IRS has increased 10.4% from 1.41 million in 2005 to 1.56 million in 2015. However, the average increase in charitable giving from 2006 to 2016 was only 1.1% (Pettijohn & Boris, 2018). The general business problem is that the lack of donations jeopardizes the financial sustainability of NPOs. The specific business problem is that some NPO leaders lack communication strategies to increase fundraising revenues.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore communication strategies NPO leaders use to increase fundraising revenues. The target population consisted of three leaders from one NPO in Texas who have successfully implemented strategies for increasing fundraising revenues. The implications for positive social change include the possibility of improving the engagement of potential donors and creating a value proposition, through increased fundraising revenues, to enhance NPOs' capacity to deliver meaningful services that benefit communities.

Nature of the Study

Researchers may choose from qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method methodologies when conducting a study (Denzin, 2017). Researchers use the qualitative method to explore a phenomenon under natural conditions (Levitt et al., 2018) and for the flexibility to gather distinct information (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Yin, 2018). Researchers use the quantitative approach to examine and quantify the relationships between two or more variables and through testing statistical hypotheses and analysis techniques (Denzin, 2017). In addition, researchers use the quantitative method to test and analyze theories (Brooks et al., 2019). Therefore, a quantitative method was not appropriate for this study, as there was not a hypothesis to test and analyze. Researchers who incorporate both qualitative and quantitative research techniques use the mixed method approach to obtain a multifaceted understanding of a phenomenon (Alavi et al., 2018). The mixed method was not appropriate because I did not examine the relationships among variables through hypothesis testing. Therefore, the qualitative method was most suitable for this study to explore communications strategies NPO leaders use to improve fundraising revenues.

The qualitative methodology includes case study, ethnographic, and phenomenological designs (Yin, 2018). Researchers use case studies to analyze and explore a phenomenon within a specific context (Alpi & Evans, 2019). I chose a case study design to understand the communication strategies that leaders in an NPO use to improve fundraising revenues. With a case study, I explored and analyzed responses from NPO leaders using interview questions and a review of documents (Yin, 2018). A researcher may use a multiple case study to explore several organizations or use a single case design to explore the phenomenon in one organization (Yin, 2018). A single case study was appropriate for this study, as I expected to gain the most insight by exploring how two members within one organization use communication strategies to increase fundraising revenues. In contrast, the ethnographic design is the study of groups' cultures or patterns (Bass & Milosevic, 2018), which was not appropriate because I did not observe participants in a real-life setting but rather interacted with them through virtual communication platforms. Researchers use the phenomenological approach to explore participants' personal feelings and experiences (Kim et al., 2018), but the personal views and feelings of participants were not pertinent to the study. A case study design was appropriate to explore the communication strategies that two leaders within one NPO use to improve fundraising revenues.

Research Question

The central research question for this study was as follows: What communication strategies do NPO leaders use to improve fundraising revenues?

Interview Questions

1. What communication strategies do you use internally to improve fundraising revenues?
2. What strategies do you use externally to improve fundraising revenues?
3. How do you measure the effectiveness of the strategies implemented to improve fundraising revenues?
4. What were the key challenges you encountered when you implemented those strategies?
5. What approaches have you used to overcome the key challenges you encountered when you implemented those strategies?
6. What additional information would you like to add about your organization's strategies for improving fundraising revenues?

Conceptual Framework

Stakeholder theory was the conceptual framework of this study. Freeman (2004) introduced the stakeholder theory in 1984 to convey that leaders should focus on understanding the role key stakeholders play in an organization. The primary focus was to demonstrate to senior leadership the impact that stakeholder relationships could have on an organization's strategy (Freeman, 2004). Freeman described stakeholders as any persons or groups who have the potential to influence or become influenced by an organization's mission and vision. Therefore, identifying and meeting key stakeholders' needs are of key interest in the success of an organization because financial sustainability may be possible when leaders can demonstrate value to their customers (Miles, 2017).

Business leaders can use stakeholder theory to become more efficient in understanding the role and needs of key stakeholders for improving financial performance (Freeman, 1984). Stakeholders include any persons or groups involved in achieving value for the organization (Harrison et al., 2015) and are essential to an organization's success and consist of either internal and external individuals or groups (Lange & Bundy, 2018). Organization ABC provides services to stakeholders in Texas, Connecticut, New York, and the Commonwealth of Dominica. However, for this study, participants were exclusively from the state of Texas. I used stakeholder theory because stakeholders have the potential to attain an organization's mission by contributing financial sustainability by helping organizational leaders define ways to improve fundraising revenues. Stakeholder theory helped me to understand the strategies Organization ABC uses to identify and address stakeholders' needs for improving fundraising revenues.

Operational Definitions

Financial sustainability: Financial sustainability is the ability of an organization to maintain and preserve their finances long-term using multiple resources (Gajdová & Majdúchová, 2018; Moore et al., 2017).

Nonprofit organization (NPO): An NPO is an organization that provides a plethora of social and community services, most often in communities with the most vulnerable individuals (Zhai et al., 2017). The U.S. government defines nonprofits as organizations that do not function for profit or distribute profits to shareholders. Because their operations are for the benefit of the public, nonprofits are tax-exempt organizations (IRS, 2019).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are aspects of a study assumed by the researcher to be true but not proven (Mohajan, 2018). In this case study, I identified three assumptions that could influence the outcomes. The first assumption was that the participants in this single case study would answer interview questions truthfully and transparently. The second assumption was that the results of this study could be beneficial to other leaders of NPOs seeking to increase their fundraising revenues to build financial sustainability. The last assumption was that the leaders of the organization would eagerly divulge unbiased, intimate details about the operation of their organization.

Limitations

Limitations in a study are aspects beyond the control of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The method of collecting data is one of the limitations associated with case study research (Yin, 2018). One limitation of this study was that data collection occurred via phone interviews and conversations, supported by an exchange of email content and organization documents. In addition, interviewing leaders of a single NPO may have limited the perspective and scope of information obtained during the research process. Furthermore, the leaders interviewed might not have accurately recalled all the experiences that led to their success. Finally, the perspectives conveyed by the different leaders within the organization may not have demonstrated a common understanding of the communication strategies used to increase fundraising revenues.

Delimitations

Delimitations define the scope of a study (Denzin, 2017). Organization ABC provides services in Texas, Connecticut, New York, and the Commonwealth of Dominica, but I used participants from the state of Texas only. The participants from Texas were organization leaders who provided insight on communication strategies they had used to increase fundraising revenues in Texas. Gathering data from a single state served as a delimitation for this study. Last, the participants consisted of NPO leaders who are organization board members rather than the line staff who executed the services.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

The results of this study may contribute to business practice by providing leaders of NPOs serving their community strategies to build relationships with vital stakeholders. The study’s findings may be valuable to business leaders who can achieve value propositions for stakeholders to positively influence the business leaders’ ability to improve fundraising revenues. The contributions to business practice may become relevant to not only NPOs but also to any organization seeking to build revenues through fundraising.

Implications for Social Change

The implications for positive social change from this study include the potential effects that the increase in revenue could provide to NPOs offering necessary services that benefit local communities. Providing academic resources that may otherwise be difficult to obtain for youth with challenging socioeconomic backgrounds can lead to quality education, enabling individuals to become active, contributing members of society. Further implications for effecting social change include the potential to provide strategies for other NPOs to increase their ability to meet similar missions of serving other communities' citizens.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the communication strategies that leaders of an NPO in Texas used to improve fundraising revenues. NPO leaders rely on fundraising to sustain their operations. Given the economic and financial climate, some nonprofit leaders are strategic in the adjustment of their funding portfolios as they stay abreast of changes in the economy (Ilyas et al., 2020). Additionally, the lack of funding has made it significantly challenging to fulfill the organization's mission and build financial sustainability (Nageswarakurukkal et al., 2020). To understand how NPOs can improve fundraising revenues, a review of applicable literature occurred.

Researchers use a literature review to examine previous studies to report on the current knowledge and to provide a summary of established research regarding a topic or phenomenon (Brooks et al., 2019). Furthermore, conducting a review of the current literature on a topic allows the researcher and reader to formulate ideas that may lead to further research (Levitt et al., 2018). In addition, the use of research conducted and analyzed provides the reader with an in-depth understanding of the topic, which was to identify successful communication strategies that senior leaders of NPOs used to improve fundraising revenues.

For this study, I critically analyzed and synthesized the literature on the communication strategies that nonprofit leaders have used to improve their fundraising revenues. Using the Walden University Library and Google Scholar to obtain articles for my literature review, I explored ABI/Inform, Business Source Complete, ProQuest Central, SAGE Journals, Science Direct, Google Scholar, Emerald Insight, and Pearson Education, as sources to complete my literature review. Business Source Complete and Google Scholar were the primary search engines used to find peer-reviewed articles. I confirmed the peer-review of the articles through Ulrich's Web Global Serials Directory and by reviewing publisher information. Peer-reviewed article confirmation also occurred by visiting the original websites of many of the articles not identified in Ulrich's Web Global Serials Directory. Though most sources retrieved for the literature review underwent peer-review and publication between 2017 and 2020, I used some non-peer-reviewed seminal sources published before 2017 to demonstrate the history related to the research topic. Other non-peer-reviewed sources included government sources and statistical data related to NPOs.

The search terms explored included *nonprofit challenges*, *nonprofit branding*, *social media technology and branding*, *five force model*, *communication strategies*, *government funding*, *brand names*, *nonprofit organization*, *not for profit organization*, *stakeholder theory*, *stakeholder engagement*, *community awareness*, *resource-based view*, and *expectancy theory*. The final study includes 177 sources. The source breakdown includes 151 peer-reviewed sources and 26 nonpeer-reviewed sources. The nonpeer-reviewed sources included seminal works and government sources used to help add context to the study. Ninety-one percent of the articles for the literature review occurred between 2017 and 2021.

Using stakeholder theory as the lens to view the business problem, the problem statement, and the research question, as well as to develop the interview questions, I completed an exhaustive review of the academic literature to gain an understanding of how NPOs use various communication strategies to improve fundraising revenues. My approach to the literature review included a review of other conceptual frameworks considered, stakeholder theory as an appropriate lens to view communication strategies for fundraising, NPOs, nonprofit funding strategies, and concluded with an overview of communication strategies that leaders of NPOs used to improve fundraising.

Conceptual Framework Considerations

In a qualitative study, researchers use a conceptual framework to provide evidence of critical concerns and how to incorporate certain principles into practice (Yin, 2018). In qualitative research, researchers develop themes within their exploration and use the conceptual framework as a lens (Onwuegbuzie & Weinbaum, 2017). Before using the stakeholder theory as the lens to view data related to nonprofit communication strategies to help improve funding, I reviewed several theories to determine if the tenets of the theory related well to the research question that guided this study. In framing a research question, a review of previous studies allows the researcher to acquire a thorough understanding of the topic (Abma et al., 2019). I considered the resource-based view (RBV), expectancy theory, marketing theory, social marketing theory, path-goal theory (PGT), and shareholder theory before deciding on stakeholder theory as the most appropriate conceptual framework for this study.

Resource-Based View

The RBV is a management theory that leaders use to examine potential resources that would lead to competitive advantage and, ultimately, sustainability (Wernerfelt, 1984). Rather than a focus on products or services, organizations adhering to the RBV manage their resources strategically. Wernerfelt (1984) developed the RBV to explain the importance of an organization’s resources as a reflection of its potential competitive advantage. In RBV theory, the organization has a value-creating strategy that differentiates them from the competitors (Jensen et al., 2016). Applying the tenets of RBV, an organization can gain a competitive advantage if it mobilizes superior resources. However, leaders should not consider resources only at an external level but also as an internal level (Brown & Baltes, 2017). Organizations drive superior performance by leveraging their unique characteristics and capabilities (Brown & Baltes, 2017). Organizations that leverage their unique characteristics and capabilities set their organization apart from other organizations, which may serve to increase their competitive advantage.

Understanding the resources held by an organization is only one component necessary for increasing the organization’s competitive advantage. Barney (1991) further expanded the RBV theory by explaining that organizations can gain a competitive advantage by offering rare items that other organizations cannot easily duplicate or substitute. By focusing strategically on internal resources, organizational leaders establish a competitive advantage (Galbreath, 2019). Barney explained that there is a direct association between an organization’s resources, the management of those resources, and a competitive advantage. However, RBV was not an appropriate framework for this study because my client organization was not seeking to create a competitive advantage by offering rare or inimitable services; the leaders were attempting to develop communication strategies to improve fundraising efforts to sustain their organization and continue to provide services for the community stakeholders.

Five Competitive Forces

Porter’s five competitive forces focus on the competitive strategies that an organization utilizes concerning the market in which its business exists (Porter, 2008). Organization leaders can determine the potential profitability of their organization by examining the five forces collectively (Mahat, 2019). The five competitive forces that affect the attractiveness of the organization include: (a) entry of competitors, (b) threat of substitutes, (c) bargaining power of buyers, (d) bargaining power of suppliers, and (e) rivalry among the existing players (Porter, 2008). Use of Porter's framework assists organization leaders to determine their strengths and weaknesses as they develop a strategy to remain competitive (Mahat, 2019). However, there is no accountability for stakeholders and value proposition to stakeholders (Porter, 2008). The limited accountability and value of stakeholders under the five forces model may result in an organization failing to use available resources.

The premise for the five forces model is to assess the market through the five forces to determine its attractiveness towards profitability (Porter, 2008). In so doing, the leaders can focus the company's resources on strategies that create competitive advantages within their market (Mahat, 2019). In the evaluation of the company's position within the market through the five forces, the leaders gain a better understanding on how to leverage their position and gain the advantage (Mahat, 2019). Though understanding the market and its attractiveness is vital to an organization's profitability, financial stability, and competitive advantage, the focus of the leaders of my client organization were on developing effective communication strategies to attract donors to increase fundraising revenues. The focus of the leaders was not on market strategies, threat of substitutes, bargaining with suppliers or creating rivalry amongst existing market leaders; therefore, Porter's five forces model was not appropriate for this study.

Vroom's Expectancy Theory

Employee behavior is a result of deliberate choices that reflect a need for pleasure and the minimization of pain. According to Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory (VET), motivation occurs when individuals believe: (a) their efforts produce satisfactory performance (expectancy), (b) they achieved positive rewards (instrumentality), and (c) their performance produces a positive outcome (valence). The individual's goal is to complete tasks that will ultimately deliver results that the individual thinks are favorable (Vroom, 1964). According to VET, the individual's combined beliefs about expectancy, instrumentality, and valence motivate the individual to act in a manner that leads to pleasure but minimizes pain (Vroom, 1964). This theory of motivation reflects how managers can identify ways to motivate employees, thereby creating an environment with increased productivity. Essential to the understanding of VET are intrinsic and extrinsic factors related to motivating employees within the organization (Vroom, 1964). The focus of VET is on employees within the organization and their individual motivation to achieve their goals and improve productivity, which is not congruent with the focus of this study, geared toward determining the communication strategies that will improve fundraising revenues. For this reason, VET was not an appropriate theory for this study.

Path-Goal Theory

The PGT has its foundation in VET, where the leader's behavior influences subordinates' motivation (House, 1971). According to PGT, leaders drive subordinates through motivation, improved performance, and satisfaction (House, 1971). The leader drives the satisfaction of the individual to increase the subordinate goal and clarifies the pathway to meet the goals. In the PGT, the leader uses a specific leadership behavior that reflects the characteristics of the followers: (a) directive leadership, (b) supportive leadership, (c) participative leadership, and (d) achievement-oriented leadership (House, 1971). The leader uses different behaviors based on employee attributes and environmental demands, ultimately altering personal satisfaction and the employees' perception of their abilities (Farhan, 2018; MacTaggart & Lynham, 2018). The tenets of PGT could have supported this study if the specific business problem closely aligned with improving internal stakeholder motivation and communication of the organization's values to the public. But because the goal of this study was to identify communication strategies to influence donor behaviors and not improving employee motivation or satisfaction, I did not choose PGT as the conceptual framework for this study.

Shareholder Theory

First used by Milton Friedman (1970), the premise of shareholder theory is that an organization's responsibility and allegiance are to its shareholders. Therefore, an organization's primary objective is to maximize profits and increase the wealth of those shareholders (Friedman, 1970). Within this theory, shareholders have the advantage of benefitting from monetary gain without assuming the risks of enterprise ownership (How et al., 2019). Organizational leaders who focus on achieving financial gains and maximizing profits for shareholders may understand that appeasing shareholders may provide incentives for continued growth and support of the organization. Many organizations and academic institutes focus on the premise that financialization and maximizing profits for an organization’s shareholders is the only feasible goal of an organization (Cardão-Pito, 2017). However, organization leaders who only focus on shareholders fail to address the needs of stakeholders. Leaders should focus on building wealth for shareholders while creating value for stakeholders (How et al., 2019). External stakeholder support in the form of donations is essential to the sustainability of the NPO’s mission, and without external stakeholder support, NPOs could cease to exist (Abebe & Cha, 2018). However, the goal of my client organization’s leaders was not on influencing shareholders and maximizing shareholder wealth. The leaders’ focus was on implementing effective communication strategies to influence external stakeholders to participate in fundraising activities to continue to sustain operations and serve the community; therefore, shareholder theory was not appropriate for this study.

Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory is a business theory developed by R. E Freeman in 1984 that states that organizational leaders must develop relationships with its stakeholders. The foundational premise for stakeholder theory occurred when AT&T’s (formerly the Bell System) executive leadership asked Freeman to develop an educational program to help increase their ability to manage company stakeholders effectively (Freeman, 2004). Freeman defined stakeholders as a group of individuals influenced by the achievement of a firm’s purpose. The stakeholder group for consideration in this study are the potential donors and how the leaders of Organization ABC develop communication strategies to influence increased donations to improve funding revenue. Organization ABC operates in the state of Texas to provide academic resources to its community. Therefore, stakeholder theory is an appropriate conceptual framework for this study.

Internal and external stakeholders are resources organization leaders can use as they strive to achieve organizational success. Freeman (2004) asserted that senior leaders should develop effective strategies to influence internal and external stakeholders to achieve organizational outcomes, encouraging the development of stakeholder relationships. Through developing stakeholder relationships, leaders can increase positive attitudes and behaviors stakeholders have toward the organization (Harrison et al., 2015). Increasing the positive attitudes and behaviors of all stakeholders is likely to increase the flow of information, customer satisfaction, and the assurance of financial gains (Harrison et al., 2015). Considering all stakeholders, rather than only focusing on shareholders, increases the likelihood that an organization will achieve organizational outcomes thereby increasing sustainability.

The tenets of stakeholder theory reinforce the perspective that leaders must consider stakeholder needs as an essential element of their business strategies (Freeman et al., 2016). Therefore, identifying and addressing the needs of key stakeholders improves the chances of organizational success (Freeman et al., 2007). Senior leaders in Organization ABC can use the fundamental idea of stakeholder relationships to improve on communication strategies for fundraising revenues and must adopt effective ways to promote the value of the organization to attract potential donors to attend these events.

Organization ABC leaders may risk the organization's viability and value if they do not implement communication strategies designed to focus on external stakeholders and draw in donations. The lack of focus on the interests of the external stakeholders could ultimately create financial hardship for the organization.

Organizational leaders should also make strategic decisions to create value for stakeholders (Freeman, 2004; Freeman et al., 2016). To sustain business operations, organizations must provide value to the stakeholders (Freeman, 1984). Because the tenets of stakeholder theory have a broad range of applications to enhance value creation, leaders in many industries such as healthcare, human resource management, information technology, corporate social responsibility, business ethics and marketing use this theory to guide their business decisions (Harrison et al., 2015). Researchers who study the use of stakeholder theory have found that the value creation can be narrow such as focusing on customers, or the focus can be wide such as focusing on larger stakeholder groups inclusive of customers, the community, and shareholders (Harrison et al., 2015). As stakeholder theory became more widely used, researchers divided stakeholder theory into three categories: instrumental, normative, and descriptive (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Although the three categories have different underlying tenets each category remains focused on addressing stakeholder needs to achieve organizational success.

Leaders using the principles of instrumental stakeholder theory believe they must focus on building relationships with key stakeholders to maximize shareholder value (Jones et al., 2018). A fundamental principle underlying instrumental stakeholder theory is that organizations build stakeholder relationships on trust, fairness, loyalty, and respect (Jones et al., 2018). Expanding on the application of instrumental stakeholder theory, some researchers believe that leaders acting as agents or instruments may improve financial performance through the creation of mutually beneficial stakeholder relationships (Jones et al., 2018; Weitzner & Deutsch, 2019). Such management results in stakeholder relationships lead to profitability and maximum shareholder benefit (Harrison et al., 2015; Jones et al., 2018). Also, stakeholders are an instrument used to achieve shareholder wealth (Francis et al., 2019). Whereas, leaders using instrumental stakeholder theory to guide decisions focus on creating shareholder wealth, leaders using normative stakeholder theory focus morality and ethics of stakeholder relationships to foster organizational profitability.

Principles of normative stakeholder theory remind organizational leaders to consider morality and ethics when creating relationships with stakeholders (Rose et al., 2018). Leaders using the tenets of normative stakeholder theory do business ethically while displaying a high regard for morals irrespective of economic gain (Rose et al., 2018). The normative approach to business management takes leaders as well as stakeholders into consideration, ensuring that organizational leader make decisions that adhere to certain ethical principles (Cesar, 2019). NPO leaders seeking to improve upon social welfare may find using the normative approach to stakeholder management to support their overarching mission and vision. Another category of stakeholder management for leaders to consider when managing their organizations stems from the principles of descriptive stakeholder theory.

As mentioned previously, descriptive stakeholder theory is an additional theory for organizational leaders to consider when creating value for their organizations through stakeholder relationships. Taking a descriptive approach involves describing the functionality of and an organization and its contributions on a larger scale (Miles, 2017). Descriptive stakeholder approaches in management help leaders determine how to account for stakeholder's interests in business decisions. Although Burga and Rezania (2016) did not set out to study descriptive stakeholder theory in their case study on social entrepreneurship, the information presented illuminated the importance of building stakeholder relationships and the salient effects on firm performance as well as demonstrated the importance of stakeholder identification.

Stakeholder identification is paramount to organizational leaders who develop strategies based on stakeholder interests. Researchers and theorists argue from diverse perspectives on how to determine and define an organization's stakeholders (Wood et al., 2021). Stakeholders are individuals or groups affected by an organization's achievement (Freeman, 1984). Benlemlih and Bitar (2018) included employees, community, environment, and products in their stakeholders. NPO leaders including the leaders of Organization ABC must take the necessary steps to define their organization's key stakeholders. Organization ABC leaders in the context of this study focus their efforts on potential donors as the stakeholders for whom to gear communication strategies toward. If the leaders can design appropriate communication strategies geared toward donors the hope is that the donors will attend fundraising events and make a financial contribution to the organizations mission which is to provide academic resources to the community. Although defining stakeholders is an important leadership responsibility, equally important to leaders using stakeholder theory to guide decision-making is to consider the relative importance of the stakeholder considering that stakeholder interest may sometimes conflict.

Stakeholder Importance

Stakeholders are influential in an NPO's viability. Though the focus of this study is on effective communications strategies that NPO leaders can use to influence external stakeholders' donations, it is essential to note that internal stakeholders play a critical role in improving relations with external stakeholders. Beer and Micheli (2017) explained that both internal and external stakeholders are essential to an organization in that the internal stakeholder's performance has a direct effect on achieving organizational goals. The relationships between internal stakeholders have the potential to influence the ability of organization members to effectively execute their job functions, which could influence the behaviors of external stakeholders (Cardwell et al., 2017). The importance of internal and external stakeholders relates to Organization ABC in that the internal stakeholders drive the organization's mission and vision and, as a result, must represent the organization well or they may unintentionally misrepresent the organization and lose the allegiance of prospective external stakeholders that may otherwise donate.

Stakeholder Engagement

How stakeholders view an organization can have a direct impact on their level of financial commitment. Stakeholders become engaged when they feel a sense of trust, satisfaction, and value (Lange & Bundy, 2018). In this capacity engaging stakeholders through trust, satisfaction, and value elicits cooperation, which can influence stakeholder engagement (Nartey et al., 2018). Stakeholder engagement increases when what the organization offers directly affects their needs (Clear et al., 2018). Therefore, leaders of NPOs might use strategies that incorporate the values and interests of stakeholders within their community.

Stakeholder engagement strategies not only apply to donors but also to recipients of services rendered. Organizations that focus solely on their services can potentially destroy the organization’s reputation (Kucukusta et al., 2019). In this capacity it is conflict rather than that influences stakeholder engagement (Nartey et al., 2018). Therefore, organizations should encourage feedback to evaluate their services (Kucukusta et al., 2019). Social media is a method that leaders could use to manage the stakeholder relationship through engagement and communication.

The stakeholder theory was appropriate as the lens for this study because the stakeholders are donors, and understanding what donors want can assist senior leaders in creating a value proposition that can promote and increase fundraising participation among donor-stakeholders. The tenets of stakeholder theory include the importance of an organization accounting for the interests of all stakeholders, rather than just shareholders

(Freeman, 1984). According to the tenets of stakeholder theory, the actions of management relate to the interest of stakeholders (Freeman, 2004). Therefore, management must first determine the purpose of the organization and then determine the responsibility of management to stakeholders (Freeman et al., 2004). Stakeholders include both internal (management and employees) and external (competitors and suppliers), groups influential to the success of the organization (Freeman, 2004). The study conducted here was an exploration of communication strategies relevant to external stakeholders or donors.

Nonprofit Organizations

There are two types of NPOs, based on whom the organization serves. According to Carter et al. (2019), NPOs either serve their members or serve the public. Organization ABC is an NPO that serves the public. Therefore, the researcher will not consider nonprofits that serve their members in this study. NPOs operate in a vast array of communities and sectors that include schools and hospitals (Burde et al., 2017). Clear et al. (2018) conducted a study using a stakeholder's approach to determine why nonprofits exist and concluded that there was a direct relationship between population size and the availability of public charities within the community. According to Clear et al. nonprofits are an integral part of local communities.

NPOs function in a capacity designed to further social interest, rather than monetary profit. Therefore, nonprofits function under the U.S. IRS tax code 501(c)(3). As such, NPO leaders maintain their solvency through charities and donations, but function and operate their organization similarly to a for-profit business. The 501(c)(3) tax code provides tax exemptions to the organization and has provisions for donations to be tax deductible (Ritvo et al., 2017). The use of a 501(c)(3) tax code limits the monetary means necessary to run the organization, thereby providing opportunity for the NPO to further their mission.

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore effective communication strategies that leaders of an NPO use to improve fundraising revenue. Therefore, I chose to study Organization ABC, an NPO that provides academic resources to Texas residents from low-income backgrounds. Organization ABC's senior leadership must operate the organization effectively to achieve the NPO's mission and provide services of value to its clients. All organizations, whether for-profit or nonprofit, must produce some value; otherwise, they cease to exist (Hommerová & Severová, 2019). Although NPOs may not provide monetary profit, they do provide value for the fulfillment of a social purpose (Ilyas et al., 2020). Therefore, the senior leadership of an NPO must strive to accrue monetary support in the quest to fulfill their mission.

Senior leaders of NPOs operate similarly to the leadership of for-profit organizations, although the aims of their operation vary. In contrast to for-profit organizational leaders, leaders of NPOs need to focus on operational efficiency to achieve social value (Vacekova et al., 2017). The essence of NPO leadership is understanding and executing a mission in pursuit of a social purpose, thereby producing value for the stakeholders (Ilyas et al., 2020). Nonprofit operations, therefore, must be efficient in their mission achievement, which is related to fiscal responsibility, because most funding comes from donations (Clear et al., 2018). As in for-profit organizations, senior leaders of NPOs have monetary goals for the organization. Therefore, transparency and efficient financial stewardship are paramount to the success of the organization, and NPO leaders must be innovative in cultivating stakeholder relationships to garner success (Miles, 2017). Without the cultivation of stakeholder relationships, senior leaders of NPOs will have difficulty attaining the monetary support necessary to fulfill their social mission. Stakeholder theory is relevant to leaders of NPOs as the very viability of an NPO is on satisfying the needs of all stakeholders, as there are no shareholders in an NPO, and all monetary gains function to further the NPO's mission.

Nonprofits by the Numbers

The nonprofit sector continues to grow rapidly, and leaders of NPOs must consider the strategies they use to ensure that they obtain enough contributions to continue operating and fulfilling their social mission. In the United States, the nonprofit sector provides a vast array of services in local communities (Hu & Kapucu, 2017). In 2015, approximately 1.56 million NPOs were operating in the U.S. (Bae & Sohn, 2018). Giving USA Foundation (2018) also reported that charitable giving in the U.S. rose by 3% in 2018 in comparison to 2016. In Texas, as of January 8, 2020, there were a total of 92,734 nonprofits, of which 65,048 were public charities (Independent Sector, 2020). Though the nonprofit sector in the U.S. continues to grow, new challenges exist as the increasing number of NPOs results in more competition for limited funds (Shin, 2019).

As NPOs become more competitive with one another, it is crucial to understand what funding strategies are most effective. This study specifically explores the efficacy of communication strategies for attracting donors. Understanding the type of communication that donors respond to most positively may help NPOs gain a competitive edge within the fast-expanding NPO market.

Funding Qualifications

To receive funding, NPOs must meet regulatory requirements and attract donors. To obtain designation as a nonprofit, organization senior leaders must meet the guidelines set forth by local, state, and federal regulations. Also, paramount to receiving funding is the ability of NPO leaders to demonstrate to potential donors that the organization's values align with the needs of the community (Vacekova et al., 2017). Given the importance of donations for funding NPOs, the tenets of stakeholder theory are relevant for NPO leaders striving to ensure donors feel appreciated and valued. Furthermore, developing relationships with stakeholders increases trust between parties, which increases donor support and involvement (Alborough, 2017). The different sources of funding necessary for NPO success suggest that different NPOs need to engage in different kinds of communication depending on the type of stakeholder to which the NPO is appealing. Fundraising constitutes one method through which NPOs communicate their mission to attract various kinds of stakeholders.

Government Funding

Stakeholders who respond favorably to NPOs are not only individuals but also government or public organizations with the financial ability to support the mission and goals of nonprofits. Leaders of nonprofits depend on funding through grants and donors to acquire the capital necessary to achieve their organizational mission (Carter et al., 2019). Many stakeholder resources originate from government resources that provide grants, reimbursements, and contracts. Therefore, the government is an essential funding source for NPOs, particularly in human services (Kerlin & Pollak, 2018). Carter et al. (2019) explained that NPOs obtain a significant amount of their revenue from government organizations, with almost 32% of the total income of NPOs in the U.S. originating from government grants and contracts. The need for human services has prompted more NPOs to participate in alternative services that the government does not provide (Kerlin & Pollak, 2018). As such, NPOs fulfill social needs that government-funded organizations may not have allocations to address. Lee and Woronkowicz (2019) conducted a study that examined how NPOs manage their finances and found that managers misuse cash holdings for their own interests. The results of their study indicated that government oversight would aid in ensuring transparency and integrity in nonprofits that use government funding (Lee & Woronkowicz, 2019). Such oversight may increase the ability of NPOs to establish trust with donors, which may help their efforts to increase success in fundraising efforts.

Organization ABC provides academic resources to students and teachers in low-income areas in Texas. Given the state’s fiscal challenges, the attainment of government grants and funding from government agencies outside of the department of education could be a beneficial stakeholder for Organization ABC. The government's increasing financial challenges further promotes the idea of the government's assisting NPOs in their attempts to help those whom the government cannot help (Lee & Woronkowicz, 2019). For example, the government's contracting out services to NPOs has led to funding for NPOs, particularly in human services (Litrico & Besharov, 2019). Contracting services to NPOs specializing in addressing human service needs can provide necessary financial resources and alleviate government costs.

Government contracting of services and public funding of NPOs does not exist without some challenges. When NPOs and government sectors are interdependent, leaders of NPOs can become too reliant on public funding, creating potential liabilities for NPOs involved in human services (Lu & Zhao, 2019). Ultimately, NPOs can be at a disadvantage because of competition from other nonprofits, increased regulation, or reductions in funding (Clear et al., 2018). Furthermore, NPOs often have limited resources and may not have the capacity to respond to the needs of the stakeholders they serve (Zietlow et al., 2018). Therefore, leaders of NPOs seeking government funding should understand the dynamics of the relationship and leverage the government's reliance on them to provide needed services while promoting their own need for funding. Though this study is not about government funding and its various advantages and disadvantages, it is important to mention it here that governments qualify as stakeholders, given that NPOs could seek government funding to support their mission. Furthermore, this study is about successful communication strategies that leaders of NPOs use to improve fundraising revenues. Therefore, given that government resources are a significant source of revenue for nonprofits, it is essential to mention the government's function as a stakeholder.

Nonprofit Fundraising

The aim of senior leaders should not be just the collection of funds, but instead building sustainable relationships with stakeholders through effective communication that will ultimately lead to improved fundraising revenues (Nageswarakurukkal et al., 2020). Fundraising in the nonprofit sector is a methodical activity that members of an organization use to raise financial resources for the activities of the organization (Hommerová & Severová, 2019). Fundraising is a method to help guide organization leaders in the development of relationships with donors with whom they have common interests (Clear et al., 2018). The purpose of fundraising is to cover operational costs, not to support sustainable practices (Ilyas et al., 2020). Sustainable practices occur when the senior leadership of an organization centers on activities around increasing value to stakeholders in the community (Hommerová & Severová, 2019). Donors are more responsive to organizations that promote their interests (Litrico & Besharov, 2019). However, a study conducted by Alborough (2017) concluded that the relationship between the giver and the beneficiary is nonexistent and that the relationship between the fundraiser and the giver is what ultimately results in giving. Therefore, for fundraising to elicit giving, fundraisers should develop communication strategies that will build on the relationship to increase the potential for donating.

Crowdfunding

NPOs use multiple platforms to achieve their financial goals. Crowdfunding is a peer-to-peer donation strategy that allows for the novice entrepreneur to collect donations online (Geva et al., 2019). Crowdfunding has become increasingly popular, having collected over $34 billion globally in 2015, becoming a popular medium to collect capital (Massolution, 2015). Online crowdfunding provides access to a more extensive range of potential donors than traditional methods (Burtch et al., 2018). Crowdfunding allows the organization to bypass various financial facilitators and seek funding directly from individuals (Geva et al., 2019). In this manner, many individuals giving a small amount can be attractive to potential donors (Li & Wang, 2019). Organization ABC’s primary mission is to supply academic resources to students and teachers in the local community where supplies are otherwise unavailable. Online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, could serve as the medium to establish crowdfunding that an enormous number of individuals frequently view. These platforms offer a wide variety of backgrounds, individuals with various financial status, and influence increasing the likelihood of gaining donor participation. However, there should be an effective communication strategy that will entice individuals to donate.

Communication Strategies

Nonprofit leaders must incorporate strategies to communicate effectively with their stakeholders to improve their financial viability. Communication occurs when two or more people share information using words, signs, or sometimes body language to influence one another (Vacekova et al., 2017). In business, communication can stimulate and influence decision making (Bormane & Šķiltere, 2018). Precise and purposeful communication can be a powerful tool for business leaders intending to improve performance and grow (Bhayani, 2017). Specifically, in relation to stakeholder theory. Bhayani (2017) asserted that communication helps to generate the attention and interest necessary to start a business or generate income. Businesses rely on communication to promote brand image, create awareness of products and services, receive feedback on customer preferences, and influence action (Bormane & Šķiltere, 2018). NPOs desiring to increase fundraising revenue can use such communication strategies to promote the organization, its mission, and its goals to increase fundraising and serve the community.

Two-way communication is necessary in the business world to transmit messages between key stakeholders. Bhayani (2017) stated that two-way communication is essential for long-lasting, positive relationships with other organizations and with the public. Duralia (2018) studied asymmetric communication within a firm and found that when a firm lacks a consistent interface, it diminishes the quality of external information communicated by that organization. In relation to stakeholder theory this could result in stakeholders feeling undervalued, which may decrease their likelihood of supporting the organization. Businesses rely on customer and stakeholder communication to understand how the organization and products are performing and compare them competitors' products and services, as well as the desires and expectations set by the customers to remain viable. The way an organization communicates with customers and stakeholders may determine the organization's long-term viability (Duralia, 2018). A discussion regarding the importance of communication strategies is important to this study as the use of such strategies aligns with stakeholder theory and may help the leaders of NPOs increase fundraising revenues, resulting in increased long-term viability.

Communication Strategies for NPOs

Communication is of paramount importance to ensuring the sustainability of NPOs. Nonprofit businesses suffer from insufficient resources and rely on external communications with a variety of audiences to inform and influence potential donors (Flanagan & Getto, 2017); thus, making effective external communication strategies vital to mission success. There is an increased demand among NPOs for services, along with a simultaneous expectation that NPOs obtain the necessary government funding and donor support to ensure competition within the market (Fernando et al., 2017). To overcome these challenges, leaders must consider strategically effective communication strategies that demonstrate value to their stakeholders.

Strategic Communication. Strategic communication is the systemic process of sustained and meaningful activities conducted across many levels to facilitate the understanding of an audience and identify favorable channels for eliciting a behavior (Jaomiasa, 2019). Communication with internal and external stakeholders is a necessary skill affecting business practices, thereby sparking interest in the competencies of professionals regarding the strategic management of communication (Brunton et al., 2019). Nonprofit leaders should insert effective external communication strategies into their overall strategic planning efforts that incorporate two-way communication to understand the needs of customers and to determine the improvements needed (Baack et al., 2017). Such increases in two-way communication may increase donor engagement and results in increases in fundraising revenue.

The design and strategic control of messaging can influence customers' buying behavior, build relationships, and promote interactive and effective communication between stakeholders and the organization (Genchev & Todorova, 2017). Furthermore, as the market landscape becomes global, NPO leaders should familiarize themselves with the cultural values of their stakeholders and how these values drive communication management practices (Brunton et al., 2019). Nonprofits' leaders must understand customers and the available avenues to effectively reach out and involve customers in promotions or activities to enhance the effectiveness of external communications. Stakeholder theory, the conceptual framework for this study, holds that individuals and groups who affected by the activities of an organization should be relevant to the organization (Freeman, 2004). Strategic communication may enhance engagement with stakeholders and is therefore essential for an analysis of NPO communication strategies from the perspective of stakeholder theory.

Message Framing. Senior leaders of NPOs cannot ignore the importance of message framing when communicating with stakeholders. Given identical situations, circumstances, or facts, people will make different decisions based on the presentation of the information (Zhang & Yang, 2019). Message framing is a strategy used in communication to shape the recipient's perception of a particular outcome (Oh & Ki, 2019). A favorable correlation exists between message framing and a positive attitude toward a company (Oh & Ki, 2019). For example, senior leaders can frame messages using gain-framed appeal, in which they enhance the potential benefits rather than the drawbacks (Oh & Ki, 2019). Using framing strategies, such as gain-framed appeal, may increase the likelihood that stakeholders will contribute to fundraising ventures.

In contrast to gain-framed appeal, a focus on loss-framed appeal includes emphasizing the negative consequences of not acting (Oh & Ki, 2019). The results of a study conducted by Amatulli et al. (2019) about the effects of negative message framing on green consumption demonstrated that negative message framing is more effective than positive message framing. The study results suggested that stakeholders are more apt to donate through guilt caused by negative message framing (Amatulli et al., 2019). With stakeholder theory, crafting messages to influence stakeholders to donate to the NPO requires the ability of the organization's senior leaders to spend significant time developing their understanding regarding what values are of importance to stakeholders (Retolaza et al., 2019). In so doing, nonprofit leaders can garner sustained financial support from their stakeholders.

Virtual Communication. In the modern world, virtual communication methods are key for increasing communication in a cost-effective way. Virtual communication refers to technology that people use to communicate without meeting in person (Lauro et al., 2019). The use of virtual communication allows participants to communicate from wherever they are, thereby providing convenience and improving productivity (Cho et al., 2017). Travel and remote work scenarios exist in many organizations, the use of virtual communication therefore enables all parties to connect regardless of location. Some of the advantages of virtual communication include low operating costs and low overhead costs (Lauro et al., 2019). According to Lauro et al. (2019), because NPOs' businesses are dependent on donor participation, NPOs make a significant effort to reach potential donors through fundraising. As such, the use of Internet-based social media provides NPO senior leaders with a cost-effective method for fundraising, allowing them a greater ability to reach donors and offering donors a more efficient and direct way to contribute (Oh & Ki, 2019). Furthermore, the use of virtual communication provides an effective method for communicating with numerous stakeholders at one time.

Social media provides an effective medium for organizations to stay connected to the public, unlike past methods that involved updating a company website (Cho et al., 2017). Social media allows nonprofit leaders to enhance and sustain communication and improve the relationship between the organization and the stakeholder (Cho et al., 2017). Social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter serve as important means of communication to strengthen stakeholder relationships that may increase donor participation. Individuals use social media to facilitate electronic word of mouth (e-WoM), using the evaluation of others within their network to influence other stakeholders' decisions regarding donation (Sozer, 2019). Positive use of social media by stakeholders may serve to entice the engagement of new stakeholders, which may help to increase donations, thereby increasing an NPOs fundraising revenue.

Brand Name Communication. The name of an organization conveys a message to the stakeholder, communicating what the stakeholder should expect. The message that brand names convey should reflect the reputation, performance, quality, and reliability of an organization (Swani et al., 2019). Also, brand names can elicit brand identity, influencing the behaviors of donors (Swani et al., 2019). Consumers may view a brand as a reflection of commitment and quality (Wu et al., 2019). Also, brands are an extension of self and provide meaning to customers (Swani et al., 2019). Therefore, leaders of an NPO should ensure that their brand name reflects the values that will convey the correct message to stakeholders. In understanding effective communication strategies that leaders of NPOs can use, the brand name should communicate a strong message that will entice donors to give.

A brand name can create longevity with customers or stakeholders. Brand names are an essential part of brand equity and advertising strategy for an organization and developing a valid brand name takes a substantial amount of time (Pathak et al., 2019). Some organizations hire firms or consultants to create the perfect brand (Sutton, 2019). For example, researchers use sound symbolism to help create a meaningful and attractive name with vowels rather than consonants (Knoeferle et al., 2017). The sound symbolism theory reflects the sounds or clusters of sounds made in a name that helps communicate meaning to the listener (Preziosi & Coane, 2017). According to Preziosi and Coane (2017), the main idea of a brand is to create a memorable name that communicates information about the organization. For example, the word Febreze, which is a combination of fresh and breeze, indicates what type of product it is (Preziosi & Coane, 2017). This concept demonstrates that when the brand name cues the stakeholder about the product or service the organization provides, the result can contribute to the value proposition and increase the likelihood of donors' giving.

An inappropriate brand name can create barriers to recruiting stakeholders to donate. Rith-Najarian et al. (2019) conducted a study on the difference a brand name makes to the recruitment of students for an online program. For their study, Rith-Najarian et al. used two different names for recruitment. The results of this study revealed gender differences related to the program name. The significance of this study confirms the importance of selecting an appropriate brand name that can minimize barriers and attract donors to give, potentially increasing fundraising revenues. Chao and Lin (2017) supported the significance of a brand name in their assertion that the name a brand chooses is one of their most valuable assets. Although Chao and Lin's study examined phonetic, semantic, and suggestive translation approaches, their conclusions supported the importance of social factors when choosing a brand name. Furthermore, Rith-Najarian et al. (2019) explained that services advertised in a way that mitigates barriers would better attract stakeholders. Therefore, an organization's brand name should reflect the services or products they offer to communicate the right message. The underlying message is that it is not only essential to advertise the services that Organization ABC provides, but how the brand name conveys to the stakeholder the expected value of the organization.

A brand name requires a clear and precise description that can cue consumers and entice their interest. Researchers conducted a survey study including participants located in the United States about the difference a brand name makes in the purchase of water (Ellis et al., 2019). Researchers conducted an analysis of twenty-one potential branding names for reclaimed water using survey responses to determine whether consumers were more apt to purchase a water based on the brand name. The results of the study showed that names such as Pure Eco-Friendly scored better than Recycled, Reclaimed, or Nontraditional Water (Ellis et al., 2019). The findings of the study aligned with research regarding the role sociolinguistics have in consumer choices. Sociolinguistics refers to the images and associations that arise in the minds of consumers that may influence consumer perceptions of specific products (Chao & Lin, 2017). As such, a brand name must convey what the organization offers.

Different languages or cultures are among the possible barriers to creating an effective brand name. Wu et al. (2019) explained that logographic language brand names, such as those that originate in Asian languages, are more difficult to retain when compared with phonographic languages such as English. Organization ABC operates in two cities in the U.S. and one outside the U.S., demonstrating the importance of creating a brand name that will resonate among other cultures and convey a message that reflects the organization.

Donor Behavior

This purpose of this single case study is to identify effective communication strategies that nonprofit leaders use to improve fundraising revenues. Understanding how donors behave can be beneficial in developing effective communication strategies that will appeal to the generosity of stakeholders. Discerning donor behavior is essential to the management of donor relationships (Nageswarakurukkal et al., 2020). Also, due to the increase in competition among NPOs, leaders of NPOs are seeking strategies that will give them a competitive advantage in sustaining donor loyalty (Rosenbaum et al., 2017). It is important to note that donor behavior is dependent on the type of donation required. For instance, according to a study conducted by Shon et al. (2019) men are more likely to donate blood, while women are more likely to give money. Furthermore, those that donate money tend to be homeowners, have a high income, and have college degrees (Shon et al., 2019). Therefore, NPOs must ascertain the type of donations they seek and the corresponding population likely to provide such donations.

A donor's desire to give may rely on whether the donation might help another rather than themselves. Hsieh and Yucel-Aybat (2018) conducted a study to investigate whether a donor's belief in changeability might influence the behavior of donors on controllable versus uncontrollable health conditions. The results of the study demonstrated that donors were more likely to give more for health conditions that were less controllable than they would for those health conditions perceived as avoidable (Hsieh & Yucel-Aybat, 2018). Organization ABC provides academic resources, leadership training, and mentoring in the inner city. Organization ABC serves a population of individuals that are in an uncontrollable setting and do not have access to the same resources as many other communities. Given the research on the propensity of donors to give to a cause that is largely uncontrollable by the beneficiaries, effective communication strategies that convey the story of the recipients can increase the desire to give.

Millennial Behavior Toward Giving

Senior leaders of NPOs desiring to increase fundraising revenue may increase donations by identifying and capitalizing the needs of a group to increase giving behaviors. For example, although millennials are often considered less likely to give in comparison to other generations (Koczanski & Rosen, 2019) this group of individuals, born after 1980 and before 2004, are projected to become a driving force in the economy (Statista Research Department, 2018). Millennials have a need for connection to the community and dedication to impacting social change (Gorczyca & Hartman, 2017). Therefore, an NPO should establish relationships with millennials by understanding their values and their behaviors toward giving (Gorczyca & Hartman, 2017). Organizations could create communication strategies strategically targeted toward millennials that align with their values, thus potentially increasing their donations.

Narratives as a Communication Strategy

Communicating with stakeholders is one of the most crucial responsibilities of NPO leaders. Cadet and Carroll (2019) explained that NPO leaders can communicate to their stakeholders using narratives to convey stories that will elicit an emotional response, thereby attracting stakeholders to the organization's cause. The increase in inexpensive web-based technologies makes the implementation of narratives as a communication strategy both cost-effective and efficient (Flanagan & Getto, 2017). The use of narratives can also serve to demonstrate an organization's commitment to communicating with their stakeholders.

Traditional communication methods may not provide the best avenue for communicating effectively for NPOs. Innovation is a key factor in an organization's financial success (Weber & Grauer, 2019). The use of narratives as a method of communication is an innovative way to maintain communication while garnering support. Weber and Grauer (2019) described effective strategic communication as involving specific content and communication that reflects the organization's views and values to the stakeholder. Persuasive narratives are competencies necessary in any sales process that allows leaders to communicate and build trust (Spiller, 2018). Organization ABC is seeking increased revenues from fundraising. Therefore, using narratives as an innovative strategy to convey the organization's beliefs, values, and services to their stakeholders, while demonstrating the importance of why they should donate, can increase engagement, build rapport, and trust, and ultimately increase donor activity. However, improper narratives could harm fundraising. Using improper narratives to elicit responses from stakeholders may lead to negative outcomes. When the information conveyed is either false or inaccurate, narratives can have negative consequences

(Moyer-Gusé & Dale, 2017). Leaders of NPOs may use narratives as a communication to increase fundraising revenue but must ensure they are implementing narrative communication in a way that elicits positive rather than negative outcomes.

Community Awareness as a Strategy

Some stakeholders may not participate in fundraising events due to the lack of information regarding the services offered by some nonprofits. Koirala et al. (2018) conducted a quantitative study and identified genuine concern for the environment, community trust, community resistance, and education about environmental concerns as factors that influenced community participation in an organization's activities. Buckley et al. (2017) conducted a study regarding stakeholders' knowledge of access to health services and determined that a lack of community awareness inhibited communities from taking advantage of healthcare services. However, the ability of organizations to communicate with stakeholders within the community through various forms of marketing can be a challenging feat. When it comes to community awareness strategies, leaders must communicate in a way that community members can understand to form their own opinion (Williams et al., 2020). Regarding Organization ABC, if the community is unaware of the products and services provided by the organization, there could be no incentive to participate in giving. Therefore, leaders of NPOs should develop strategies to ensure the community has information regarding the purpose of the organization.

Community Marketing as a Strategy

Marketing is essential for establishing awareness about an organization. Community marketing is a strategy used by organizations to establish an engaging brand and to communicate with existing customers (Pue, 2019). Community marketing eases the pressure on an organization related to time, money, and effort in marketing to new stakeholders by first focusing on existing customers. Focusing on existing customers can not only create brand loyalty but also attract new customers. Organization ABC provides services throughout Texas and has garnered loyal stakeholders who consistently donate. Those stakeholders who donate consistently could become part of a strategy for communicating with other potential donors in the community. Pue (2019) asserted that through the process of community marketing, brand awareness attracted other customers in the community. Leaders that foster a strong relationship will create loyal customers (Khalifa & Saad, 2017). Therefore, engaging with current and potential donors is paramount.

Social Marketing as a Strategy

Commercial marketing is essential to achieving financial sustainability by focusing on current stakeholders to attract new stakeholders, whereas the focus of social marketing is on achieving social good to improve awareness and engagement. The design of social marketing is to change the behavior of the targeted stakeholder and involves the strategic planning and execution of processes that influence the behavior of stakeholders (Hiqmah, 2019). Organization leaders can use social marketing to influence individuals to stop a behavior, such as smoking, or develop new behaviors, such as giving (Rundle-Thiele et al., 2019). The intent behind social marketing is to influence behavior for the benefit of society or a community (Drew, 2019). According to Drew (2019), the National Social Marketing Centre developed benchmark criteria that address effective social marketing, which includes (a) understanding the customer using ethnographic techniques, (b) using existing theory to understand behavior, (c) thoroughly researching the target audience, (d) mitigating the benefits to cost on behavioral change, and (e) identifying competitive factors that are barriers to the influence of behavior. The incorporation and deliberate focus on conveying messages in a community that might influence and inspire individuals to give are essential to Organization ABC's mission to successfully increase donor giving and improve financial sustainability.

Social Media Marketing as a Strategy

Social media marketing is a strategy that organization leaders can use to increase awareness about an organization's mission and vision (Chiang et al., 2017). Globally, billions of people use social media platforms such as Facebook to communicate (Appel et al., 2020). Business leaders can learn significant consumer habits through social media platforms (Carlson et al., 2018). Additionally, the use of social media marketing provides organization leaders with multiple ways to identify and engage with a variety of stakeholders (Appel et al., 2020). Facebook has more than 3 billion active users monthly, with predictions that the number of users will continue to grow (Facebook, 2021). The use of social media presents an essential marketing opportunity for organizations because consumers share information on timelines that are visible to viewers, causing others to share, like, and comment, thereby attracting new users (Haikel-Elsabeh et al., 2019). Wu (2020) conducted a study that surveyed 115 participants in 17 countries and regions with organizations that incorporate social media. The results indicated that Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Twitter were the most used platforms (Wu, 2020). Also, 45% of these organizations were reaching new customers, 57% were communicating with current customers, and 44% represented forms of marketing campaigns (Wu, 2020). These findings represent a significant opportunity for organizations that have not yet acknowledged the benefits of social media marketing. Such organizations could seize on social media marketing as an opportunity to create awareness about services provided, thereby using word of mouth to spread the information about their organization.

The research question at the center of this literature review was to understand what communication strategies NPO leaders use to improve fundraising revenues. The use of stakeholder theory provided a lens for examining the literature regarding NPOs and identifying strategies Organization ABC should consider for increasing fundraising revenues. Given the influence a stakeholder’s view of an organization has on level of financial commitment and the plethora of NPOs seeking donations, senior leaders of Organization ABC must address the importance of building relationships with stakeholders. Using communication strategies NPO leaders can both develop relationships with stakeholders and appeal to the stakeholders’ generosity thereby eliciting enough funds to maintain the financial stability of the NPO and the continuation of the NPO's mission.

Transition

Section 1 included the problem statement, which provided a summary of the challenges that leaders of NPOs face related to charitable giving concerning a lack of communication strategies to increase fundraising revenues. The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore communication strategies NPO leaders use to increase fundraising revenues. The target population included two leaders from one NPO in Texas who have successfully implemented strategies for increasing fundraising revenues. The review of the professional and academic literature contains an exploration of the research phenomenon as it relates to charitable giving and its relationship with the stakeholder theory. In the literature review, I discussed the 2000s climate within the nonprofit sector. Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory was the lens for this study, supporting the importance of stakeholders' relationships to an organization's financial performance, and included a discussion on two-way communication in building positive relationships with key stakeholders. Demonstrating value proposition to stakeholders could potentially lead to increased donations and improve the financial stability of the organization. The results of this study may provide business leaders with strategies to build relationships with key stakeholders to improve fundraising revenues, which could provide beneficial resources to local communities.

In Section 2, I include an exhaustive description of the project, including a reiteration of the purpose of the study and a comprehensive description of the research method and design, population and sampling, the role of the researcher, data collection instruments, and data collection techniques used in this study. Section 2 also includes a discussion regarding the ethical considerations surrounding the study, the participant selection process, and the measures taken to ensure the protection of participants' rights.

Section 3 includes detailed information on the research conducted for study completion. To perform detailed analysis for and about Organization ABC, I applied the 2019 Baldrige Excellence Framework and its Criteria for Performance Excellence. Using the Baldrige Excellence Framework, I explored Organization ABC's leadership, strategies, workforce, operations, and results to develop and present the findings and how Organization ABC can apply the results to their professional practice. Finally, I discussed fundraising strategies and several successful communication strategies, such as message framing and virtual technology, which NPOs can use to improve stakeholder relationships. As a scholar consultant in the DBA consulting capstone, my goal was to assist Organization ABC's leaders in exploring effective communications strategies that leaders of NPOs can use to increase fundraising revenues. Finally, Section 3 concludes with a project summary, contributions, and recommendations for future study.

Section 2: The Project

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore communication strategies NPO leaders use to increase fundraising revenues. The target population consisted of three leaders from one NPO in Texas who have successfully implemented strategies for increasing fundraising revenues. The implications for positive social change include the possibility of improving the engagement of potential donors and creating a value proposition, through increased fundraising revenues, to enhance NPOs' capacity to deliver meaningful services that benefit communities.

Role of the Researcher

In many qualitative case studies, the researcher is the primary instrument for gathering, exploring, synthesizing, and interpreting the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Levitt et al., 2018). The researcher is responsible for collecting data by asking pointed questions, listening effectively, and being flexible and adaptive as the interviews progress (Yin, 2018). In addition, the researcher should have a working knowledge of the issues explored and perform the research in an ethically acceptable manner (Yin, 2018). As the research instrument for this single case study, I asked questions respectfully and without bias and reported the findings accurately. I have almost 30 years of leadership experience but no experience working for an NPO. I had no connection to the participants in this study. My role as the unbiased researcher in this study was to gather and analyze data from participants from Organization ABC to learn what communication strategies they use to increase fundraising revenues.

Further, according to Walden University's (2019) *Consulting Capstone Manual*, scholar-consultants interview NPO leaders and collect data using the Baldrige Excellence Framework (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019) to determine business problems and answer research questions. I used the Baldrige Excellence Framework as a guide to explore and collect data to help my client organization improve performance, as consultants provide expert knowledge and recommendations to assist organizations in improving their processes and achieving sustainable results (Sahir & Brutus, 2018). Although there is a limit to my knowledge of NPOs, I have almost 30 years' experience in healthcare, and I have used the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019) to improve processes at the nursing home where I was employed. Using the framework, I was able to lead my team and improve clinical processes and employee engagement. We also decreased unnecessary expenditures, established a presence in the local community, and improved productivity. Considering my experience working with the Baldrige Excellence Framework, I was able to discern some of the business challenges my client organization faces in its relationship with stakeholders.

In my initial interactions with the client, I sought to establish a rapport built on mutual respect, trust, and authenticity, with the hope that the client would share the details needed to conduct this study. Functioning as a scholar-consultant, I conducted five virtual conversations with the founder to discern the business problem. Once I identified the problem, I explored the existing literature to achieve a deeper understanding of this issue. To better understand my client's business model and services offered, I also reviewed the organization's website, which provided insight into the organization's mission, vision, and core values. Understanding these core values also allowed me to build a better rapport with the participants.

Additionally, in conducting a research study, researchers must maintain ethical standards (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research [NCPHSBBR], 1979). Researchers have access to confidential information and must conduct themselves in an ethical manner concerning information shared (Nowell et al., 2017). The guidelines for ethical research, as outlined in the Belmont Report, emphasize (a) protection and privacy for the participants, (b) protection of the rights of the participants, and (c) informed consent (NCPHSBBR, 1979). The fair treatment of participants without prejudice is necessary, and participants have the right to terminate their participation in the study at any time (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). In my research, I followed the principles established in the Belmont Report, obtaining consent from the participants that they were willing to participate in the study as stated in the interview protocol (see Appendix A). In addition, I maintained participants' privacy. Prior to gathering data, the participants consented to participating in the study.

Doing no harm is another principle outlined in the Belmont Report (NCPHSBBR, 1979). While collecting data during interviews, I was sensitive to participants' moods and the potential stress from challenging questions. I considered that the questions concerned intimate details regarding the organization and might expose weaknesses that could make the participants uncomfortable. Researchers must be sensitive to the stress associated with the interview and be ready to terminate the interview at any point in time (Mohajan, 2018). I advised participants of their rights to end their participation at any time. Because the participants' privacy was paramount to ensuring they speak freely, I used pseudonyms—P1, P2, and P3—to keep identifying information confidential.

Researchers should also follow protocols that mitigate potential biases that could affect data collection and analysis (Fusch et al., 2018). In addition, threats to reliability and validity could occur at any phase in the research process (Yin, 2018). I conducted interviews in a manner that would mitigate any bias affecting the reliability and validity of the study. Participation error, participant bias, researcher error, and researcher bias are concerns that threaten the reliability of research (Stewart et al., 2017). I was careful not to introduce personal bias on the research topic, and I conducted the interviews at a time and location in which the participants felt relaxed and comfortable. To further reduce bias and substantiate validity, I used triangulation to ensure credibility and authenticity of the data collection and analysis (Stewart et al., 2017). In addition, I reviewed the gathered information with the participants to validate its accuracy.

In accordance with the guidelines established by seminal researchers, the Belmont Report, and the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB), I also used an interview protocol (see Appendix A) that provided ethical standards to reduce bias in conducting this research study. Researchers use an interview protocol to standardize the interview process, access necessary information, and simplify data collection (Hancock &

Algozzine, 2017). An interview protocol reduces the potential for researcher bias (Yin, 2018).

Participants

Researchers must ensure that the quality and quantity of interviews are sufficient to achieve accuracy and depth in a study and that participant selection and alignment to the research question are important in reaching accurate conclusions (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). Selecting participants and defining eligibility requirements that align with the research question are also essential. The participants in my study included a Texas NPO's CEO and two of its board members, leaders who had implemented successful communication strategies to increase their fundraising revenues. Participant inclusion in this study required that the participant was (a) actively involved in the organization, (b) a leader in the organization, and (c) had successfully implemented strategies that increased fundraising revenues.

Walden University faculty paired me with a client organization, and after receiving IRB approval, I contacted that organization's CEO via email and telephone to begin establishing rapport and determine what communications strategies would be most beneficial. The client–consultant relationship exposes the client's true concerns and makes clear how best to establish the working relationship (Block, 2011). I engaged in professional and personal dialogue to build trust and allow the client to divulge authentic and details about the organization. Additionally, qualitative researchers must embody ethical sensitivity in the development of relationships with participants through the respect and understanding of their viewpoints (Karagiozis, 2018). After multiple attempts to communicate by phone, the client agreed that we should communicate through email and Google Docs because they would yield the most productivity, given our busy schedules. A biweekly conversation by phone to discuss information shared via email, however, provided a greater understanding of the information exchanged. Though we communicated predominantly by email and sometimes by phone, we also met face-to-face at a neutral location that was both comfortable and private enough to facilitate the exchange. Our combination of emails, online sharing, phone calls, and face-to-face meetings allowed me to collect pertinent data that reflected the performance of the organization.

To adhere to the IRB requirements, I asked each participant to sign a consent form before their interview. To maintain client confidentiality, I used pseudonyms—P1, P2, and P3—for the participants. In collaboration with the client organization's leadership, I established a timeline to collect and interpret the data and offer recommendations that would improve the performance outcomes of the organization.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

To explore the communication strategies that leaders of NPOs use to improve fundraising revenues I used a qualitative research method. Researchers use qualitative methods to explore and gain insights into experiences surrounding a phenomenon (Denzin, 2017). More specifically, researchers use interviewing to gain an understanding of a phenomenon (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). I explored the experiences of the leaders of the client-organization predominantly through telephone interviews and email correspondence to understand the communication strategies they use to improve fundraising revenues.

In contrast to an exploration of participant experiences as in qualitative research, quantitative researchers establish connections through statistical analysis among independent and dependent variables (Yin, 2018). Quantitative research reveals patterns and disparities in relationships with numerical data, which qualitative researchers can further explore (Brooks et al., 2019). The quantitative method was not appropriate for this study because understanding how company leaders perceive communication strategies used to increase funding revenues did not necessitate examining numerical data and their relationships between variables.

Researchers use a mixed method approach to incorporate both the qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques (Levitt et al., 2018) and to gain a multifaceted understanding of a phenomenon (Alavi et al., 2018). Mixed methods research can require a significant amount of time and resources (Brooks et al., 2019). The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the communication strategies that leaders of an NPO in Texas use to improve fundraising revenues. The examination of variables was not necessary for answering this question, making the mixed method was not appropriate for this research.

Research Design

A research design is a detailed plan for addressing specific questions that will lead to a set of conclusions, ensuring that the data collection and analysis process leads to answering the research question (Yin, 2018). A single case study was appropriate for this study because it enabled a thorough exploration of the fundraising strategies used by the leadership of one organization. In the single case study design, researchers can explore a phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin, 2018). A single case study design was appropriate to explore the implementation of communication strategies to improve fundraising revenues.

Qualitative designs also include ethnographic, phenomenological, and narrative designs (Denzin, 2017; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The ethnographic design is the study of cultures and patterns of certain groups and how they interact with each other (Bass & Milosevic, 2018). The ethnographic design was not appropriate because I did not explore cultures or social groups and how they interact. The results of this study reflect the experience of leaders in the client organization, not groups or cultures.

In the phenomenological design, researchers explore and describe how participants experience a single phenomenon (Denzin, 2017; Smith, 2018). Researchers using the phenomenological approach to explore participants' personal feelings and experiences surrounding a phenomenon (Kim et al., 2018). The phenomenological design was not appropriate because the personal feelings of the leaders of the client organization were not pertinent to the communication strategies used to improve fundraising revenues.

Finally, researchers use the narrative design to capture the personal lives of individuals by narrating their experiences (Smith, 2018). Researchers obtain the experiences of their participants and then organize this information most often in a chronological manner (Brooks et al., 2019). The data acquired through narrative design reflects only the lived experiences of the participants without regard for context (Smith, 2018). The narrative design did not align with the purpose of this study because the personal life histories of the leaders were not significantly related to their use of communication strategies at work.

In addition to choosing the most appropriate design, reaching data saturation helps ensure the validity of the research study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Lowe et al., 2018). Researchers achieve data saturation when additional data collected no longer contributes to new information or new themes (Stewart et al., 2017). To reach study data saturation, I interviewed participants, allowing them to speak freely about their experiences in a semistructured interview process until the information was redundant and they revealed no new information. Asking follow-up questions gave further clarity and value to the participants' responses. Using an open-ended question format reduced researcher bias and encouraged dialogue with the participants.

To increase the credibility and validity of the study results, researchers use member checking. Researchers use member checking to reduce researcher bias and provide participants with the opportunity to review analyzed data to ensure accuracy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Member checking is essential to researchers in that it is a reflection that the information collected was correct and valid (Stewart et al., 2017). To ensure the accuracy of the information and prevent bias, I provided participants with a copy of the synthesized information gathered from the interview questions, which they reviewed and noted as accurate. The participants also participated in member checking by reaffirming that what they shared was what they intended to share throughout the interview process until they did not provide any new or changed information.

Population and Sampling

Sampling Method

For this qualitative single case study, the population consisted of NPO leaders who have successfully implemented strategies for increasing fundraising revenues. Researchers should use specific inclusion criteria to define the sample population that would be best for answering the research question (van Rijnsoever, 2017). Purposeful sampling enables researchers to study a specific population, which results in data targeted toward answering the research question (van Rijnsoever, 2017). Walden University administrators selected the client-organization and organization leaders and assigned the client-organization to scholar consultants in the DBA Consulting Capstone.

Walden administrators provided the contact information of the client-organization's CEO. After establishing rapport, the CEO provided contact information for two senior leaders with the knowledge and experience necessary to participate in this single case study. The two additional senior leaders successfully implemented strategies for increasing fundraising revenues. Both had an in-depth knowledge of the organization and over 20 years of experience working in similar organizations. Furthermore, the participant leaders from Organization ABC each had experience with managing fundraising strategies. It was not necessary to sample all the leaders in Organization ABC because not all leaders had experience with fundraising.

Sampling

The sample population for this single case study included the CEO and two senior leaders of Organization ABC located in Texas who used communication strategies to improve fundraising revenues. Choosing knowledgeable participants to provide relevant information on a research question is essential in purposeful sampling (Levitt et al., 2017). The sample size must be sufficient to obtain data saturation (Denzin, 2017). Selecting a sufficient sample size promotes a reliable and credible analysis (Varpio et al., 2017). A large, representative sample size was not necessary as the goal was to explore successfully implemented strategies for increasing fundraising revenues. I gathered data from only the CEO and two senior leaders because they had direct knowledge and experience relating to the research question. The CEO and two senior leaders constituted a sample large enough to reach data saturation.

Saturation

Qualitative researchers obtain data saturation when there is no new information gleaned from study participants. A researcher can conclude that they have reached data saturation when (a) replication of the study may occur, (b) no new information emerges, and (c) when additional coding fails to elicit new themes (Oswald, 2017). To achieve data saturation for this study, I determined saturation when no new themes arose from the data. Within qualitative research, data saturation occurs when the researcher obtains all relevant information necessary to answer the research questions (Lowe et al., 2018). One method to ensure data saturation is thematically coding the participant responses based on similar words and sentences (Belotto, 2018). Once the interview process was complete, I reviewed and thematically coded each participant's response. Saturation occurred when no new themes emerged from the coding process.

Interview Setting

Semistructured interviews and data gathering occurred by phone and with face-to-face video conferencing. Allowing the participants to choose a method for conducting the interview that was most convenient promoted participant comfort. Phone interviews allow participants to speak openly and honestly (Farooq & de Villiers, 2017). Video conferencing and phone interviews also provide a convenient way of communicating between different geographical locations (Farooq & de Villiers, 2017). Video conferencing allows participants the liberty to choose the interview time at their convenience and makes it easier for participants to end the interview (Weller, 2017). I conducted interviews in a private setting to maintain participant confidentiality and allowed participants to speak candidly and openly.

Ethical Research

It is essential when conducting research that researchers consider ethical practices to guarantee the protection of participants (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018), and ensure that the study is conducted confidentially with respect and kindness (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Doctoral students in Walden University's doctoral program must comply with ethical standards of research and obtain IRB approval before conducting research (Walden University, 2019). As a scholar-consultant in Walden's DBA consulting capstone, before engaging with the participants from Organization ABC, I obtained approval from Walden University's IRB, the approval number for this study was 11-15-18-0763331.

An essential component of addressing ethical concerns within research is the provision of pertinent study information to participants to ensure they have the information necessary to allow informed consent (NCPHSBBR, 1979). As such, I also provided the leaders of Organization ABC and all participants with the informed consent form via email. The form included the interview procedures, the voluntary nature of the study, the potential risks and benefits of participation in the study, information regarding privacy, and all pertinent contact information. As an added safeguard to ensure ethical practices, I also reviewed the form with participants before the interviews to ensure they understood they could withdraw from the study at any time. A key ethical component a researcher must consider is whether to provide incentives to participants in the study (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). Preventing bias and unfairness in research involves making participants aware that the researcher will not offer incentives (Annas, 2017). There were no incentives offered to participants, other than the potential for Organization ABC to gain communication strategies to increase fundraising revenues for their NPO.

Moreover, the study did not involve significant risks to the participants.

Ethical research involves protecting the privacy of research participants. Throughout the study, I referred to the client's organization as Organization ABC to protect the identities and privacy of the participants and the organization. Privacy measures also included storing information collected during the study using a file-naming system on the computer. During the study, as well as after, I stored the files in an encrypted folder named *client organization,* and the participants were identified by their assigned code names (i.e., Participant 1, Participant 2). In adherence to Walden University's research protocols, I plan to keep the collected information securely stored for 5 years following the completion of the doctoral study, at which time I will permanently destroy the information.

Data Collection Instruments

In this qualitative case study, I was the primary research instrument. The researcher serves as the primary data collection instrument in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). I collected data using semistructured telephone interviews and reviewed the organization's documents. The objective of conducting the semistructured interviews was to identify successfully implemented communication strategies for increasing fundraising revenues by two leaders at one organization. Prior preparation is paramount in the success of conducting interviews (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). Therefore, a significant part of the research process included becoming knowledgeable about the organization and acquiring an understanding of the business problem as it relates to NPOs.

In conducting the semistructured interviews, I followed an interview protocol (Appendix A) and used open-ended questions (Appendix B) that allowed the participants to respond freely. Researchers who use semistructured interviews, and review historical information about a phenomenon, can achieve data saturation by exploring all the data available (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). Using the Baldrige Excellence Framework (see Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019) as a guide, I gathered and analyzed the information obtained. I requested information from the clients from the following categories: (a) leadership, (b) strategy, (c) customers, (d) measurements and knowledge management, (e) workforce, (f) operations, and (g) results. The participants also answered six open-ended interview questions about communication strategies nonprofit leaders use to improve fundraising revenues (Appendix B). Interviews are extremely valuable in the collection of pertinent information about a phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The depth of information I obtained via the semistructured interviews assisted in achieving data saturation.

The different techniques for collecting data included the use of documentation concerning the organization. Per permission from the organization, I explored financial and strategic planning documents. Exploration of the documents made available by company leadership to assess their status and the tools they use is an integral part of understanding the organization in its entirety (Bastani et al., 2018). After receiving permission to research the organization and its participants, I used the Baldrige

Excellence Framework (see Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019) to interpret and share the collected data.

As the primary data collection instrument, it is essential to mitigate any biases that may decrease the validity and credibility of the study, and I endeavored to conduct the study as objectively as possible. For the results of a study to be useful and accurate, the researcher needs to take steps to ensure reliability and validity throughout the data collection process (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). To ensure reliability and validity within the data collection process, I had the participants review a summary of the information collected for accuracy in the process of member checking. Researchers use member checking to ensure the validity of a study (Denzin, 2017; Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). To ensure reliability and validity within the data collection process, and after conducting the interviews and transcribing the data, I had the participants review a one-paragraph summary of each of their responses to each interview question to ensure the authenticity and integrity of the information collected during the member checking process. The participants verified the accuracy of the transcription analysis summary in a conversation conducted over the phone; however, I sent the one-paragraph summaries to them via email prior to the phone conversation. Participant assessment of the accuracy of the data allows the opportunity to provide additional information or to identify any errors and misinterpretations that occurred through the interview process. According to FitzPatrick (2019), the member checking process is essential for validation.

Data Collection Techniques

After receiving IRB approval, I used semistructured interviews and reviewed the organization's documents to collect the data. Researchers use semistructured interviews and open-ended questions to allow the participants to describe their experiences around a phenomenon (Yin, 2018). Asking open-ended questions in a semistructured format promotes structure and focus during the interview (Bradshaw et al., 2017). One advantage of using semistructured interviews includes the flexibility needed for participants to express themselves freely (Yin, 2018). Therefore, the semistructured format was appropriate for this qualitative single case study.

For this qualitative single case study, I used several data collection techniques, which included face-to-face audio-recorded semistructured interviews, phone calls, a review of the organization's documents, a review of the literature, and emails. Face-to-face interviews are associated with the disadvantage that geographical limitations between the participant and the researcher may be present (Levitt et al., 2018). However, telephone interviews offer more geographical reach and convenience. In addition, Stewart et al. (2017) clarified that Internet methods are increasingly becoming pervasive as methods of communication and for research. Given the restraints of time and distance, I conducted the interviews face-to-face and via the phone. In the interviews, the participants responded to six open-ended questions (Appendix B), following the guidelines of the interview protocol (Appendix A). Researchers use of follow-up questions to illuminate and further define participant responses (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Therefore, as the interview progressed, participants responded to clarifying questions to provide more in-depth answers.

There are advantages and disadvantages to using document data collection from an organization as a data source. Exploring an organization's documents and data only offers a one-sided view of the organization's status (Yin, 2018). Because I explored financial and strategic-planning documents made available by company leadership to assess their position and the tools they use, I did not have an opportunity to explore the participants' thoughts or opinions on the document information. In addition, there are issues of security concerning the oversight, or lack of oversight, in obtaining documents, which may influence the type of data made available and the potential for ethical violations (Buckley & Doyle, 2017). Furthermore, analyzing multiple data sources can be time-consuming (Yin, 2018). For the advantages associated with document data collection from an organization as a data source, using this type of data can provide deeper insight into a phenomenon, providing physical evidence (Clark & Vealé, 2018). The greater the amount of available data to understand a topic, the richer the analysis can be. In either case, I aim to collect as much data as possible to enable methodological triangulation, which confirms credibility.

The use of interviews for data collection, although beneficial, is not without challenges. Researchers that conduct face-to-face interviews build rapport during the interview through active listening skills and personal engagement with the participant (Kaliber, 2019). However, time constraints and geographic location can be a disadvantage (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). I mitigated these constraints by offering to schedule the interviews at mutually agreeable time and location. Furthermore, I used video calls such as Skype, as an alternative. Weller (2017) explained that video conferences provide a suitable advantage where the participant can overcome geographic and time constraints. However, many people lack the technological skills and acumen needed to use video conferences (Weller, 2017). Furthermore, researchers are unable to determine the space the participant uses for the interview and therefore cannot assist in removing potential distractions (Gray et al., 2020). Although not optimal for observing participant body language, the use of video calls via Skype provided the opportunity for engaging with the participants despite challenges to time constraints and geographic location.

It was not necessary to conduct a pilot study before gathering the data. Researchers use pilot studies to identify strategies, rationales, challenges in the research process, and to establish the feasibility of the study (Brooks et al., 2019). In the context of qualitative research, pilot studies are useful when using structured interviews and questionnaires as they can provide clarification between the participant and researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The data for this study came from semistructured interviews and organization documents; therefore, a pilot study was unnecessary. Conducting semistructured interviews allowed for the exploration of experiences by the participants relevant to communication strategies used to improve fundraising revenues.

One strategy used to establish reliability and validity is member checking.

Member checking is the process by which researchers allow participants to review a data analysis summary to ensure the proper conveyance of their thoughts and experiences (Yin, 2018). Member checking promotes rapport and trust with participants to accurately confirm or refute collected and obtain more data (Candela, 2019). Allowing the participants to review the data collected ensures credibility and validity (Nowell et al., 2017; Stewart et al., 2017), and mitigates researcher bias (Abdalla et al., 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). An essential component of conducting research is accurately recording the participant's responses (Belotto, 2018). After audio recording each interview and completing the transcription process, the participants reviewed the interview transcript in a phone conversation. Additionally, I used member checking to ensure the accuracy of the interview data. After compiling the data collected and sending the participants a one-paragraph summary of each of their responses to each interview question, I asked the participants to review the initial analysis summary to ensure its authenticity through member checking. During the conversation, I confirmed that I understood the participants' intended meanings, asked if anything needed to be added or validated, and continued this process until no new data was disclosed; the latter process being a recommendation for member checking by Hancock and Algozzine (2017).

Data Organization Techniques

To keep track of all data collected, I used a file-naming system on my computer and stored files in an encrypted folder named *client organization.* Each participant received an identifier beginning with *participant* followed by a corresponding number (i.e., Participant 1, Participant 2, and on). Each file contains the transcribed interview, and the interview notes I took as the participants shared. Researchers should create an organized, easy, and efficient method of retrieving data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Though the folder is easily accessible, the encrypted status requires a password to access the material. All the data collected will remain stored for 5 years following the completion of the doctoral study, upon which time I will destroy the data.

The iPhone 8 plus was the primary device used to record both phone and face-to-face semistructured interviews. Also, to accommodating unforeseen challenges, I used the Evistr 16GB digital voice recorder as a secondary recording device during the face-to-face interviews. In addition to the Evistr voice recorder and the iPhone 8 plus, I used an app called "Tape a Call Pro" to record calls made by phone. NVivo is a type of data organizational software researchers use to organize and code data for analysis (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). I collected the information and transcribed the data using the NVivo software, as well as to organize, code, and create themes from the transcribed data. In interpreting and identifying themes, it is paramount to analyze data objectively and to seek patterns within the transcribed data (Oswald, 2017). In addition to using the NVivo software, I used the Zotero software to organize articles and information related to the research study.

Finally, I endeavored to remain objective by using notes I jotted down in a reflective journal throughout the interview process. Korstjens and Moser (2018) proposed that researchers could lessen researcher bias by using a reflective journal. Stewart et al.

(2017) also proposed that using a reflective journal to record observations in the form of taking notes is useful for later data analysis of the material. Therefore, I took notes by reflective journaling during the interview process to capture the participant's facial expressions and body language as an additional data collection source. After completing the interviews, I transcribed the handwritten journal notes and kept them on my personal computer in an encrypted folder. The data interpreted with the help of these three instruments allowed me the ability to conduct an effective analysis.

Data Analysis

Yin (2018) explained that there are four types of triangulation: (1) data triangulation, (2) investigator triangulation, (3) theory investigation, and (4) methodological triangulation. Methodological triangulation was the method used in this single case study. Morgan et al. (2017) explained that methodological triangulation involves analyzing data from multiple sources, such as semistructured interviews, organizational documents, and previous research. Using multiple sources ensures the validation of the data (Yin, 2018). To achieve methodological triangulation, I conducted a comparison of semistructured and informal interviews, a review of the organizational documents, and reflective journaling.

Organizing data is a challenging yet key component in the research process, which technology has made easier. Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software has become more prevalent and relatively simple to use in assisting researchers in organizing and analyzing data (Oswald, 2017). Qualitative researchers use NVivo software in the analysis and coding of data, and the identification of themes (Robins & Eisen, 2017). In this single case study, I used NVivo software to organize the data from semistructured interviews and to discover and differentiate themes within the data.

Yin's (2018) five-step process of thematic analysis includes (1) compile the data, (2) disassemble the data, (3) reassemble the data, (4) interpret the data, and (5) draw conclusions from the information. To identify themes related to the research question, I assembled all the data sources collected. Then, I disassembled the data into different categories, reassembled the data, and coded the data into specific themes. I analyzed the themes considering the research question and through the lens of the conceptual framework. Also, the emerging themes identified were correlated with a review of the academic literature to identify effective communication strategies that leaders of NPOs used to improve fundraising revenues.

Reliability and Validity

In determining whether a study is trustworthy, researchers evaluate the reliability and validity of the data (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). To establish the reliability of the study's findings, researchers must assess the integrity of the research regarding the application and the suitability of the method and the accuracy of the conclusion (Stewart et al., 2017). Reliability of the study includes consistency in the research method and process to obtain stable and consistent results (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Validity indicates that the research design and method represent an accurate reflection of the data (Nowell et al., 2017). The terms used in research to evaluate trustworthiness in qualitative research include dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability (Abdalla et al., 2018).

Reliability

Achieving reliability in this study involved a rigorous member checking process. Researchers must be mindful of the necessary rigor needed in the research process to ensure reliability (Cypress, 2017). In other words, the results attained in a study by a researcher must be flawless, and a true representation and reflection of the data (Spiers et al., 2018). Also, reliability in qualitative research promotes consistency and mitigates bias in the research data (Yin, 2018). Collecting data through organizational documents and interviews and comparing the findings from this study to the literature on the subject regarding the successful communication strategies used to improve fundraising revenues, ensured reliability. To help ensure the reliability of the data, I provided participants with transcripts of the interviews, allowing them to ensure the data obtained was an accurate reflection of their responses. Additionally, I employed member checking to ensure the interpretation of the data was accurate. Member checking is important for reliability and dependability as it allows participants to verify that their responses are correct, thereby preventing researcher bias from guiding the interpretation (Clark & Vealé, 2018). Member checking entailed summarizing the data shared by participants and giving the participants the summary to ensure what they shared was accurate. In addition, member checking took place throughout the interview process by consistently checking if the participants were sharing what they intended to share by frequently echoing back to them what I heard to ensure the dependability and reliability of the data gathered.

Validity

Ensuring validity in this study involved collecting data from multiple sources and reaching data saturation. Validity refers to the credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability of the data collected (Bansal et al., 2018). Researchers who collect data from multiple sources and mitigate researcher bias increase the validity of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). I obtained data from semistructured, face-to-face interviews, organization documents, member checking, and reflective journaling. Additionally, I ensured that I reached data saturation. According to Levitt et al. (2018), data saturation is essential in ensuring the reliability and validity of a research study. Credibility also contributes to the overall rigor and trustworthiness of a study.

Credibility

Ensuring credibility in this study involved member checking and methodological triangulation. Credibility refers to the trustworthiness of the data collected (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Researchers can ensure the credibility of the data by ensuring the authenticity of the data collected and that it is free from bias (Stewart et al., 2017). Researchers use member checking to strengthen the credibility of the study (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017; Naidu & Prose, 2018). Therefore, I used member checking to ensure that the information collected was an accurate reflection of the participant's experience and not the interpretation of the researcher. The use of member checking allows the participants the opportunity to ensure the researcher's interpretation of the data collected is an accurate reflection of their thoughts and experiences. I employed methodological triangulation to further ensure the credibility of the study. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) defined triangulation as the use of multiple sources and collections methods to establish the credibility of the data collected. Therefore, I compared the findings from semistructured, face-to-face interviews, and a review of the organization's profile to establish the credibility of the study's overall findings.

Transferability

Ensuring the transferability of this study's findings involved the inclusion of descriptive details about the specificities of the case under study. Transferability refers to the relevancy of the research findings in other studies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018**).** Yin (2018) explained that the results from case studies offer generalizations that would be beneficial in other or similar contexts**.** The provision of detailed descriptions regarding the population and procedures ensures the transferability of the research to future researchers (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). As such, I have provided detailed descriptions of the eligibility criteria essential for participation in the study, as well as the data collection methods used to conduct the study. Furthermore, I collected a thick description of this single case study to allow external readers to draw their own conclusion. The intent of this study was to explore successful communication strategies that NPO leaders use to improve fundraising revenues. The findings identified in this study could potentially be of use to others in a similar context.

Confirmability

Ensuring the confirmability of the study's findings involved member checking, reflective journaling, and methodological triangulation. To ensure that the study is free from researcher bias, qualitative researchers use a criterion called confirmability (Carminati, 2018). Confirmability refers to the establishment of accurate and consistent data to ensure its validity (Stewart et al., 2017). The process of confirmability ensures that the data collected is a true reflection of the participants' experiences and not the researcher's (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). Reaching data saturation is another crucial component of establishing trustworthiness in a study.

Data Saturation

To reach data saturation in this study I asked the same set of questions to each participant and used methodological triangulation. Researchers use data saturation to ensure they have gathered enough information to guarantee the validity of their research (Levitt et al., 2018). The achievement of data saturation provides the researcher with enough information to accurately draw conclusions from the data (Lowe et al., 2018). Data saturation takes place when no new information or themes emerge from interviewing the participants of a study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). One way to achieve data saturation is for the researcher to ask each participant the same interview questions (Levitt et al., 2018). I asked each participant the same set of questions to reach data saturation. Methodological triangulation is another approach to reaching data saturation. Comparing and contrasting the findings from interviews, company documents, and the existing literature contributed to reaching data saturation in this study.

Transition and Summary

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore communication strategies NPO leaders use to increase fundraising revenues. The target population included two leaders from one NPO in Texas who have successfully implemented strategies for increasing fundraising revenues. Section 2 of this study included a comprehensive explanation of the research methodology. I functioned as the data collection instrument for this single case study, described my role as the researcher, gathered data through semistructured interviews, obtained organizational data, and described the purposeful sampling method used to select the three seniors of the organization in Texas to participate in the study. The sample size was sufficient to gather rich information and achieve data saturation. To ensure ethical conduction of the research, I followed the guidelines discussed in *The Belmont Report* (NCPHSBBR, 1979). I incorporated member checking and triangulation to ensure the reliability and validity of the study. Then, used NVivo 12 software to organize and code the data for thematic analysis.

In Section 3, I provide the findings through use of the 2019 Baldrige Excellence Framework and interview questions for a comprehensive description of Organization ABC, allowing for the assessment of the organization's strengths and weaknesses. The Baldrige criteria and the 2019 Baldrige Excellence Framework included the categories: leadership; strategy; customers; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management;

workforce; operations; and results. Finally, Section 3 concludes with an executive summary of the findings, application to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for future research and for the client, and my personal reflections.

Section 3: Organizational Profile

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the outreach strategies that a successful NPO uses to expand its revenue streams and donor bases. The research question that guided this study was "What communication strategies do NPO leaders use to improve fundraising revenues?" The focus of this study was Organization ABC (a pseudonym), a 501(c)(3) NPO located in Texas, New York, Connecticut, and Dominica that provides academic resources to over 12,000 students and teachers. Materials collected for data analysis included semistructured interviews with three organizational leaders, a review of internal documents, the organization's website, and other public documentation. I used methodological triangulation, thematic analysis, and member checking to categorize and interpret this data.

With the aid of NVivo 12 for compilation and coding purposes, three relevant themes were identified: (a) using their positive workforce environment to improve fundraising, (b) the need for improved strategic communication, and (c) greater fundraising and marketing strategies. It was determined that Organization ABC's leadership faced significant gaps in communication, goal-related alignment, and strategic implementation, particularly as it applied to enacting an effective marketing strategy. However, Organization ABC's highly autonomous and motivated volunteer base was a significant asset to the organization. These findings were supported by the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program's (2019) framework, Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory, and other existing literature on NPO management.

Key Factors Worksheet

Organizational Description

The purpose of Organization ABC is to connect with community leaders and partners to train and mentor middle school, high school, and college-age students. These student ambassadors then assist in providing academic help, books, and school supplies to students in need. Students who participate in Organization ABC's programs discover their leadership potential through mentoring less fortunate students in reading and writing. Every year Organization ABC's efforts affect over 12,000 students in three states (Texas, New York, and Connecticut) and the country of Dominica. Organization ABC's goal is to help teachers motivate their students to achieve personal and academic success. The primary focus of Organization ABC is to assist low-income schools by providing books, supplies, and supplementary academic assistance.

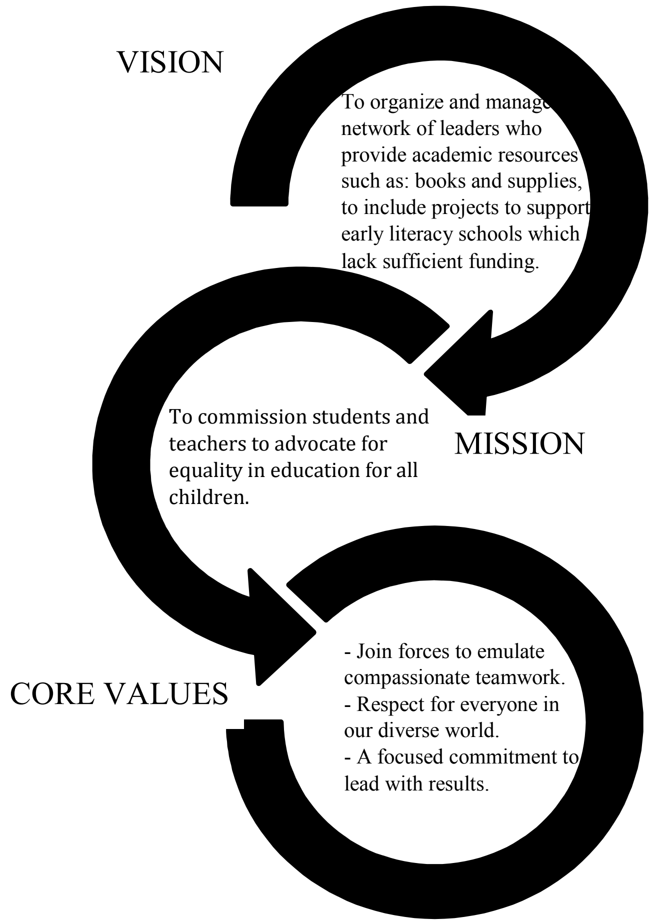
Organizational Environment

Product Offerings. Organization ABC uses three programs to accomplish their mission. Through the backpack program, the organization provides individual students, classrooms, and entire schools with necessary resources ranging from eating utensils to computers. Organization ABC also has a book share program designed to inspire students to foster a love of learning, reading, and creativity. The purpose of the book share program is to encourage literacy in Title I students and schools across Texas. Organization ABC provides adult literacy ambassadors with materials that encourage students to lead and participate in the book share program. Finally, Organization ABC has a student ambassador program, to which student volunteers from Grade 8 to college contribute. The mission of the student ambassador program is to increase awareness about students in the local community who are in need and provide the necessary tools to help foster their academic success.

Mission, Vision, and Values. The mission of Organization ABC is to provide books, school supplies, and mentorship opportunities to Title I students and schools. Organization ABC's vision involves encouraging students and teachers to advocate for educational equality. Organization ABC's founder and board members believe that every student deserves to have access to resources that allow them to strengthen their scholastic skills, further their academic interests, and become community leaders. Figure 1 illustrates the organization's mission, vision, and core values.

Figure 1

Mission, Vision, and Core Values



Workforce Profile. Organization ABC has an all-volunteer workforce governed by a board of directors (BOD) and led by the board chair (see Table 1). The leadership and board consist of 14 members with varying experience in accounting, human resources, marketing, technology, sales, literacy, education, corporate leadership, and public leadership. The teacher and student ambassadors are the volunteers who implement the organization's goals. Teacher and student ambassador recruitment occurs through an application process. Potential candidates complete an application, and the founder selects candidates to interview. Hired candidates then complete an onboarding process. The only required training consists of onboarding to orient volunteers to bylaws, meetings, the structure of the organization, and goal setting.

In addition to onboarding, ambassadors attend training throughout the school year to ensure competency in implementing the organization's educational services. Training subjects include marketing, operating social media platforms, fundraising event planning, and volunteer engagement. Board members receive a job description and must sign an agreement to fulfill their obligations. The ambassadors' ages range from 11 to 23, and board members' ages range from 30 to 50. This approach to workforce has positive implications for process integration, per the Baldrige Excellence Framework (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). By including students, professionals, and teachers from many different age groups, personal backgrounds, and professional backgrounds, Organization ABC goals include universal teamwork and success, consistent with its equity-focused organizational aims.

Table 1

Job Description

Position	Areas of Responsibility
Board chair	● Steering the development and governance. ● Responsible for grant writing and fundraising. ● Support the board of directors to fulfill their goals and duties. ● Board chair serves a 2-year term that can be renewed 2-3 times based on the nomination committee.
CEO/founder	● Manages the core volunteers, which consist of the student and teacher ambassadors. ● Manages the marketing team. ● Reports to the board chair.
Program chair	● Oversees measurement of social impact. ● Oversees program goals and implementation. ● Conducts fundraising for programs and projects in collaboration with the development committee.
Finance chair	● Oversees financial health of organization, to include bookkeeping, monthly and quarterly reports. ● Works with the finance director to ensure proper financial reporting. ● Develop and implement financial policies and procedures.
Finance director	● Certified public accountant responsible for all the bookkeeping and contracted voluntarily for 4 years.
Marketing	● Coordinates social content quarterly to ensure promotion of brand, events, and awareness.
Secretary	● Responsible for administrative support for board meetings and is a member of the grants committee.
Ambassador coordinator	● Lead, collaborate, mentor, and coordinate the ambassador program.
Student ambassador	● Primary targets of the ambassador program to be mentored and educated as future leaders.
Teacher ambassador	● Assist ambassador coordinators with the activities in the school and communities.

Assets. Organization ABC's major assets include intellectual property and marketing materials (i.e., banners) for events. The intellectual property includes expertise in areas of literacy and online design for the organization's leadership program. Additionally, some of the assets include key financial and communications-based partnerships with Microsoft, The Pollination Project, The Independent Educational Consultants Association, First Book, and Volunteer NY.

Regulatory Requirements. Licensed in Texas, Organization ABC is a tax-exempt NPO under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. According to IRS requirements, Organization ABC must file an IRS Form 990 to disclose financial performance (IRS, 2019). Organization ABC governance occurs through application of bylaws and BOD oversight. The organization retains a certified public accountant who reviews and approves all reimbursements submitted to the executive team. The organization's certified public accountant reconciles their books and accounting procedures, which the board reviews monthly. Teacher and student ambassadors must abide by the policies and regulations of the schools in which they serve and must provide the organization with a background check.

Organizational Relationships

Organizational Structure. The BOD governs the operations of Organization ABC, which include program goals, fiduciary responsibilities, and the fulfillment of the mission and vision. The board chair leads the BOD, which consists of a CEO who is also the founder, a program chair, a finance director, a finance chair, and a secretary (see

Figure 2). The CEO has four direct reports consisting of marketing team members and ambassador coordinators. The ambassador coordinators have two direct reports consisting of student ambassadors. The organization's workforce is entirely volunteer and currently has no paid employees, and except for mileage reimbursement for travel, volunteers receive no financial incentives. Organization ABC has 24 volunteers who serve an average term of 2.5 years. In 2018, 24 volunteers assisted 8,000 students by providing academic supplies and books.

Teacher and school ambassadors execute the organization's goals. These ambassadors develop and implement projects based on service projects throughout the year. There is an executive student board responsible for the operations of student projects, mentorship directives, and leadership conferences. There is also a storyteller student board who is responsible for social media and collaboration with the graphics team.

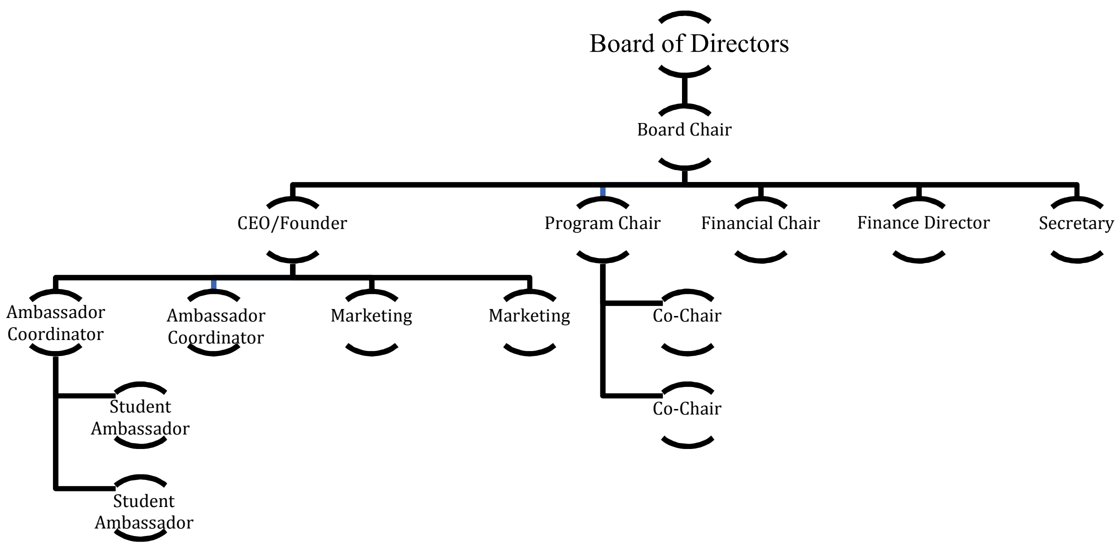
Organization ABC uses a report structure to disseminate information. However, I obtained limited information regarding this structure as the organization is presently in the process of restructuring the reporting system structure. What will remain consistent is the organization's reporting relationship, which begins with the board chair, moves to the BOD, then the executive director who communicates with the teacher and student ambassadors.

When evaluating these organizational processes with the approach, deployment, learning, and integration (ADLI) process scoring tool from the Baldrige Excellence

Framework (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019), the approach of this organizational structure is sensical, repeatable, and functions largely without issues at lower organizational levels. The reworking of the reporting system structure demonstrates an ongoing learning process, in which Organization ABC is attempting to refine its approach to efficient functioning (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). This demonstrates ongoing organizational growth on the part of Organization ABC.

Figure 2

Leadership Organization Chart



Customers and Stakeholders. The customers and stakeholders of Organization ABC are the students, teachers, parents, contributors, and local community partners. The customers and stakeholders are those who benefit from the provision of educational resources provided by organization ABC. The middle school, high school, and college students who participate in Organization ABC's ambassador program are the primary stakeholders. The ambassadors benefit through mentorship and support in becoming future leaders. The Title I students and teachers served by Organization ABC act as its customers, as they receive its resources. Teachers and students receive necessary equipment such as books, computers, and mentorship to better assist the students' academic performance. Teachers who also become teacher ambassadors facilitate the coordination of activities within the school and community.

Community partners assist the ambassadors through the provision of various resources necessary to execute Organization ABC's programs. These community partners are often businesses, teachers, community leaders, and school administrators. Community partners provide materials for Organization ABC's projects, brand awareness, and marketing. Community partners also connect ambassadors with additional contacts and assist with their fundraising programs. By actively recruiting the efforts of many different community resources and figures in the pursuit of a common cause, Organization ABC demonstrates a harmonized set of actions across work processes. Use of resources contributes to a positive organizational identity. This demonstrates a positive integrative practice as outlined by the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019).

Suppliers and Partners. Organization ABC partners with different local and national organizations to provide the funding for the projects necessary to accomplish their mission. Key partners include the Independent Educational Consultants Association foundation, The Pollination Project, Youth Services of America, and First Book. Student and teacher ambassadors are also key partners, as they execute the projects in their communities. Organization ABC's senior management is seeking coordination with suppliers of educational goods to donate products and equipment; however, at present the organization leaders use the funding from the various partners to purchase the supplies for their missions. Such supplies include books, computers, backpacks, and those needed for extra-curricular activities.

Organizational Situation

The following subsection contains a review of Organization ABC's organizational situation including its competitive environment, strategic context, and the performance improvement system the organization uses to remain competitive.

Competitive Environment

Competitive Position. According to the Baldrige Excellence Framework (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019), NPOs often compete with other organizations with similar services. This is particularly true of organizations offering similar services within the same community. To gain competitive advantage, nonprofit leaders must understand how their competitive environment affects communicating with stakeholders, particularly as it pertains to value proposition (Barney, 1991). Through an understanding of its competitive environment, Organization ABC may improve its ability to gain funding, improve its sustainability, and improve its competitive position within the communities it serves. Based on communications regarding competing organizations, Organization ABC's awareness of its competition appears limited. Per the Baldrige Excellence Framework (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019), a limited awareness of competition demonstrates an opportunity to improve any weaknesses in their organizational approach.

Competitiveness Changes. Organization ABC has established several key changes to improve its service availability and efficacy within the communities it serves. These changes could also support improved competitiveness. It has recently expanded its social media presence, creating profiles on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram. The social media infrastructure Organization ABC uses serves as a means through which they can disseminate short narratives about the organization. Organization ABC has short written and video testimonials on Facebook and Instagram that share the stories of the customers (students and teachers) who have benefited from the organization's services. The senior leaders use LinkedIn to inform potential stakeholders, volunteers, and donors of the organization's history and what it is currently working to achieve. Social media platforms serve as a great medium to strategically communicate to both current and potential stakeholders. The ADLI process development tool would suggest that although Organization ABC is actively refining its approach to competitiveness and promotion by building new social media outreach tools, the extent to which these initiatives will be repeated is unclear (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019).

Comparative Data. According to Independent Sector (2020), there are approximately 11,653 NPOs that provide literacy programs in the state of Texas. In San Antonio alone there are 708 literacy programs. According to the Baldrige Excellence Framework (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019), information obtained from comparative data allows organizations to compare their performances with similar organizations, which could help improve operational efficiency. Currently, the senior leaders of Organization ABC are not gathering and analyzing comparative data in the evaluation of their organization, which represents an opportunity for improvement. Organization ABC could collect information about the many literacy programs available within the communities they serve. Organization ABC could also collect benchmarks, performance data, and operational budget data on competitive literacy nonprofits in the areas they serve. The comparative data collected could help Organization ABC compare strategies related to communication with stakeholders to improve fundraising techniques. The Baldrige Performance Excellence Program's (2019) ADLI process scoring criteria suggests that this lack of data analysis and collection shows significant oversight in their approach. Without creating repeatable, data-driven methods of analyzing competitive organizations' behaviors, Organization ABC will not be able to adequately respond to market needs or shareholder expectations.

Strategic Context

Understanding the strategic context within an organization is critical to organizational success. Although Organization ABC has not yet formally tracked their strategic challenges and advantages, there are several challenges the organization has faced, which have become clear during the research process. For example, the organization has had strategic challenges with the organizational structure of the senior leadership and competition between various literacy nonprofits make it challenging for the organization to obtain adequate funding. Additionally, the organization's name did not align well with the mission and vision of the organization. After discussing the matter with the founder, he made the decision to change the name to better align with the organization's mission regarding the commission of students and teachers to advocate for equality in education.

The inability of the organization to formally communicate and evaluate its own strategic advantages and challenges continues to present an opportunity for improvement. Organization ABC could conduct a strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis to identify the organization's strategic advantages and challenges. The information taken from the SWOT analysis could allow the organization to focus on and enhance their strengths and identify further opportunities for success. The SWOT could also serve as an opportunity to identify areas of weakness or to identify any threats that may serve to cause organizational instability. Using the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program's (2019) ADLI process scoring criteria demonstrates inefficiencies in communication, which hinder an organization's ability to create a strategic response. Communication deficiencies express a significant problem with process approach and process deployment. For Organization ABC to address this problem, significant learning must take place.

Performance Improvement System

According to the Baldrige Excellence Framework (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019), organizations should tailor their performance improvement systems to align with their goals. Interview responses from board members suggest that although conversations regarding the efficacy of certain organizational practices—such as outreach, pedagogical methodology, and board structure—are taking place, a formal improvement system does not exist. Per the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program's (2019) ADLI process evaluation criteria, this lack of formal improvement processes demonstrates problems with the organizational approach, which will hinder Organization ABC's ability to learn from its mistakes and reach goals. Although holistic, group-mediated improvement-related discussions are important, the incorporation of a formal performance improvement system would qualify as an opportunity for improvement (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). Through incorporating a formal performance improvement system, the organization leaders could evaluate the efficacy of different revenue streams in a more intentional, deliberate manner, allowing for a better quantitative analysis of different types of organizational outreach.

Leadership Triad: Leadership, Strategy, and Customers

The following section illuminates the function of the leadership triad. Leadership is an integral and fundamental component in achieving performance excellence within an organization (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). One purpose of the Baldrige Excellence Framework (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019) is to align the mission and vision of the organization with the stakeholders through effective leadership. The alignment of leadership and customers is also the focal point of the stakeholder theory developed by Freeman (Freeman, 1984). Freeman (2004) explained that an organizational leaders' primary focus should be to stakeholders. It is similarly imperative that leaders engage in strategies focused on meeting the needs of the customer to build a culture of performance excellence and achieve positive results (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). Therefore, the decisions and strategies implemented within Organization ABC should reflect the needs and expectations of its stakeholders and customers.

Leadership

Senior Leadership

Since the establishment of Organization ABC in 2011, the founder and the leadership board have provided strategic direction for the organization. Currently, the organization is in the process of restructuring their leadership. Specifically, they are seeking board collaborators with greater connections to local business communities and with specialized knowledge relevant to different facets of nonprofit administration. The purpose behind the restructuring is to build more cohesive methods of fundraising, a clearer chain of command within the leadership board, and a better sense of Title I schools' academic needs.

The senior leadership consists of five members, who oversee the daily operations of the organization: the board chair, the founder, the financial chair, the finance director, and the secretary. Currently, the board chair reports to the full board and partners work directly with the founder and the founder dictates financial allocations within the organization. Together, the founder and the board chair oversee the organization's operations. Figure 3 illustrates the senior leadership's reporting structure. The core leaders are the two student ambassador coordinators and the two teacher ambassador coordinators. Figure 4 illustrates the reporting structure for the core leaders.

Figure 3

Senior Leadership Reporting Structure

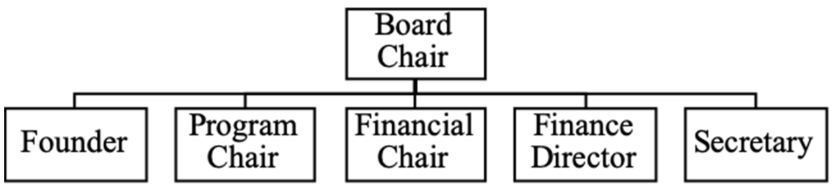
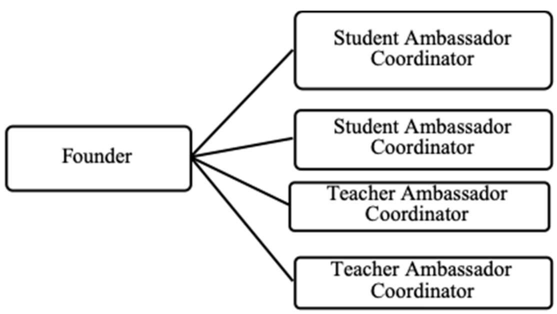


Figure 4

Organization ABC Core Leadership



Setting Vision and Values. Organization ABC's vision is to provide more equitable public education resources for students in Title I schools. The organization's values include equality, justice, advocacy, and community building. Organization ABC demonstrates its vision and values through mentorship and training. Communicating vision and values begins during the recruitment process. Through the application and interview process, organization leaders introduce prospective mentors to the organization's mission, vision, goals, and values. Throughout the school year, the board members, teachers, and students work towards the realization of this vision by establishing partnerships, adopting Title I classrooms or schools, and empowering volunteers in support of education equity and literacy for all students. The founder communicates and reinforces his vision and values for the organization through communication with board members, partners, and the stakeholders who execute the vision at periodical meetings (see Table 2).

Table 2

Scheduled Meetings

Position	Scheduled meetings frequency	Items discussed
Board members	Quarterly	goals, fundraising, program updates, financials, old and new business.
Core leadership	Monthly	marketing, social media, program planning and implementation
Volunteers	Monthly and as needed	program planning and implementation

The senior leadership of Organization ABC is in the early phase of implementing systematic approaches that will create a focus on action. Senior leaders focus on action through innovation, strategic risks, and improvements related to processes that help achieve their strategic objectives (see Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). To reach maturity organizations must embed repeatable processes, which include a method for evaluation and improvement (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). Additionally, action-focused organizations ensure that applicable parts of the organization integrate the processes and create a focus on action, giving Organization

ABC an opportunity to improve the organization's systems and processes. Per the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program's (2019) ADLI process evaluation criteria, this demonstrates a meaningful attempt at organizational learning and process improvement.

Promoting Legal and Ethical Behavior. Organization ABC does not have a formal process for ensuring and promoting legal and ethical behavior, which presents an opportunity for improvement. Leaders must ensure that they obtain desired results through ethical action (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). Therefore, Organization ABC could establish a code of conduct that describes the organization's values and acceptable behavior. Organization ABC could also publish employee and volunteer handbooks that detail policies on organizational ethics, including sexual harassment, handling confidential information, and appropriately collecting fundraising revenues. Because Organization ABC coordinates with several volunteers, the development of a process of accountability related to productivity could prove beneficial. As policies and standards of behavior vary slightly between different school districts and schools, it is important to ensure that employees and volunteers in each scholastic context have a set of school policy texts to review. According to the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program's (2019) ADLI process scoring tool, to lack a consistent standard of behavior and personal ethics advanced by Organization ABC is both inconsistent with the messaging of the organization's brand and potentially disastrous for the organization's reputation. This demonstrates a significant organizational oversight.

Communication. The senior leaders of Organization ABC use a collaborative approach to communication. At the beginning of the school year, teachers and students collaborate using virtual meetings. The teachers invite students to the virtual meetings to hear their ideas and provide support and guidance to help the students successfully implement their projects. Collaboration occurs through a Facebook community group as well as through virtual meetings. One senior leader in Organization ABC mentioned that adding collaborative virtual meetings is a new approach deployed throughout the organization, which seeks to create a more pedagogically centered organizational dialogue.

By deploying this collaborative communication approach, leaders in Organization ABC operate within the tenets of stakeholder theory. Stakeholder theory tenets include the principle that leaders should make decisions and implement processes supportive of key stakeholders (Freeman, 1984), which for Organization ABC includes both the teachers and the students. Implementing the collaborative communication approach also aligns with Baldrige Excellence Framework criteria (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019), which includes questions about how senior leaders encourage two-way communication. In high performing organizations, senior leaders encourage two-way communication and use the information received to make key decisions and determine necessary organizational changes (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). If the virtual meetings and ongoing collaboration between teachers and students is successful, Organization ABC leaders will have implemented a strong process that could lead to high performance and mission attainment.

Senior leaders in Organization ABC provided information about the internal stakeholder communication approach, but when asked about the approach to their external communication methods, leaders did not provide evidence of a common strategic approach. Mature high-performing organizations must have processes to communicate with external stakeholders (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). Additionally, mature organizations should be able to demonstrate a customer and business focus. External communication with key stakeholders in Organization ABC is an area deemed as an opportunity for improvement. The Baldrige Performance Excellence Program's (2019) ADLI process evaluation guidelines suggest that Organization ABC has an efficacious and repeatable approach to communication at the volunteer level, but an highly disorganized approach to communication at the managerial level. Ongoing BOD restructuring demonstrates that Organization ABC is going through a learning process to address this problem.

Creating an Environment for Success. To create an environment for success, senior leaders seek competent, communicative board members and volunteers. Organization desires volunteers committed to Organization ABC's cause, with strong academic capabilities, an abiding belief in Organization ABC's social commitments, and a willingness to undergo training to improve their understanding of pedagogy, fundraising, and community building. Organization ABC's board members have worked collaboratively on building effective lines of inter-organizational communication, creating channels for private sector collaboration, and on developing more effective managerial structures. The multitiered support systems used by Organization ABC, although under-systemized at points, have both promoted a supportive organizational culture and allowed for the expansion of the organization's stakeholder/customer base. The common approach to organizational goals and needs demonstrates a well-integrated volunteer selection process, per the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program's (2019) ADLI process evaluation guidelines.

Creating a Focus on Action. Organization ABC's leadership is in the early phases of executing systematic approaches designed to generate a focus on action. Senior leaders focus on action through innovation, strategic risks, and improvements associated with processes that help achieve strategic objectives (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). One of the most recent approaches taken by senior leaders at Organization ABC is the implementation of social media outreach designed to communicate with the volunteers and other organizational stakeholders. The purpose behind the organization's use of social media sites is to help facilitate communication and drive their actions toward mission attainment. In addition, the founders reorganized the BOD and appointed a board chair charged with overseeing the BOD actions and increasing accountability. Last, the organization rebranded its name to better align with its overarching mission. These actions demonstrate the founder's commitment to process improvement and his desire to reach organizational maturity.

To reach maturity organizations must embed repeatable processes that include a method for evaluation and improvement (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). Additionally, action-focused organizations ensure that applicable parts of the organization integrate processes and create a focus on action. Although Organization ABC's founder is passionate about the organization's mission and demonstrates a willingness to improve the organization's systems and processes, there are improvement opportunities. Improvement opportunities include creating a virtual dashboard that would facilitate communication between all levels of the organization. For example, the organization could create a questionnaire for volunteers, customers, and stakeholders that could provide insight on challenges that volunteers face in the field (Baldassarre et al., 2017). In addition, the feedback received from questionnaires could improve business decisions and ultimately, sustainability.

Governance and Societal Responsibilities

Discussed in the following subsections are a review of Organization ABC leaders' governance system, legal and ethical behaviors, and social responsibility to the community. According to the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019), governance is as an organization's ability to ensure transparency and accountability to the organization and all stakeholders. Organization ABC is governed by a board run by volunteers and is discussed in detain below.

Governance System. The organization's governance system is currently composed of a six-member BOD, composed of individuals with varying backgrounds including accounting, C-suite corporate execution, fundraising, and education. All members of the BOD are volunteers and are responsible for the operation of the organization. Board members meet quarterly and annually, as well as communicating frequently via email. All major decisions—including new programs and major expenditures—are presented to the board for approval. Board members meet annually to update the strategic plan and ensure its alignment with the organization's mission and vision. The board and the founder ensure accountability through their newly developed governing policy manual.

The governing policy manual, developed by the BOD guides the action of the BOD, senior leaders, volunteers, and other representatives of Organization ABC. The various policies outline the founder and the BOD's obligation and responsibility to ensure accountability across all facets of the organization. Explicit within the governing policy manual is the strategic plan. Every 3 to 5 years the BOD develops a long-term plan for the organization to ensure its progressive growth and sustainability. The BOD determines whether the existing services and programs align with the mission.

Organization ABC values transparency from its board members. The fiscal year of the organization runs from July 1st to June 30th. All purchases that exceed $1000 require approval from the finance director. The founder, finance director, board chair, and the accountant are the only personnel authorized to sign checks from the organization's bank. As an additional measure, all checks must be signed by two of the authorized personnel. Petty cash of no more than $100 may be kept by the founder in a locked cash box. However, any cash received greater than $100 must be deposited within 3 business days. Organization members must keep all receipts and submit them to the accountant monthly. Finally, the board members may initiate an audit at their discretion.

Strategy

Strategy Development

Organization ABC's strategic approach appears to be in a nascent stage of development. There are several strategic objectives the CEO has outlined. These include (a) strengthening youth leadership within Organization ABC, (b) increasing private sector partnerships to expand capacity for reach, (c) adopting data-driven approaches to both pedagogical practices and intraorganizational communication, and (d) expanding local and national brand awareness. According to Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019) standards, Organization ABC's limited ability to standardize, replicate, and measure the results of its own managerial strategies suggests serious strategic deficits.

Senior leaders of Organization ABC discuss strategic planning annually at a retreat; the CEO, BOD, funders, and several ambassadors work to create a comprehensive set of strategies designed to holistically address the challenges different parts of the organization face. The efficacy of this process appears to be at an impasse for several reasons. First, although the CEO does have actionable ideas, they do not represent a meaningful break with the practices Organization ABC is already enacting, nor do they appear ordered in such a way that would provide additional process structure to the present approach Organization ABC has to strategy. Additionally, board members are ostensibly supposed to approve and act on new strategic approaches, but the challenges with intra-board communication seem to significantly hinder Organization ABC's strategic development and strategic enactment. Finally, although this retreat provides a forum in which to discuss the ambassadors' problems, it does provide a means for the organization's main point of contact with its targeted population to have its organizational concerns addressed and the ambassadors' practices appear to be largely self-directed and self-designed with little to no standardization.

Per the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program's (2019) ADLI process evaluation criteria, limited standardization is a significant hindrance to the success of an organization, as it keeps the organization's leadership from being able to easily analyze the efficacy of the system's individual parts. For this strategic planning to be more efficient, the CEO and BOD would have to create a standardized infrastructure, and data-driven process. Organization ABC's inability to formally collect, organize, or interpret data relevant to strategic development is a hindrance to its operating functionality. Although the CEO has discussed incorporating qualitative and quantitative data relating to Title I students' reading progress before and after ambassadors' interventions, this data collection has not yet occurred.

For the purposes of this study, the CEO performed a SWOT analysis of the Organization ABC (see Figure 5). The results of the SWOT analysis indicate an essential strategic tension within the organization: although volunteer help is enthusiastic, efficacious, and free, there are inefficiencies within higher levels of Organization ABC. Significant communication gaps, murky financial management, and unclear organizational structure are all major contributors to what appears to be a pervasive instability among the BOD.

Strategy Implementation

Effective strategy implementation requires cooperation from different managerial entities to develop strategies to meet organizational goals. The implementation of Organization ABC's strategic plan is highly fragmented. While disarray at the higher levels of the organization significantly limits large-scale strategic implementation, the lower levels of the organization—the main point of contact with the communities Organization ABC seeks to assist—are self-sufficient, which appears to allow for ongoing organizational growth.

In the interest of empowering teacher ambassadors, student ambassadors, and school administrators to tailor instruction to students, Organization ABC does not give instructors any sort of strict curriculum which students must follow and does not give instructors explicit proficiency benchmarks to meet. This allows ambassadors to work with members of the school community to design their own lessons. Although this may not be an ideal situation for the organization, it does allow the ambassadors to display their passion for teaching and empowers young ambassadors to take leadership roles, in accordance with the CEO's first strategic objective.

Figure 5

CEO's SWOT Analysis of Organization ABC

Strengths	Weaknesses
1. The people within our organization are passionate about helping our targeted audience. 2. Active members who support the growth and operations of the organization 3. Variety of skills and talents from team members 4. Community Partners 5. Global and local model; students can impact students' lives locally and globally. 6. Innovative 7. Compassionate team: people want us to be a part of their work because we bring high energy to events. 8. Having a program that provides students with the opportunity to become leaders. 9. Everyone is willing to lend a hand if other people need assistance with their own tasks	1. Clear Communication - this is the number one key in order for any organization to be successful. 2. Members clearly communicating their projects, priorities, etc., effectively. 3. Fundraising: we need to have a cohesive fundraising plan and strategy 4. Documentation of roles and responsibilities 5. We have a strong volunteer base and inspiring leadership, but we lack someone who can effectively budget operational funds to maximize our impact on the community. 6. Our mission statement is broad. We could be better served if we had a concise organizational goal. 7. Committing to an effective organization process that can be used by myself and others. 8. We need to set up foundational processes that can be easily passed on in the future when bringing on new leadership members.
Opportunities 1. Partnership with Microsoft 2. Funding opportunities with The Pollination Project 3. Grants that are focused on youth leadership, literacy, and education. 4. Sponsorships 5. Monthly, quarterly, and annual donors 6. Planning marketing that gets other communities involved and having them host events on their own	**Threats** 1. Different visions for organization 2. Lack of understanding of core values. 3. Negativity 4. Lack of grant writing 5. Lack of ownership 6. Funding 7. GMH member burnout 8. Lack of communication 9. Lack of professional development 10. Lack of a clear understanding of the vision of the organization 11. Don't have monthly, quarterly, and annual budget reports sent out. 12. Planning things abruptly and making changes last minute 13. Doing the tasks of other leadership members or assigning a task to someone that is the responsibility of another leader without their knowledge

Although Organization ABC is working toward certain elements of the CEO's strategic objective, the extent to which they have been/can be/will be adopted by other members of the BOD is unclear. Adopting social media-based advertising approaches and increased private sector partnerships via local business are both modest adoptions of the CEO's enacted strategic plans; however, the interviews with the participants suggest that these are mostly the result of near-unilateral action on the part of the CEO. Until the BOD can work in a more unified manner, the "strategy" of Organization ABC is going to be significantly limited. The need for a unified strategic vision is consistent with information identified in the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019). A unified strategic vision among upper management is lacking at Organization ABC, demonstrating a significant flaw in the organization's approach to managerial hiring and communication, per the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program's (2019) ADLI process evaluation guidelines. In addition, Organization ABC does not adequately track which ambassador approaches work, to what extent those approaches work, and how they can use them to develop new approaches, thereby suggesting strategic deficits.

Customers

Customer Expectations

The students and teachers of the Title I schools Organization ABC services might not align with the typical image associated with the term "customer"; however, when interviewed, one of Organization ABC's board members characterized teacher and student ambassadors as their prime "customer base," as these groups are one of the beneficiaries of Organization ABC's services. The reason for this characterization, as implied by the board member, is that Organization ABC provides indirect support to Title I schools through the direct support of the organization's ambassadors. In addition, because most of the direct interaction Organization ABC's board members have is with student and teacher ambassadors, their "customers" perform the dual function of being both volunteers and ambassadors.

Although Organization ABC could easily create metrics on the efficacy of tutoring on student and teacher success through monitoring the changes in test scores of students before and after working with Organization ABC ambassadors, Organization ABC implicitly assumes that any well-intentioned intervention in Title I schools is a "net good" if the administration of a given Title I school agrees, whether the overall effect is positive. The board member interviewed characterized the organization's approach to working with students as highly flexible and adaptable, and largely designed and enacted by the work of teacher/student ambassadors. This seems to suggest that feedback is only given by members of Title I school communities to ambassadors and does not suggest that Organization ABC has any infrastructure for reviewing individual ambassadors' performances. This significantly limits the exposure Organization ABC's board members can get to types of constructive feedback, which could ultimately be a significant asset to future student ambassadors, teacher ambassadors, and ambassador mentors. This demonstrates a confused perception of Organization ABC's aims and indicates room for improvement on the part of Organization ABC.

The majority of customer perception collection for Organization ABC occurred via one board member's direct conversations with student ambassadors, teacher ambassadors, donors, and community representatives. The conversations this board member had regarding customer perception were extremely open-ended. The board member discussed potential projects teacher ambassadors could enact alongside student ambassadors, and critically considered ways in which individualized approaches to these products could enhance student learning. The assessment offered by this board member could help address some of Organization ABC's weaknesses. This could be considered when setting organizational goals and standards.

To hold student ambassadors accountable and help lead them through their projects, Organization ABC assigns each student ambassador a mentor. This mentor is also a board member and it is the responsibility of this mentor to guide the student ambassadors through the completion of their projects with Organization ABC and develop them further as leaders. Student ambassadors have an opportunity to discuss challenges they experience in the field with both their assigned board member and other board members, in the interest of bettering their service project experiences and developing their leadership potential for higher positions within the organization. Although this has allegedly had positive implications for Organization ABC's adaptability when dealing with unfamiliar pedagogical situations, there is not a formal paper trail provided to demonstrate this success.

The board member I spoke with also handles the majority of outreach to donors and community representatives. The purpose of this outreach is to help donors and community representatives better understand Organization ABC's mission, open lines of dialogue to help better understand community needs, and ultimately encourage them to get more involved with the organization. Although the board member cited this as a means of "listening" to consumer groups, this analysis seems somewhat stilted. Although this does demonstrate the organization's willingness to have open-ended discussions with stakeholders, this does not appear to represent meaningful engagement with anyone in a customer-analogous role.

Organization ABC does have positive lines of communication open between the organizations and various parties that ultimately influence its consumer experience; however, the organization has a somewhat limited cognizance of who its consumer base is. According to the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019) and Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory, the students and teachers using Organization ABC's services would be considered both customers and stakeholders. While Organization ABC's emphasis on increasing autonomy for ambassadors and Title I schools alike is philosophically sound, the organization's apparent lack of feedback collection or full understanding of its customer base does not bode well for its ongoing efficacy. Additionally, correspondence between Organization ABC's stakeholders and workers seems to be largely informal and under-documented. According to the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program's (2019) ADLI process evaluation criteria, these are significant problems with process development, as they make processes less repeatable and harder to evaluate. Although Organization ABC seems to respond quickly and readily to individual complaints, there appears to be limited cognizance about how to use those complaints to enact greater systemic change.

Customer Engagement

As Organization ABC views its teacher and student ambassadors as its primary “customers,” when discussing customer engagement, the Organization ABC board member I interviewed focused on ways in which the organization supported ambassadors. Teacher and student ambassadors interact with board members in ongoing in-person meetings to ensure personal familiarity with Organization ABC’s leadership and to allow for greater levels of communication activity between leadership and ambassadors. The interaction that takes place between teachers, students, and other customers is critical for building relationships, fostering trust, and encouraging the sharing of resources. Senior leaders within Organization ABC have curated an extensive reference library, including topic-specific PowerPoint presentations and videos of earlier in-person meetings, in the interest of giving ambassadors the greatest possible collection of organization-related knowledge.

Organization ABC has no formal process for handling complaints. One board member has the task of directly handling, or if necessary, directing, all complaints. If a complaint demonstrates a systemic problem rather than a unique one, the board member may get in contact with other board members to investigate further. Should complaints require human resources-based intervention there is another board member called upon to address these complaints. This presents an opportunity for improvement, as this limited scope of oversight requires Organization ABC's grievance process to be continuously reactive rather than proactive, which allows for the possibility of the organization ignoring, missing, or mishandling complaints.

As previously mentioned, Organization ABC does not use any kind of data, surveying, or benchmarking to determine how satisfied their partner schools and students are with their work. The only feedback Organization ABC regularly receives occurs yearly when their partner schools and student ambassadors decide whether to continue working with the organization; beyond this, the primary type of feedback Organization ABC relies on are complaints as they lack a structured feedback system or any way in which to rate feedback should they receive it. This is an area in which the organization needs significant improvement, as it hinders organizational officials' capacity to evaluate repeated processes. Without developing an infrastructure for feedback, Organization ABC will not be able to reliably respond to the needs of its customer base.

This suggestion significantly ties into stakeholder theory as the schools and students served by Organization ABC are some of the organization's key stakeholders (see Freeman, 2004). Without being able to prove the relevance and positive impact of their services on school communities, Organization ABC risks failing to adequately service their primary stakeholders. This has potentially negative effects for organizational leaders, as rejection by key stakeholders bodes poorly both for volunteer morale and organizational stability (Miles, 2017). Similarly, the lack of input information

Organization ABC collects on their own processes may not enable success (see Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). Without data-driven, repeatable protocols for improving organizational processes, Organization ABC cannot consistently improve its performance.

Results Triad: Workforce, Operations, and Results

The following subsection includes a detailed description of Organization ABC's workforce and operational processes, and the performance results attained from those processes. The Baldrige Performance Excellence Program's (2019) framework is a viable method for reviewing the three components make up the results triad. The use of measurement, analysis, and knowledge management as foundational elements to achieve workforce and operational results, allows leaders to improve performance and establish sustainability (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). The conceptual framework, stakeholder theory, described previously in this study refers to the ability of an organization to meet key stakeholder needs and demonstrate value to their customers. Leadership and effectively functioning organizations have a stable and engaged workforce, create efficiency at the operational level, and consistently deliver results that support the organization's vision and goals (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). Using the standards set in the Baldrige Excellence Framework, leaders can practice sustainable actions and behaviors, the use of which will allow their organization to mature. A mature organization can make proactive decisions, rather than engage in reactionary decision making, akin to less mature organizations (Baldrige Performance

Excellence Program, 2019). Therefore, senior leaders should evaluate their workforce, operations, and results to better align with the values that will attract stakeholders and customers as noted by both the stakeholder theory and in the Baldrige Excellence Framework (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019).

Workforce

The Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019) defined workforce as all personnel at all levels, associated and responsible for the organization's work. The workforce is essential to the operations of an organization and is necessary in the achievement of operational success. The stakeholder values are a necessary target if senior leaders of Organization ABC desire to communicate effectively to attain the necessary financial funding that will lead to operational efficiency. This assertion aligns with stakeholder theory, as both Freeman (2004) and Lange and Bundy (2018) asserted that improving stakeholder relationships and understanding the behaviors of stakeholders can greatly improve overall organizational success. Similarly, the Baldrige Excellence Framework criteria's focus on integration of various stakeholder interests suggests that high coordination of stakeholder expectations and duties has positive implications for ongoing organizational success (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). In the workforce subsection is a description of how the senior leaders at Organization ABC assess their workforce capability and capacity needs to ensure the workforce environment is efficient in achieving high performance. Also, in this section, is an explanation regarding how senior leaders at Organization ABC use their workforce to ensure alignment with their mission, and their efforts to successfully communicate with their stakeholders.

Workforce Environment

Organization ABC's workforce consists of volunteers, the BOD, teacher leadership, student leadership, teacher ambassadors, student ambassadors, and support staff. The Baldrige Excellence Framework describes workforce capabilities as the organization's ability to ensure that the organization operations are carried out through the knowledge, skills, competencies, and abilities of its workforce (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). Workforce capacity is the organization's ability to ensure sufficient staffing levels to ensure the work processes are carried out (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019).

Workforce Capability and Capacity. Organization ABC utilizes a systematic process for evaluating their workforce capabilities with the board members, leadership team, teachers, and student ambassadors. The organization has created a new organizational structure called the Advisory Council, to more clearly determine the experience, knowledge, and skills necessary for board members. The Advisory Council differs from the BOD in several ways (see Table 3). Table 4 describes the responsibilities of the BOD and the Advisory Council. The Advisory Council serves as an avenue for skilled and experienced community champions to provide the organization with their expertise, knowledge, philanthropic support, and their connections to local and national resources. However, the Advisory Council has no authority or governing function within the organization. The Advisory Council has six members with knowledge and skills in areas that could benefit the organization (Table 5). As positions on the board become vacant, or as the board expands, Organization ABC will choose members from the Advisory Council. The intention behind this action is that the potential candidates will have the necessary skills and competency for the position. As stated previously, the board members possess a variety of experiences in accounting, human resources, education, and corporate leadership. During the board member selection process the founder of Organization ABC searches for those with the skills necessary to help advance the organization and improve its performance. According to the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program's (2019) ADLI process evaluation criteria, the implementation of the advisory council is a positive process. The process has a high level of repeatability, helps ensure Organization ABC's staff's ethical commitments align with the organization's mission, and helps ensure that Organization ABC hires competent employees.

The leadership team consists of the founder, two marketing team members, a project manager team member, a social media team member, and an intern. The founder is an educator with over 10 years of experience working in public schools and higher education. One marketing team member has a bachelor's degree in graphic design and art and has done freelance graphic design for over 7 years. The project management team member has a bachelor's degree in economics and political science. Finally, the intern is a sophomore and computer science major.

The teachers and student ambassadors are promoted from within the ranks of the previous year's teacher and student ambassadors. The founder assesses and selects the ambassadors based on their participation, commitment, and their ability to mentor new ambassadors. The founder and the leadership team specifically look for currently certified teachers to serve on this team. Many of the teachers recruited are English teachers, who align well with the organization's overall mission to improve literacy. A review of the organization's website further confirms that the founder seeks current teachers with capabilities in reading, literacy, and English and reviews each volunteer's resume to determine whether they have the capabilities.

Table 3

Comparison of Board Members and Advisor Council

	Board membership	Advisory council membership
Legal liability	X	
Fiscal responsibility	X	
Governance responsibility	X	
Oversight of executive director	X	
Strategic planning	X	X
Must attend board meetings (75%)	X	May attend, but not required
Annual contribution	$1,000 (personal contribution, personal fundraising or grant-writing)	X
Committee leadership/participation required	X	Possible, but not required
Recruit ambassadors and other volunteers, as required	X	X
Identify and cultivate potential donors	X	X
Mentor student or student networks	X	Recommended

Table 4

Board of Directors and Advisory council Responsibilities

Position	Length of term	Reports to	General responsibilities	Individual responsibilities
Board of directors	2 years	Chairperson of the board	Legally and ethically responsible for all activities of the organization	Promote the organization's mission. Working knowledge of the organization's programs, policies, and operations. Actively serve on at least one committee. Provide mentorship to at least one Ambassador per year. Update board members of his/her specific activities Make an annual contribution to the organization. Participate in fund raising activities and special events. Adherence to all organizational policies
Advisory council	2 years	Board of directors	Community Champion to the organization, sharing gifts and talents in support of the organization's mission	No individual responsibilities.

Table 5

Advisory Council Skillset

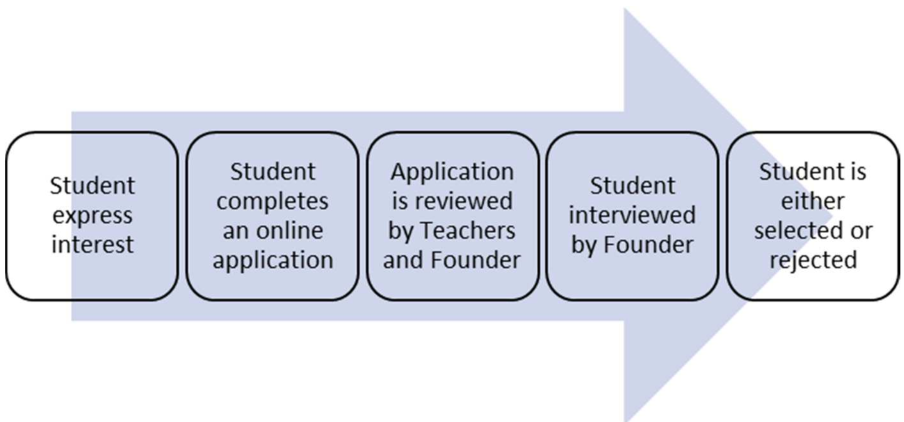
Council member	Skillset
Member 1	Marketing – Facebook
Member 2	Former board chair
Member 3	Operations and fundraising, former board chair (Cisco)
Member 4	Operations and fundraising – Microsoft
Member 5	Certified public accountant
Member 6	Marketing

Organization ABC is in the early stages of evaluating a systematic process for workforce capacity. The senior leaders do assess the workforce capabilities and ensure that they recruit a workforce with the necessary knowledge to accomplish the various projects. However, the organization does not determine the capacity needed for individual projects. The organization launches projects, then assigns the workforce to the projects. Rather than first analyzing and determining how many volunteers will be needed, as the project grows the founder reassesses his workforce capacity. In alignment with the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program's (2019) ADLI process evaluation criteria, this demonstrates an active learning process which will positively benefit the organization.

New Volunteer Workforce Recruitment. Organization ABC has 49 student ambassadors, representing the largest workforce within the organization. Senior leaders use a collaborative approach to select their student and teacher ambassador volunteers. Figure 6 illustrates the student and teacher ambassador recruitment and selection process. The selection process begins with an interest and an application to volunteer. Volunteers can submit their application via the organization's website. Once the prospective volunteer applies, the founder or members of the leadership team interview them. Ultimately, the founder makes the decision to select or reject the prospective volunteer. One of the criteria for selecting volunteers includes individuals that have a prior history of volunteer service or a sincere desire to serve for the first time. An additional criterion includes selecting individuals that are passionate about improving literacy and want to make a difference in their community.

Figure 6

Student Volunteer Recruitment Process



The organization's website displays several student volunteer biographies that demonstrate their passion to serve. For example, one student ambassador explained that it is a great opportunity to help more people. Another felt a great sense of purpose to give back to the community. The biographies displayed on the organization's website convey the student's interests in volunteering. These practices reflect a positive motivational strategy in line with stakeholder theory and demonstrates effort on the part of organizational leaders to create a highly personal sense of value and mission in its volunteers (see Freeman, 2004). By demonstrating to volunteers that the leaders value their positive efforts on behalf of the organization, the leaders simultaneously raise volunteer morale and increase volunteer buy-in (Jones et al., 2018). Demonstrating the value of volunteers increases the chances for continual organizational success as it adds to both stakeholder and shareholder value (Jones et al., 2018).

Workforce Benefits. Although the Organization ABC workforce is composed of volunteers, the senior leaders in the organization support the workforce with a variety of benefits. Senior leaders provided information indicating that benefits are structured differently for teacher and student ambassadors. Although benefits vary amongst teacher and student ambassadors, all volunteers are reimbursed for travel expenses related to mileage, meals, and material costs. Table 6 lists the student and teacher benefits provided by senior leaders in Organization ABC.

Table 6

Student and Teacher Ambassador Benefits

Volunteer type	Benefits
Student ambassador	Reimbursement for company related expenses
	Letter of recommendation for college entrance
	Earn 15 hours of community service.
	Access to business professionals and networking opportunities
	Gain transferrable skills to list on resume and scholarship programs.
	An opportunity to enter the annual leadership award
Teacher ambassador	Reimbursement for company related expenses
	Chance to witness service impact on community.
	Receive access to lesson plans and new books to distribute.
	Connect with a network of teachers for support.
	Opportunity to receive awards and stipends.
	All-expense paid teacher retreat.

Workforce Engagement

The senior leaders use a volunteer selection approach to drive engagement in Organization ABC. As previously mentioned, there is a rigorous selection process for both teacher and student ambassadors. The founder believes that the passion of the individual will drive their engagement and commitment to the projects in which they either participate or lead within the community they serve. Volunteers who express an interest must substantiate their desire by writing answers to application questions designed to align the interest of the volunteers with the organization's mission and vision. Teachers must describe why literacy is important to them, while students must explain why service is important to them. Volunteers demonstrate high levels of engagement and commitment when their personal values align with an organization's mission and vision (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). Table 7 lists the teacher and student ambassador applicant questions the founder uses to measure engagement and select candidates. Senior leaders understand that if they spend time selecting the right volunteers to complete the organization's work, the volunteers will demonstrate their engagement through completing multiple projects and working with the organization for several years.

Table 7

Student and Teacher Ambassador Application Questions

Volunteer type	Application questions
Student Ambassador	Why do you want to join the program? What does service mean to you? What does leadership mean to you?
Teacher ambassador	Why do you want to join the program? What does service mean to you? Why is literacy important to you? Why is it important for teachers to be supported in their community? What ways can you help create a positive community? What are some of your strengths or expertise that you could share in support of your fellow teachers?

The Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019) criteria included retention as a measure of workforce engagement. Organization ABC volunteer retention is a strong indicator of their workforce engagement. Organization ABC senior leaders are proud to report they have over 2000 volunteers in the San Antonio market, many of which have an average length of service of 2 years or more. Some volunteers have committed 5 years of their time to helping Organization ABC achieve its mission. The founder explained that he learned the key to longevity is to carefully select volunteers and then match their projects to their schedules.

Other measures of workforce engagement indicated in the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019) criteria are performance management, performance development, learning and development effectiveness, and career development as opportunities for increasing workforce engagement. Senior leaders report they do not have a formalized process for performance management and development, learning development, and career development, largely because their workforce is composed of volunteers. Senior leaders report that they are in the beginning stages of deploying processes for performance management and development, career development, and learning development.

Organization ABC leaders recently deployed a new program designed to provide development opportunities for students. The new learning and development program pairs student ambassadors with experienced teacher ambassadors or board members who act as mentors to answer questions and facilitate leadership skills and development. Additionally, student ambassadors who participate in this new program could be appointed to the Student Executive Board or the Storytelling Board to increase their exposure to new challenges and to hone their leadership skills.

Operations

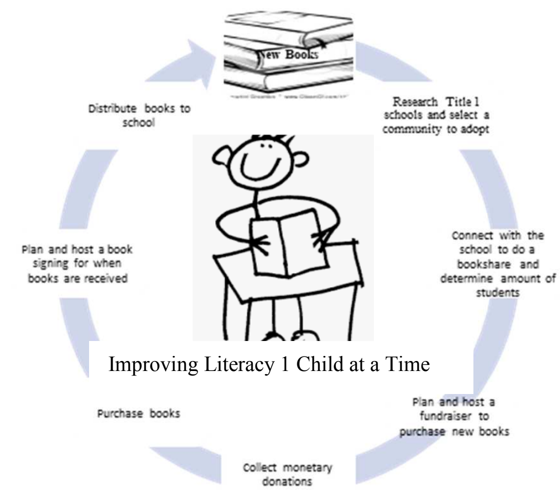
The following subsection contains information on how senior leaders of Organization ABC design, manage, and improve their work processes to facilitate operational effectiveness and deliver value to their stakeholders located in San Antonio, Texas. The use of stakeholder theory, as well as the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019), will allow essential business processes to work on a companywide level to assist leaders in reaching their organizational goals. A discussion of the work process begins the following sections.

Work Processes

Organization ABC key work processes support the delivery of book and school supplies to the children in San Antonio Title I schools. As previously mentioned, Organization ABC's key work process are the national book project, backpack program, and student ambassador program. The national book project occurs each school year to ensure children have access to books and allows the organization to partner with teachers and students at Title I schools to provide books to underfunded communities. Each book distributed contains inspirational words to encourage, inspire and motivate the recipients. The national book project provides an opportunity for the student ambassadors to lead a project independently. Senior leaders provide the student ambassadors with a step-by-step framework they can follow to complete their project. Because this is an independent project, student ambassadors must apply for and be selected to participate. Figure 7 illustrates the process senior leaders and student ambassadors use to execute the national book project every school year.

Figure 7

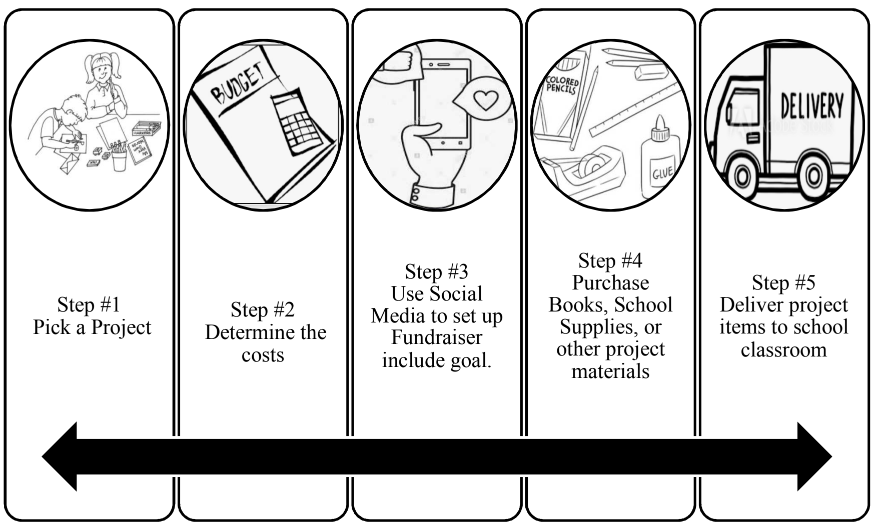
National Book Project Process



Although the national book project represents a major contribution to Title I schools, Organization ABC provides additional academic resources to students in San Antonio, TX through the backpack program. Organization ABC's backpack program is another key work process that supports the mission to deliver school supplies to children in underfunded schools. The backpack program provides academic resources such as computers, pens, papers, crayons, bookshelves, and curriculum materials to the schools adopted by the student ambassadors. To raise funds for this program, the student ambassadors follow the organization's standard fundraising model (see Figure 8). Senior leaders encourage student ambassadors to host an event to fill the backpacks with school supplies purchased with money raised or donated by local stores such as Walgreens, Walmart, and Target. Once volunteers fill the backpacks, the student ambassadors deliver them to the classroom. Considering the global pandemic caused by the COVID-19, student ambassadors adjusted their backpack process to include school supplies, books, and personal hygiene products. Additionally, the student ambassadors included a handwritten note in each care package backpack to demonstrate love and caring for students who were not able to return to the classroom because of COVID-19.

Figure 8

Standard Fundraising Model



Student ambassadors execute most Organization ABC's work processes through their involvement in the student ambassador program. The student ambassador program is a leadership and mentoring program for middle school, high school, and college students. Student ambassadors collaborate with each other, teachers, and the senior leadership to organize the national book projects and the backpack program. While Organization ABC's overall mission is to create a network of leaders that help improve early literacy in underfunded schools, the student ambassador program has a slightly different mission. Their mission is to support overarching missions, raise awareness, and pinpoint children in need of help. They are the frontline workforce responsible for completing the organization's work. Volunteering creates opportunities for student ambassadors to form beneficial relationships with Organization ABC's senior leaders.

One way the student ambassadors benefit from relationships with senior leaders is by working together to develop leadership skills. Senior leaders benefit from relationships with the student ambassadors by helping to maximize fundraising efforts for the organization. One of the guiding principles of fundraising in Organization ABC is that kids helping kids inspires adults to donate. See Table 8 for a description of other ways student ambassadors and senior leaders benefit from the relationship formed while volunteering.

Table 8

Relationship Benefits

Student ambassadors	Senior leaders
● Gain mentorship from senior leaders	● Mission attainment
● Given opportunities to give back to the community	● Budget neutrality
● Awarded 15 hours of community service	● Low operating cost
● Develop a portfolio for college entrance	● Build public image
● Personal enjoyment	● Improve stakeholder relationships

Operational Effectiveness

The Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019) criteria helps scholar-consultants evaluate an organization's operational effectiveness by reviewing how leaders control costs, add customer value, track key measures, maintain business continuity, and manage security. In this subsection, I provide an overview of how senior leaders in Organization ABC control costs, add customer value, track key measures, maintain business continuity, and manage security.

The founder of Organization ABC believes that operational effectiveness begins by forming strategic partnerships. To fund the organization's national book project, the senior leaders formed a partnership with one major book distributor who charges $1-$2 per book, which is a low-cost method to provide books for the children who need them. This method is effective at containing costs, as providing books for an entire school with 500 students costs approximately $500. Leaders in well-run organizations are responsible to control costs and add value for their customers (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019).

Customer experiences influence the value of an organization. A pillar principle of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019) criteria is customer focused excellence. One way that senior leaders demonstrate value to the customer is by providing books at no cost. Senior leaders, teacher ambassadors, and student ambassadors work hard to make sure that each child who receives a book feels like they have received a gift of love. To create customer focused excellence, as previously mentioned, the student ambassadors take the time to handwrite notes in each book and include smiley faces, hearts, and other emojis to help convey care and love. The books distributed to the children are part of Organization ABC's mission to improve literacy. To ensure mission attainment and operational effectiveness, the senior leaders of an organization must track key measures (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019).

Key measures tracked by Organization ABC include funding sources and funding uses. The founder of Organization ABC admits that tracking key measures is not an organizational strength and he has worked to improve tracking processes. Although tracking key measures was not a strength, senior leaders provided funding data dating back to 2016 for review (see Table 9 and Table 10). Tracking key measures is essential for operational excellence. Additionally, maintaining business continuity in extreme circumstances also provides insight into operational effectiveness (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019).

Like many NPOs, Organization ABC had to adjust operations due to the extreme circumstance created by the COVID-19 global pandemic. When discussing operational adjustments with two key leaders, each one had a different perspective about how COVID-19 affected business operations. One leader mentioned that there were no disruptions in operations. Book distributions continued without interruptions and are on track to exceed the numbers from 2019. Figure 9 illustrates the effect COVID-19 had on book distributions. Another leader reported that COVID-19 had a major impact on the organization and that they had to make rapid operational adjustments. Table 11 lists the adjustments senior leaders made in response to COVID-19. Making rapid adjustments and implementing processes to create operational effectiveness is a critical function that leaders must perform (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). Additionally, leaders must make efforts to implement cybersecurity processes within their organization (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019).

Table 9

Tracking Funding Sources

Funding Sources	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	Total
Donations	$9,185	$17,054	$76,700	$28,660	$21,110	$152,709
Corporate Sponsorships	$1,117	$2,053	$20,870	$4,887	$4,685	$33,612
Foundation Support	$1,800	$1,900	$19,000	$0	$2,500	$25,200
Grants	$500	$7,500	$5,300	$1,516	$19,000	$33,816
Program Service Revenue	$0	$0	$0	$0	$120	$120
Fundraising Income	$5,741	$1,937	$1,128	$1,203	$0	$10,009
Total Income	$18,343	$30,445	$122,998	$36,266	$47,415	$255,466

Table 10

Tracking Funding Uses

Funding Uses	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	Total
Program 1	$1,862	$9,139	$12,435	$6,823	$13,184	$43,443
Program 2	$3,785	$7,533	$24,904	$7,727	$9,708	$53,657
Program 3	$0	$0	$41,228	$2,723	$15,772	$59,723
Program 4	$475	$1,613	$3,555	$3,385	$903	$9,930
Program 5	$0	$0	$0	$1,222	$18,177	$19,399
Other Program Expenses	$9,012	$2,900	$2,265	$33	$373	$14,583
Admin & Fundraising	$2,047	$6,172	$8,047	$4,352	$4,176	$24,794
Total Expenses	$17,181	$27,356	$92,434	$26,265	$62,293	$225,529

Figure 9

The Effects of Book Distribution

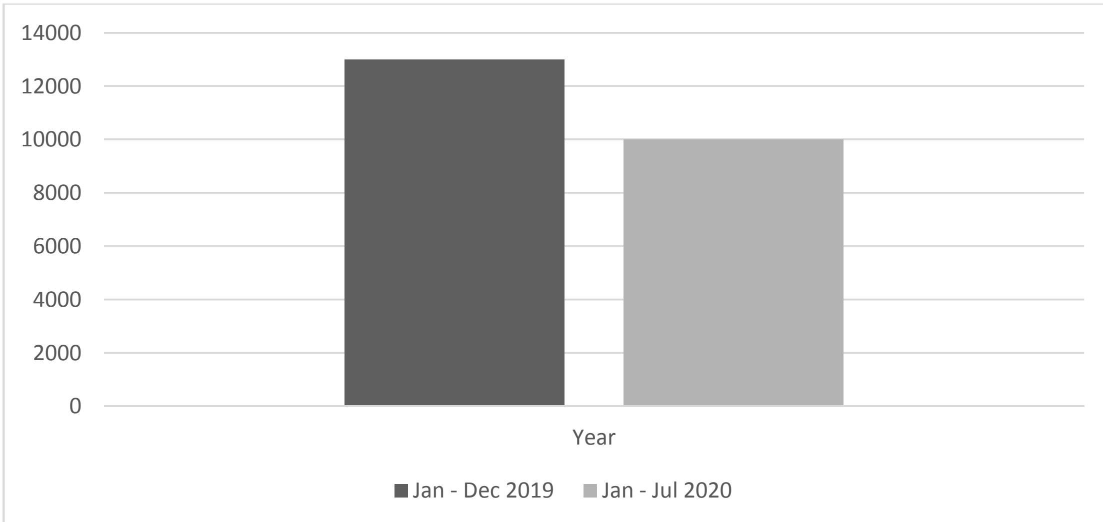


Table 11

COVID-19 Adjustments

	Adjustments
Adjustment types	Description
Operational adjustment	5 – day Leadership Conference was converted to Virtual Leadership Conference
Project adjustment	Care packages that included books, and healthy snacks were delivered to the homes of students
Operational adjustment	The Teacher Ambassadors summit was converted to a virtual conference
New process added	Book readings are being through virtual platforms

As indicated in the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019) criteria, the management of information security in an organization is essential for operational effectiveness. Effective information security processes help protect the organization from cyber-attacks, data breaches and other threats (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). Organization ABC leaders operate in a virtual environment, which negates a need to provide physical security. However, because they operate using the internet and other web-based platforms, this makes them vulnerable to cyber-attacks such as hacking. Google is the main platform that the organization uses. One senior leader reported that the organization has not implemented a formal cybersecurity program and relies on the security provided by the internet company and by Google. Leaders use Google Docs to share internal documents. As an extra security measure, sensitive information such as financial data is only accessible to the finance director and the certified public accountant who manages the accounting and tax submissions.

Measurement, Analysis, and Improvement of Organizational Performance

NPOs must have a mechanism in place to help them attain their goals. Critical to goal attainment is the ability to measure effectiveness and to manage knowledge. The measurement, analysis, and knowledge management of an organization's performance is paramount for understanding and improving the performance of the organization (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). The following subsection contains a description of how Organization ABC leaders gather data, analyze data, and improve upon their processes. Also included is an overview of how senior leaders learn from information they receive in their daily operations.

Measurement, Analysis, and Improvement of Organizational Performance

Senior leaders of Organization ABC realize the importance of measuring performance, reviewing the results, and making improvements based upon data. My review of the organization indicated that the senior leaders are in the beginning phases of implementing a systematic approach to measurement analysis and knowledge management. According to the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program's (2019) ADLI process evaluation criteria, this is a positive process which demonstrates a significant process-based learning initiative in action. Traditionally, the leaders of Organization ABC aggregate organizational data using a manual process of entering data on Excel spreadsheets. The type of data collected consists of financial data, volunteer demographic data, and project related data. One senior leader reported that the organization is just starting to connect their strategic plans to the financial and budget forecast. Additionally, another senior leader reported that future considerations for collecting data include purchasing a small database and reporting system. Timing of implementation is contingent upon finding volunteers to add data to the database. Although gathering performance measures are important, equally important is the ability to review and analyze data.

Organization ABC uses what I have coined as the three R approach to data analysis: receive, review, and respond (see Figure 10). First, the senior leaders receive information from daily operations, organizational spreadsheets, and direct visualization of projects under implementation. Second, the BOD reviews all the data during ad hoc and annual meetings. Board meetings serve as opportunities to assess organizational successes, performance, and financial health. Important to this process, is that the board members obtain documents prior to the meeting, which allows time for review and to promote productive discussions. In addition, the BOD and senior leaders complete the review and analysis process by comparing internal data and processes to other nonprofits of similar size and purpose. One senior leader stated they research comparative organizations to make decisions; for example, the decision to allow teachers to have a stipend resulted from researching another organization and finding out the benefits they have for their volunteers. The founder uses personal interactions with other partner organizations to glean information that guides decisions. In the future, Organization ABC plans to join nonprofit networking organizations to help connect with other NPOs. As shown by the stipend example, the senior leaders demonstrated their ability to respond to information and make organizational changes.

The third R in the analysis process is related to leadership response. Leaders must be able to respond to rapidly changing conditions and make appropriate decisions (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). The senior leaders of Organization ABC believe that their small size provides an advantage to respond quicker than larger organizations. The organizations response to the COVID-19 pandemic provided a prime example of their rapid leadership response. When schools closed and derailed the national book project and backpack program, the BOD met and agreed to reallocate the funding resources to provide care packages to the homes of the students.

Figure 10

The Three R Approach

Another example of quick decision making, and rapid response occurred during the outbreak of COVID-19. The leaders learned of a financial grant for $10,000 from their book distributor. To receive the grant, the organization had to invest $10,000 in a one-to-one match program. The BOD convened an ad hoc meeting, reviewed the financial statements, and approved the investment. In that situation, the BOD made a quick decision that resulted in an improvement in the organization's overall financial position.

Information and Knowledge Management

In this subsection, I describe how senior leaders of Organization ABC manage information and organizational knowledge assets. Knowledge is a valuable resource that facilitates an organization's ability to innovate, improve efficiency, and gain a competitive advantage (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019). Using the information and knowledge management category of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019) allows the organization's leaders to solidify employee engagement, produce high quality data, and ensure that partners, collaborators, suppliers, and customers have their needs met based on a holistic framework. Senior leaders of Organization ABC are committed to the management of information and knowledge throughout the organization. Senior leaders of Organization ABC are in the beginning phases of implementing a systematic approach to share organizational knowledge.

Organizational Knowledge. Organization ABC uses Google Suite as the foundation for their organizational knowledge. Each branch of the organization, such as teacher ambassadors, student ambassadors, and board members, have their own section and varying degrees of access to the information in the organization's shared Google Drive. The senior leaders make every attempt to ensure that the shared Google Drive provides a medium through which the organization can share information and knowledge consistently and efficiently. One senior leader reported that most knowledge sharing occurs using presentation technology. For example, mentors and student ambassadors receive training on the processes used for fundraising and how to execute the organization's projects. Organization ABC also provides student ambassadors with mentors who assist them throughout their projects. Assigning student ambassadors mentors demonstrates the commitment Organization ABC senior leaders have regarding the sharing of organizational knowledge. Per the Baldrige Performance Excellence

Program's (2019) ADLI criteria for evaluation, this demonstrates a positive and effective approach to intra-organizational communication and a simple and widely accessible deployment of an organizational knowledge building apparatus. Assigning student ambassadors mentors gives an effective means through which ongoing organizational learning can take place, which supports the goals of the organization. Considering the depiction of ambassador training and ambassador-teacher relationships, this process appears to be effective.

Organizational Learning. Senior leaders of Organization ABC are in the beginning phases of implementing a systematic process to ensure organizational learning. One method for doing so is the development of a governance manual. Additionally, the founder and board chair have collaborated about the need to provide manuals to volunteer students and teachers in leadership positions. One way that the organization has promoted organizational learning, is sharing information about fundraising and project efforts that occur throughout the organization through presentation technology. To help ambassadors learn from one another, such things as student fundraising efforts and teacher efforts are shared with other ambassadors.

To ensure the quality of the information, all organization information goes through a peer-review and editing process before it is published. A major focus of Organization ABC is on learning, which means that together the BOD, teacher leadership, student leadership, teacher ambassadors, student ambassadors, and support staff refine and update processes as they work through them. Additionally, any changes made to existing processes are updated in organizational documents. This ensures that all members of Organization ABC have access to the most recent and accurate information.

Organization ABC attempts, where possible, to share and reuse information to maintain consistency while building new knowledge. Board members receive details regarding changes to processes and additional pertinent information to ensure they can read, analyze, and formulate questions about the information prior to the board meeting. This step helps the BOD to make effective decisions regarding organizational processes and how best to communicate these processes.

Per the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program's (2019) ADLI process scoring evaluation, the creation of an organizational knowledge base with a working infrastructure available to all internal organizational affiliates suggests a repeatable and effective process approach consistently applied deployment via a single web application, and well-aligned process integration. Although this has positive implications for ongoing organizational learning, it appears that there is a learning gap, as the lack of common learning goals and assessments has negative implications for the collection of organizational data (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019).

Collection, Analysis, and Preparation of Results

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore communication strategies NPO leaders use to increase fundraising revenues. The central research question was: What communication strategies do NPO leaders use to improve fundraising revenues? I used a conceptual framework based around Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory, which stresses that organizational leaders critically consider the functions of their relationships with stakeholders to create competitive advantage for the organization. I used semistructured telephone interviews, email, Organization ABC's website, and a review of the organization's documents to obtain data. In addition, I used the 2019–2020 Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019) to collect data on the organization's profile, including (a) leadership, (b) strategy, (c) customers, (d) measurements, (e) workforce, (f) operations, and (g) results.

Thematic Findings

To identify key interview themes, I performed a thematic analysis based on participants' responses to semistructured interview questions and my own in-depth review of organization data. The central research question for this study was: What communication strategies do NPO leaders do to improve fundraising revenues? The participant responses from the interview process and the review of organizational data revealed several themes concerning: (1) using their positive workforce environment to improve fundraising, (2) the need for improved strategic communication, and (3) greater fundraising and marketing strategies. Presentation of these key themes may allow NPO leaders to consider new methods for improving fundraising revenues. By utilizing stakeholder theory as a means of analyzing leadership responsibilities, Organization ABC's board members could ensure they meet stakeholder needs.

Theme 1: Using Their Positive Workforce Environment to Improve Fundraising

The key asset working in Organization ABC's favor is its volunteer workforce.

BOD members described Organization ABC's volunteers as highly enthusiastic, with high levels of organizational commitment, and strong beliefs in the organization's set of values. BOD members described interactions between volunteer ambassadors, teacher ambassadors, and students as the primary means through which Organization ABC creates stakeholder value. Jones et al. (2018) argued that in order for NPO leaders to be effective, they must be able to efficiently understand and execute their mission. A reliance on high-quality volunteer work demonstrates a success for Organization ABC. The positive and supportive environment created by volunteers suggests, per the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019), that Organization ABC has a strong positive workforce environment.

Though communication problems have created significant challenges for Organization ABC's BOD, communication between ambassadors and teacher volunteers was described as proactive, robust, and meaningful. This demonstrates an effective attempt on the part of senior management to create positive stakeholder relationships, in accordance with Miles's (2017) view of stakeholder theory. In addition, this demonstrates a positive organizational communication strategy, which Duralia (2018) cited as an imperative element of building an enduringly viable organization.

Direct communication between Organization ABC leaders and volunteers was described as somewhat limited. The CEO described recruitment, volunteer orientation, and the formal complaint process as the three primary points of contact organization leaders had with volunteers. A focus on these three contact points demonstrates an opportunity for improvement on the part of organizational leaders, as described in Theme 3. When conducting searches for volunteers, board members found it relatively simple to identify and recruit both ambassador trainers and ambassadors with beliefs which align with the commitments Organization ABC has made to its educational stakeholders.

Although Organization ABC has high levels of structural instability stemming from its poor communication structure, unclear strategic approach, and limited ability to collect data, the organization may still appear more effective to stakeholders because its volunteer workforce provides the point of contact with students. This allows for an effective line of communication and organizational outreach to be built between customer-adjacent stakeholders (i.e., students, teachers, and school administrators) and worker-adjacent stakeholders (i.e., volunteers and BOD members), in accordance with Baack et al.'s (2017) recommendations for strategic external communications.

Theme 2: The Need for Improved Strategic Communication

The next theme that emerged from data analysis was problems with communication. A major element of effective planning is strategic communication. Jaomiasa (2019) defined strategic communication as the systematic process of sustained, meaningful activities conducted across organizational levels to ensure that a given audience is understood. The definition included behaviors that can be used to elicit a reaction from that audience can be identified. In addition, Brunton et al. (2019) asserted that both internal and external stakeholder communication is a significant element of running a successful business and inspiring ongoing stakeholder confidence in the organization. Regarding internal communication outside of the BOD context, the primary function of the organization means that many important stakeholders (i.e., ambassadors who provide volunteer educational services to schoolchildren) function more as contractors than as true internal entities. Although the organization consistently keeps in touch with its ambassadors through digital communications and gives its ambassadors contact with trained teacher mentors to answer pedagogy-related questions, the organization itself does not implement programs that seek to demonstrate organizational efficacy.

Although the ambassadors are often given measures of direct support from Organization ABC, and some degree of knowledge regarding the organization's functioning, they work with a large degree of curricular independence. This represents a substantial consequence of the organization's problem with determining its own direction. Instead of training ambassadors with a common set of organizational resources, Organization ABC allows most of the pedagogical training to be guided by teacher volunteers. Although this is not necessarily a negative strategy, it means that Organization ABC loses an opportunity to establish its own curriculum and a set of its own educational goals. Having their own set of goals and curriculum, Organization ABC could create assessment tools to evaluate its students, which could ultimately be used to create data proving the organization's positive efficacy. Organization ABC's lack of self-sufficiency in creating assessment tools to evaluate its students conflicts with the tenets of stakeholder theory (see Freeman, 1984). By not creating data-driven metrics that demonstrate organizational efficacy, the organization loses an opportunity to build its reputation and hinders growth; something noted by all the participants.

Theme 3: Greater Fundraising and Marketing Strategies

The final theme that emerged from data analysis was the need for greater fundraising and marketing strategies. Organization ABC is attempting to use a social marketing strategy to attract new donors, a practice which is supported by existing literature (Rundle-Thiele et al., 2019). Stakeholder theory suggests that organizational leaders must make decisions and enact policies that will maximally benefit key stakeholders (Freeman, 1984). To ensure that Organization ABC's stakeholders (i.e., ambassadors, students, investors, and BOD members) receive the maximum benefit, the organization must make more significant progress in addressing its challenges with marketing. One significant problem is its limited understanding of its market competition. Communications with Organization ABC's BOD members and CEO suggest that organizational leaders do not have a concrete sense of what other literacy-related nonprofits, working in similar areas, are doing to ensure ongoing community outreach and greater outcomes for school stakeholders. The importance of understanding effective funding strategies in the growing American nonprofit market is becoming more and more necessary for success (Nageswarakurukkal et al., 2020). Additionally, the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program's (2019) LeTCI results scoring criteria demonstrates that a lack of knowledge regarding competitors makes critical results comparisons impossible to use or act on. Without a stronger understanding of marketing strategies, little effort can be made to ensure Organization ABC's ongoing stability.

Although organizational leaders have identified several potential venues through which additional fundraising could be secured, little has been done to capitalize on these. One goal the CEO has set for increasing funding is increasing national brand awareness; however, plans for achieving this are not clear. Regarding its social media presence, Organization ABC has recently expanded its public presence on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram. Social media can provide a very effective means through which an organization can communicate with the public. However, the way Organization ABC evaluates, or plans to evaluate, the effectiveness of its social media program is unclear. Although using social media suggests a move toward expanding organizational outreach, the lack of a concrete social media plan or analytical framework for measuring its effectiveness suggests a questionable process approach (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019).

BOD members have discussed the possibility of creating an online store for Organization ABC in the interest of building a more diverse set of revenue streams; however, there are no tangible plans for establishing the online store. A possible hindrance to both creating an online store and the organization's ongoing marketing plan is that Organization ABC's awareness of its own branding is also limited. Although the CEO discussed the possibility of completely rebranding the organization, the BOD's limited ability to productively discuss issues makes this a challenging proposition. While nascent ideas for building a greater stakeholder base exist, concrete plans for improvement are extremely limited.

Product and Process Results

This section contains a description of Organization ABC's products and process results. Organization ABC is a nonprofit founded in 2011 to offer academic resources to students and teachers in San Antonio, Texas. The primary mission of Organization ABC is to improve literacy in underfunded Title I schools. The key process measures for Organization ABC are the backpack, book share, and student ambassador programs. The Baldrige Excellence Framework (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019) includes questions that senior leaders can ask themselves to describe their results for key product and process measures.

Senior leaders in Organization ABC recognize the importance of measuring results to gauge their organization's progress toward mission attainment. Although the senior leaders do not have a fully established performance measurement system, they have begun developing key performance indicators, as well as tracking and measuring performance outcomes. In the current paradigm, Organization ABC leaders track the number of backpacks delivered to students, books distributed via the book share program, and the number of student ambassadors. Leaders use the previous year's performance as the benchmark for the next performance year with a goal to meet or exceed the previous year's performance. Using past performance as a benchmark is advocated by both stakeholder theory and the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019). Stakeholder theorists find that identifying and meeting stakeholder needs is an important practice for building financial stability and organizational value (Abebe & Cha, 2018). Measuring and sharing organizational outcomes helps an organization evaluate its shareholders' perceptions of success, and determine the most lucrative path forward; thus, helping ensure continual stakeholder buy-in. The Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019) stressed the importance of continually collecting data concerning organizational performance with the aim of standardizing and replicating productive practices.

Figure 11 illustrates Organization ABC's yearly comparisons of the number of backpacks delivered to students. Senior leaders consider 2016 as the baseline year as this is when they started formally tracking results. The year-over-year trend, excluding the 2019 outlier, indicates effectiveness in meeting and exceeding the prior year's performance outcomes. Banu (2018) mentioned that the measurement of key performance indicators is paramount to making sure an organization meets its objectives. According to the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019), tracking key indicators, such as product and service performance, reveals whether there is an issue with workforce or a change in the market (determining the effects of supply and demand on selling products and services). Tracking key indicators has significant implications for stakeholder theory; Freeman (2004) and Harrison et al. (2015) indicated that demonstrating sustainable organizational outcomes to stakeholders increases organizational sustainability. When organizational leaders show proactive responses to organizational performance metrics, value is created for shareholders and stakeholders

(Freeman et al., 2016). Being proactive has positive implications for continuing shareholder growth, as contributions to the organization are seen to be genuinely useful.

Figure 11

Backpack Results Between Years 2016-2020

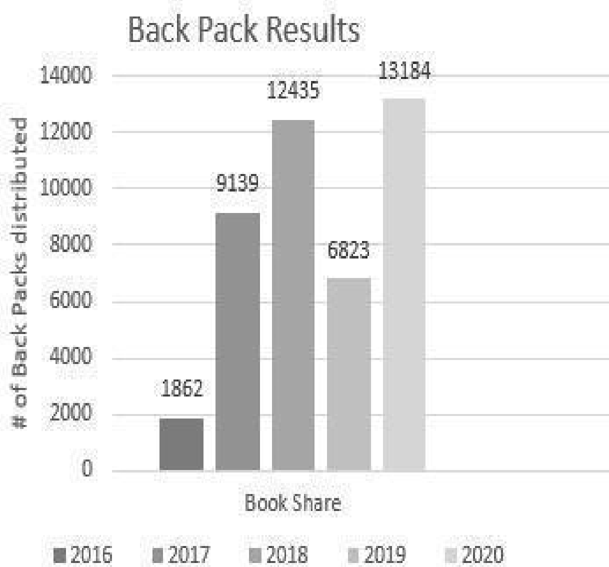


Figure 12 illustrates the organization's yearly comparisons of the number of books distributed in the book share program. As previously mentioned, senior leaders consider 2016 as the baseline year as this is when they started formally tracking results. The year-over-year trend, excluding 2018 outlier results, indicates effectiveness in meeting and exceeding the prior year's performance outcomes.

Figure 12

Book Share Results Between Years 2016-2020

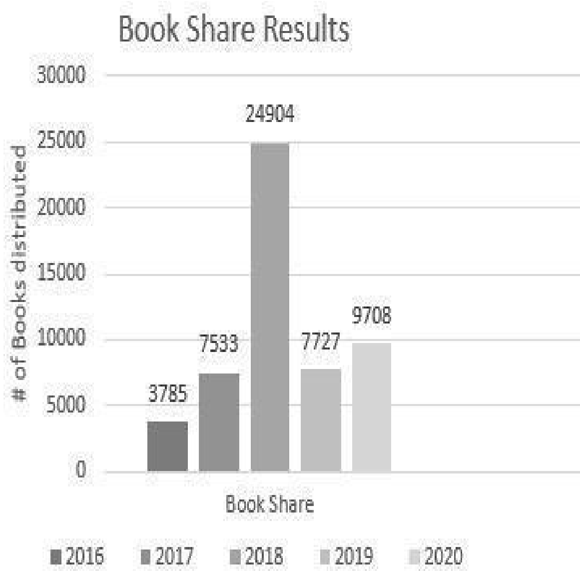
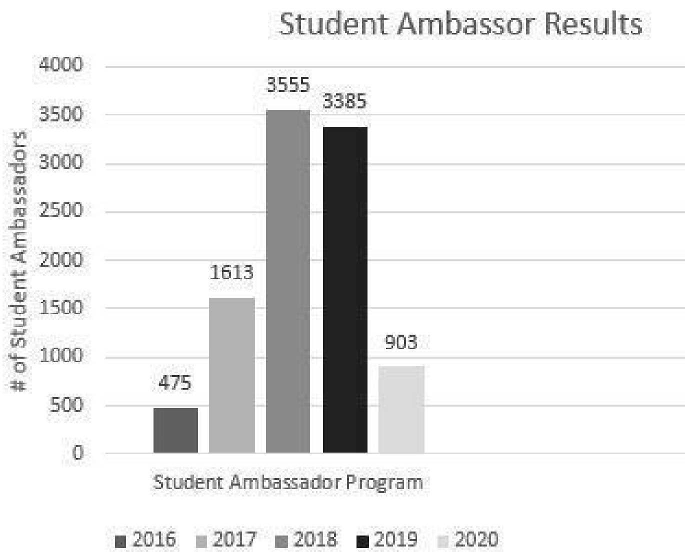


Figure 13 illustrates yearly comparisons of the number of books distributed in the book share program in San Antonio, Texas. As previously mentioned, senior leaders consider 2016 as the baseline year as this is when they started formally tracking results. The yearly trend results indicate effectiveness in meeting and exceeding the prior year's performance outcomes. However, the founder reported that the decline in 2020 was not a result of COVID-19, but a result of the organization's focused efforts on rebranding. The reallocation of resources during the rebranding process resulted in performance outcome declines reflected in the number of books distributed.

Figure 13

Student Ambassador Results Between Years 2016-2020



In this qualitative single case study, I sought to utilize stakeholder theory and the standards created by the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019) to find communication strategies NPO leaders use to improve fundraising revenues. Organization ABC, which was the focus of this study, sought to assist Title I schools in San Antonio, Texas with literacy outreach programs. To respond to stakeholder concerns regarding organizational impact and efficiency, Organization ABC released metrics charting the growth of three different ongoing projects: backpack donation, book donation, and student ambassador program volunteers. All three initiatives showed an upward trend in the period from 2016-2020, except for a decline in 2020 for the student ambassador program as an orchestrated focus on rebranding.

Organization ABC's proactive behavior is consistent with stakeholder theorist

Freeman's (2004) asserted that organizational leaders should focus on strategically leveraging stakeholder relationships and responding to stakeholder expectations. By explicitly identifying for stakeholders how Organization ABC is growing and providing metrics by which this growth is understood, organizational leaders demonstrate how they are being responsible to their shareholders.

Similarly, this behavior is advocated by the data-driven approach used in the Baldrige Excellence Framework. The Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019) advocates that organizational leaders craft a consistent, tightly managed system with clear benchmarks for organizational success. Using this approach gives a clear understanding of how the organization is progressing and gives both managers and stakeholders a strong sense of how the organization will continue to build.

Customer Results

This section contains information about how Organization ABC collects information related to the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of their customers. The Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019) authors explained that customer-focused performance results demonstrate customer satisfaction levels and how the organization builds loyal relationships with their customers. The senior leaders of Organization ABC report that they do not have a formal performance measurement process for monitoring customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Organization ABC's customer-focused performance results come from the feedback received from the volunteers during their yearly meetings. Senior leaders use the feedback received from the volunteers to implement changes in the organization’s future programs. The lack of a systematic process to determine customer satisfaction represents an opportunity for improvement.

Measuring and analyzing customer satisfaction is one way to demonstrate communication with stakeholders. The central research question for this study was: What communication strategies do NPO leaders do to improve fundraising revenues? Meeting the needs of the customer and aggregating data that demonstrates customer satisfaction could motivate stakeholders to donate to Organization ABC. Organizations that have satisfied customers are likely to develop customer loyalty (Lim et al., 2020). Also, customer satisfaction often results in promotion of the organization through word of mouth, which can benefit the organization financially (Lim et al., 2020). Therefore, adopting a customer-focused approach would allow the organization to learn more through tracking customer satisfaction, allowing the organization to improve their offerings and demonstrate value to the customer, ultimately improving their fundraising efforts. Table 12 illustrates customer-focused and donor satisfaction surveys that Organization ABC could implement.

Table 12

Customer-Focused and Donor Satisfaction Survey

Customer satisfaction questionnaire	Donor satisfaction questionnaire
Was our volunteer staff courteous and respectful	Did the staff show gratitude for your donation?
How do you rate your satisfaction on a scale of 1-10, where 10 is excellent?	Did you receive immediate confirmation that we received your donation?
How many books did you receive	Did we express to you the impact of your donation?
Did we meet the students' needs?	Was your online donation experience good?
Would you recommend our services to other schools and families?	Would you recommend family and friends to donate to us?
Do you feel that Organization ABC has made a great impact on your school?	Dou you feel your donation will make a difference?
What other resources could your school benefit from?	What can we do to improve?
Do you have any additional comments?	Do you have any additional comments?

Workforce Results

Organization ABC does not have a formal performance measurement system to analyze the performance of its workforce. However, the senior leaders of Organization ABC report that they assess the organization's workforce engagement by tracking the number of events conducted. In addition, the organization tracks the number of volunteers that join and books distributed. They compare the goals for the year against the previous year's achievements. Additionally, mentors track projects and communicate with the student ambassadors, assisting them with challenges that may occur and helping them to maintain engagement.

Workforce Leadership

Organization ABC recently initiated a mentoring program for student ambassadors. The design of the mentorship program is to provide leadership development by pairing student ambassadors with an experienced ambassador or board member. The mentors are available to answer questions or connect student ambassadors with the appropriate help they need to be successful. In addition, the student ambassadors have an opportunity to be appointed to the student executive board to increase their exposure to new challenges and improve their skills.

Organization ABC does not have a learning and development system. However, ambassadors receive trained via PowerPoint presentations, Zoom conferences calls, and partnerships with their mentors. They also have opportunities for promotion that can further increase their competencies as they continue their education and pursue their individual careers. The senior leaders believe that providing opportunities to succeed ignites an interest in advocacy.

Leadership and Governance Results

Board leaders in Organization ABC have demonstrated strong leadership and governance results. Governance results indicate that board members comply with all laws and regulations governing NPOs in the multiple regions in which Organization ABC works. Based on the information outlined in the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019), Organization ABC's leadership and governance results appear strong, but offer limited information with regards to organizational data. However, Organization ABC was able to (a) demonstrate efficiency in their accounts of their work; (b) sustain this efficiency throughout the organization's existence and expansion; and (c) demonstrate a culture of support and positivity, which appeared to confirm the board's legitimacy as leaders. Quantitative accounts of leadership and governance were not available for review; subsequently, I have limited quantitative evidence to support positive trends of this nature over time.

Financial, Market, and Strategy Results

Organization ABC's board leaders understand the importance of revenue surplus to the organization's overall financial health and continued growth. Board leaders expressed a clear understanding of financial diversification in the nonprofit sector, as well as an understanding of the importance of private sector funding such as grants. According to the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program's (2019) process scoring guidelines, Organization ABC is in a mature development phase. This is based on (a) the organization's strong showings that demonstrate positive trends in surplus revenue generation and (b) the organization's push to diversify into new revenue streams, including courting large corporate donors and selling products. Although Organization ABC board members spoke of positive trends, I did not receive a data set to understand the extent of the trends' behavior. This may suggest a deficit on the part of Organization ABC's board with regards to bookkeeping.

Key Themes

The focus of the Baldrige Excellence Framework is on processes and results as the key dimensions by which an organization's strengths and weaknesses can be properly evaluated (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). An analysis of key themes in Organization ABC's interviews regarding organizational processes and results allowed for a comprehensive evaluation of the organization's performance. A performance evaluation will be detailed in this section and considers the organization's strengths and weaknesses based on the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program.

Process Strengths

The Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019) characterized fully mature processes as those that are repeatable, evaluated for improvement, and include the ability to track progress. Organization ABC's board has some processes that act as strengths, which include a positive work environment and a comprehensive approach to online donation seeking. In analyzing the data collected by the processes outlined in this doctoral study, I found that Organization ABC's strategic fundraising plan appears to be in the early stages of development. Organization ABC has begun to perform fundraising operations with repeatable processes through the development of a rough, yet multifaceted virtual strategy, which utilizes a multiplatform approach through social media outlets, to target diverse demographic groups. The approach as described is inefficient and inadequate because of the limited technical understanding on the part of board members. Although this strategy is repeatable to the extent that a variety of social media platforms can be used as a means of outreach, without an understanding of online trends, online platforms, and online marketing, future payoffs may be more limited. Organization ABC described the bulk of their strategic planning as online based, though interviews with board members demonstrated an eagerness to collaborate with private sector entities. Strategy and quantitative goals have been very loosely determined and board members indicated that data metrics have not been created to evaluate the efficacy of the online approach.

According to information outlined in the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019), the strategic planning processes Organization ABC described are (a) effective to the extent that they have been proven to generate revenue; (b) repeatable to a degree but owing to the limited technical acumen of the board, perhaps not sustainably; (c) deployed within the leadership team and deployable by other stakeholders, though not necessarily in an organized capacity; (d) fail to consider present and future organizational needs by laying out clear opportunities for small-scale involvement; and (e) not adequately monitored in a strategic capacity, because of the limited amount of donation metrics generated. Because the strategic planning process met two of these criteria, partially met two of these criteria, and missed one of these criteria, I would evaluate Organization ABC's strategic planning process as somewhat positive for the organization.

As previously outlined in this doctoral study, to effectively realize their organization's mission, senior leaders rely on the cooperation of volunteers and board members. The nature of the positive workforce environment is communicative, friendly, and innovative. According to the criteria outlined in the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019), Organization ABC has a strong positive workforce environment. Leaders were able to demonstrate an open sense of collaboration and passion, often describing group efforts and complimenting each other's ideas during our interviews.

These processes were determined to be repeatable, as demonstrated by emails and corroborated accounts of regular meetings. Additionally, these processes were determined to be fully deployed and demonstrating meaningful learning, as the communications described were characterized as a great determinant of policy direction. Organization ABC's positive workplace environment is a great asset to the organization.

Process Opportunities

Organization ABC's board has some processes that act as weaknesses, and some gaps in data collection that obscure the true efficacy of certain processes. Weaknesses of Organization ABC include limited collection of revenue-related data resulting in the inability to track and trend, challenges relating to employee knowledge of technology. Additionally, they have an underdeveloped strategy to communicate with stakeholders through an effective marketing approach.

The workforce development approach in Organization ABC was not completely clear based on interview material. Most of Organization ABC's discussion of workforce investment had to do with restructuring the responsibilities of board members. Nonboard member stakeholders discussed in interviews were overwhelmingly donors targeted by board member outreach. Commercialization through communication and marketing was a type of workforce development discussed. One participant discussed a desire to expand into the merchandise market by selling products to build new revenue streams, which implies a need to expand workforce and supply systems.

According to the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program's (2019) process scoring guidelines, Organization ABC's workforce development is in an early developmental phase, while Organization ABC's commercialization process is in a reactive developmental stage. Organization ABC's workforce development has some coordination and some repeatability, as it seeks to reorganize and separate out the responsibilities of the board members. For example, delegating different responsibilities of the board members into a coherent system with clearly defined spheres of influence. Interviews with Organization ABC's board members suggested that this system is in the process of improvement and refinement. The limited exposure I was given means that I cannot properly judge the way these processes work at lower levels of the organization. Overall, Organization ABC's workforce development process appears to be in the beginning phase of a systemic approach. Regarding the commercialization process, Organization ABC's merchandise sale venture seems to exist solely as a concept. Although Organization ABC has recognized that this type of expansion may be a fruitful revenue-building venture, no clear processes, goals, or systems have been defined.

Results Strengths

According to the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019), results are outputs that reflect an organization's performance in the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program category 7; this encompasses product and process results, customer results, workforce results, leadership and governance results, and financial, market, and strategy results. Organization ABC was able to provide results strengths in two of these categories. Key themes were (1) using their positive workforce environment to improve fundraising, (2) the need for improved strategic communication, and (3) greater fundraising and marketing strategies.

Results Opportunities

There are several results opportunities for Organization ABC, including limited self-evaluation abilities, a weak system of organizational communication, and limited development opportunities for ambassadors. Organization ABC's board has poor organization, coordination, and division of responsibilities. Although a board of organizational leaders has developed, one particular senior leader seems to have taken on most of the responsibility for the direction and operation of the organization. The senior leaders have a very difficult time coordinating organizational action, owing to persistent communication gaps and gaps in organizational commitment. One such consequence of this is an extremely limited ability to develop tools for strategic oversight; Organization ABC has done little collection of performance-related data, leading to a stifled ability to implement effective, data-driven organizational change in line with the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019). Lack of leadership coordination and lack of data collection both constitute opportunities for improvement on the part of Organization ABC.

Organization ABC's lack of a formal learning system for its ambassadors demonstrates a significant opportunity for improvement. Ambassadors do receive some training in the form of PowerPoint Presentations and direct communication with mentors, but there is not a formal means through which ambassadors are trained or receive some sort of official acknowledgement for their skill growth. Although ambassadors may become well-trained in a particular aspect of mentoring or teaching, the lack of professional development-style opportunities explicitly guided by Organization ABC limits both the ongoing payoffs for ambassadors and the strength of the organization. By providing ambassadors with formal, guided, topic-specific training seminars, Organization ABC can give ambassadors additional professional credentials which may help them as they continue in the job market. By collecting student achievement data which accounts for the impact of this ambassador training on student achievement, Organization ABC may be able to give data-driven demonstrations of organizational efficacy to shareholders and students. Rather than appearing as an organization which simply pairs schools with student volunteers, Organization ABC could demonstrate its profound investment in its own volunteers and, by extension, in the local communities it serves.

Project Summary

The ability to adequately raise funds is a survival necessity for NPOs. Without the donations of external stakeholders, nonprofit leaders could face significant challenges in conducting efficient operations and financially sustaining their organization, which for an NPO results in a mission failure. Like for-profit organizations, NPOs have operational costs that require funding to keep the organization functioning. Whereas for-profit organizations provide a service or product at a cost that accounts for operational expenses and profit, nonprofits rely on willing donors that support the organization’s vision through their donations. Ultimately, these charitable donations help NPOs sustain the organization, failure to acquire these donations will increase the likelihood that NPOs fail to achieve their mission. Donors, or external stakeholders, are essential to the financial sustainability of NPOs. The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore communication strategies NPO leaders use to improve fundraising revenues. As a scholar consultant, I was assigned an NPO vetted by Walden University's administration. As a scholar consultant, I gathered and reviewed Organization ABC's internal and external information. The population for this single case study consisted of three participants, which included the founder and two senior leaders of the organization located in San Antonio, Texas. These participants have implemented successful communication strategies that assisted the organization in receiving donations, thereby allowing the organization to consistently remain financially stable.

In this study, I used the stakeholder theory as the conceptual framework, and the 2019 Baldrige Performance Excellence Program as the performance framework to obtain a detailed understanding of Organization ABC's operations. To obtain relevant data, I gathered information via semistructured interviews with the founder and two senior leaders and reviewed organization documentation. I also obtained relevant data from internal and external organizational documents, which included the organization's website. After analyzing the collected data and reviewing the Baldrige Excellence Framework, three key themes emerged related to Organization ABC's process strengths, process opportunities, results strengths, and results opportunities. The key themes were

(1) using their positive workforce environment to improve fundraising, (2) the need for improved strategic communication, and (3) greater fundraising and marketing strategies. Strategic recommendations based on the findings of this doctoral study that could help Organization ABC senior leaders include: (a) assessing customer and volunteer feedback, (b) monitoring financial results from fundraising, and (c) an effective communication strategy that will engage stakeholders in the vision of the organization.

Organization ABC senior leaders were beginning to show signs of a strategic approach to creating a systemic process to maximize operations. This was evident by the organization’s rebranding to better communicate with their stakeholders. The original name of the organization was not reflective of the mission, vision, and values related to ensuring that students in Title I schools achieve academic success. Secondly, the organization also began demonstrating signs of an efficient data-driven process. This was evident through their use of data to track fundraising efforts. However, the data was limited, in that it only provided details about the entire organization. Senior leaders could improve this process through the collection of data by location, school, and volunteer. In doing so, the organization could track individual productivity, creating a more efficient process related to fundraising. Furthermore, the organization could track the individual donors by location to determine how much, how often, and through what route they gave. A data-driven approach could also provide quantitative data that stakeholders or potential donors could review to evaluate the organization’s progress and effectiveness. Demonstrating the efficiency of the organization via data could communicate to stakeholders that Organization ABC is using funds efficiently. Moreover, the data could also demonstrate to stakeholders the benefits the organization provides to Title 1 schools. Both donors and potential donors who see an organization use donations appropriately may be more apt to donate frequently or for the first time.

Contributions and Recommendations

Fundraising is an essential component to the successful achievement of an NPOs mission. The increasing demand for social services, number of nonprofits competing for the same financial resources, and limited availability of government and corporate funding significantly increases the importance of having an effective strategy for fundraising (Nageswarakurukkal et al., 2020). Without the collection of necessary monetary funds, Organization ABC will be unable to complete their mission. Therefore, identifying successful communication strategies that senior leaders of NPOs can use is essential to increasing fundraising revenues.

To achieve a successful communication strategy to improve fundraising revenues, the senior leaders of Organization ABC should develop an effective marketing strategy within their strategic plan that includes all potential stakeholders within the communities in which they are seeking to make a difference. To do so, Organization ABC could launch a marketing campaign that includes commercials at theaters prior to the beginning of movies. They could also work to establish a strong presence on multiple social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. Moreover, senior leaders of Organization ABC should incorporate a data-driven process to monitor the donations resulting from the use of the social media platforms. In alignment with stakeholder theory is the idea that monitoring where donations come from can help senior leaders improve fundraising revenues. One of the components of an organization's success is accountability for their performance (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). Through monitoring donations resulting from social media presence, Organization ABC could identify whether their marketing efforts are efficient. However, it is essential that senior leaders have a good understanding of the market space in which they function.

To develop an effective strategic plan, the senior leaders of Organization ABC should consider learning more about their specific ecosystem. In the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019), an ecosystem is described as a conglomerate of suppliers, customers, competitors, stakeholders, and collaborators. Understanding an organization's current and shifting ecosystem can help organizations create an innovative space where senior leaders can identify unique services that may set them apart from their competitors. A focus on these unique services may then resonate with stakeholders who are looking for ways to monetarily give back to their communities. Understanding internal and external stakeholders is a key component of stakeholder theory.

Although Organization ABC has a strategic plan, there is very little specificity related to marketing strategies. For example, the organization does not have an effective data analysis process regarding the efficiency of those marketing processes. Additionally, the senior leaders were unable to identify who their competitors were. This conveys that the senior leaders of Organization ABC were missing an essential component related to understanding who competitors are to identify what communication strategies may be most effective in each market space. To remedy this deficiency, senior leaders could create an aggregated spreadsheet that includes a comparison of Organization ABC to other organizations engaging with the same financial sources, locations, and stakeholders that Organization ABC engages with.

Understanding what stakeholders want in terms of value, could be valuable information to nonprofits, as it allows the organization to focus on communication strategies that would align the values of the stakeholder to the values of the organization. Effective feedback information from customers could communicate to potential stakeholders the benefits of donating, as demonstrated by the success of Organization ABC in giving academic resources to Title I schools in San Antonio. The senior leaders of Organization ABC could adopt a feedback method to determine customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction through (a) disseminating surveys, (b) maintaining a customer account history, (c) compiling a stakeholder account history, (d) tracking transaction completion rates, (e) obtaining and recording Title I school satisfaction or dissatisfaction rates, and (f) gathering formal or informal feedbacks from volunteers or customers. According to the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (2019), the information could be aggregated and used as comparative data with that of Organization ABC's competitors. The comparison of data may prove useful in determining successful projects with Organization ABC's efforts to provide academic resource and services to Title I schools in San Antonio, Texas. Such communication would thus create the narrative necessary to align the value of the stakeholders to that of the organization.

Application to Professional Practice

Organizations that are for-profit obtain their financial sustainability directly through income obtained from their products or services, and usually focus on profit. However, NPOs rely solely on donations given through an array of funding resources and a focus on mission attainment. Therefore, financial acumen is essential for ensuring the financial sustainability of an NPO (Ilyas et al., 2020). Equally important is the organization’s ability to manage a willing volunteer workforce that exists solely to bring the organization’s mission to fruition. Therefore, a thorough understanding of the organization’s stakeholders, competitors, and workforce is paramount to the financial sustainability and mission attainment of Organization ABC. To build a financially stable nonprofit, senior leaders of Organization ABC must have an effective volunteer engagement process that incorporates a systemic process for managing feedback, communicating with donors, and building trust to garner continued financial support. In this component, I provide insight regarding how business practitioners could apply the findings in this qualitative single case study to their professional practice, and to share the knowledge I obtained to assist them in improving their processes and advancing their organization’s business practices.

The intent of research is to inquire about a particular phenomenon and facilitate a scholarly conversation (Brooks et al., 2019). Researchers use qualitative research to explore a phenomenon, such as exploring individual or group behaviors within an organization (Pathiranage et al., 2020). The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore communication strategies that Organization ABC leaders use to improve fundraising revenues in San Antonio, Texas. NPO leaders who want to improve their fundraising efforts may benefit from the findings and recommendations in this study when designing an effective strategy for their organization.

The results of this study may add to existing knowledge on communication strategies for improving fundraising efforts within the nonprofit industry. It may also help to fill gaps in the research on fundraising strategies used by NPOs. Senior leaders of NPOs seeking to improve their existing fundraising strategies or to formalize a communication strategy to improve fundraising revenues could review my recommendations and use them as a guide in the development of strategies within their organization. My recommendations are as follows: (a) retrieve comparative data within the organization's ecosystem; (b) analyze the comparative data to create innovative unique ideas; (c) utilize social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn and create narratives that would demonstrate value to the stakeholders, customers, and volunteers; (d) establish data-driven processes for customer, stakeholder, and volunteer feedback; and (e) establish data-driven processes related to fundraising efforts. Organizations could then use the data-driven process to: (a) determine location of fundraising, to include the stakeholders involved; (b) determine success of fundraising by location and by volunteer; (c) determine which stakeholders are donating, to include what platform was used to donate; and (d) determine productivity of the social media platforms used.

As the recommendations in this study are grounded in theory, NPO leaders may find it beneficial to explore stakeholder theory to improve business practices. A review of the other theories considered for this study could also result in a deeper understanding for NPO leaders regarding grounded in theory that could ultimately facilitate the development of strategic processes in improving fundraising revenues. Additionally, the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program could be used as a guide for reviewing an organization's leadership performance, strategy, customers, operations, workforce, measurement analysis, and results. NPO leaders can use the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program to conduct a thorough assessment of the organization to improve their overall mission.

Implication for Social Change

Walden University degree programs are centered around facilitating the education of students and equipping them to have a positive impact on social change in their field and within their communities (Walden University, 2020). In Walden University's doctoral program, students must include information regarding the positive impact that the study will have on social change within the community. Nonprofits play an essential role in affecting social change via the delivery of services and the facilitation of volunteer involvement to increase growth and development in underfunded areas (Clear et al., 2018). The ability of nonprofits to provide services positively influences the communities, which, in the case of Organization ABC, provides necessary academic resources to underfunded schools. As a scholar consultant, my research provides information that may impact social change within the communities abroad.

At Walden University, the DBA programs were not only designed to educate and create practitioners but also equip students to have a positive impact on social change. Brown and Baltes (2017) postulated that there is a direct relationship between education and social change. As levels of education increase, involvement in social change activities increase (Brown & Baltes, 2017). Senior leaders of Organization ABC who participated in this study facilitated the exploration of successful communication strategies used to increase fundraising revenues that could be used by other organizations to improve their fundraising strategies and affect social change.

The implications of social change resulting from this study could include the potential to offer senior leaders of NPOs innovative communication strategies that would lead to an increase in fundraising revenues. Nonprofits are reliant on charitable donations to fund the organizations' efforts in the community and bring about social change. The financial contributions obtained through effective communication strategies would give senior leaders the ability to provide more schools with academic resources such as books and computers, thereby facilitating the education of students in Title I schools. The dissemination through academic literature, workshops, and company training could provide senior leaders with the necessary strategies they can use to improve their fundraising processes. Further implications for social change may include the ability of Organization ABC to provide additional resources and services to promote the success of students in Title I schools. Students, parents, and teachers directly or indirectly influenced by the provisions of Organization ABC may be encouraged to further influence their communities via positive social change.

Recommendations for Action

This section includes recommendations for senior leaders of Organization ABC and other NPOs can consider for improving fundraising revenues. Levitt et al. (2018) stated that researchers provide recommendations for action that explains the significance of the study. A researcher's interpretation includes information obtained from existing knowledge and information gathered related to the subject (The Association for Qualitative Research, 2020). This research study revealed that improving or increasing fundraising is a multifaceted approach that includes: (a) understanding the business ecosystem that the organization abides, (b) aligning the values of the organization to the stakeholders, (c) creating an effective marketing strategy designed for recruitment of volunteers and giving stakeholders, and (d) having a detail data-driven process that allow the leaders to analyze, interpret, and improve processes. Although Organization ABC has a potentially impactful approach to improving Title I student welfare, the organization's lack of a coherent means of communication, lack of a consolidated vision, and limited ability to practically collect or utilize data are all serious hindrances to its success. In order to ensure Organization ABC will be successful, organizational leaders must speak honestly and openly about their communication problems. They should identify which priorities and goals the organization should pursue. A clear set of organizational goals must be created with a plan for how to quantitatively track progress. In addition, a detailed financial plan must be made to ensure that the organization remains viable. The BOD must oversee this process, ensuring that their division of responsibilities is equitable and practical.

The results found in this study could assist NPO leaders in developing innovative strategies in improving their ability to obtain the necessary funding to improve and sustain operations. The results of this study will be disseminated via conferences, lectures, and training events. Other methods for dissemination might include social media platforms, word-of-mouth, and literature searches.

Recommendations for Further Research

The primary purpose of this study was to explore successful communication strategies that senior leaders of nonprofits use to improve fundraising revenues. In conducting my research, a limitation of this study emerged. The primary experiences I explored were from senior leaders of one NPO in San Antonio, Texas and not the experiences of multiple NPOs. Making inferences about one NPO's experiences limiting as there was no account for variations in location, multiculturalism, or a survey of different NPOs that differ in size, volunteers, and how this effects the organization's efforts if the employees were paid. Because of this limitation, my recommendation is to expand this research to identify the successful communication strategies used in multiple organizations in San Antonio, Texas and other cities. Additionally, I recommend that future researchers use other conceptual frameworks to identify communications strategies to improve fundraising revenues. Using other conceptual framework may present a different perspective that senior leaders of NPOs could use to improve fundraising revenues.

Reflections

The Walden University's Consulting Capstone Program provided me an opportunity to conduct qualitative research. Additionally, I was given the opportunity to work as a scholar consultant in assisting an NPO in San Antonio, Texas in evaluating their organization's performance using the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. The Consulting Capstone is a rigorous program, which challenged my preconceived ideas about consulting. Prior to my doctoral journey, I was a Healthcare Consultant for a large nursing home company with over 100 nursing homes. Throughout my doctoral journey and in consulting with my assigned NPO, I continually faced challenges regarding my personal and professional bias. During my journey, I learned to focus on the information presented and then analyze that information through the lens of my conceptual framework and the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. I learned that though my experience is valuable, other senior leaders are in different places within vision and journey. My job as a scholar consultant was to identify their vision, where they were in achieving this vision, and help guide them to where they wanted to be. For Organization ABC, this meant assisting them in identifying successful communication strategies that would assist the senior leaders in improving their fundraising efforts.

Looking back at my journey, I have identified some things that I would do differently. First, I would have translated the information from the Baldrige Excellence Framework in a way my client could have understood. In the beginning, I assumed that my client would understand the business jargon. I quickly learned that he was very knowledgeable but needed more clarity on what I was asking. Secondly, I should have spent more time in the beginning to understand the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. It was difficult asking the client questions about their organization based on the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program when I was just learning it. The Baldrige Commentary proved to be a very important tool in understanding the information and increased my ability to form the questions to my client in a manner that would be understandable and not intimidating. Lastly, procrastination was my biggest challenge in this journey. Being an active husband, father, grandfather, and a nursing home administrator while completing a doctoral program caused me to put off things that I could have done. Because of this procrastination, I did not meet the completion goal that I set. However, I also learned that the journey was mine and could be completed at a pace that I could handle. Thankfully, my peers helped pull me along and kept me accountable. Since the beginning of my doctoral journey, I have evolved into a scholar consultant with a deeper understanding on how to add value to an organization.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to advance the knowledge of communication strategies to improve fundraising efforts used by NPO leaders. Identifying successful innovative communication strategies to improve fundraising revenues and reduce the risks associated with ineffective strategies may provide NPO leaders information that may increase their chances of a sustainable process. The use of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program allowed me to serve as a scholar consultant and assist the senior leaders to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement and to add value to the organization. Additionally, use of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program allowed me to gain the experience and skills necessary to be an effective consultant regardless of the industry.

During the research process, I was able to identify one limitation that was essential to providing a deeper understanding about effective communication methods to improve fundraising. The most important component to arise from this study was that NPO leaders must develop a strategic plan for marketing and effectively communicating with their stakeholders using a data-driven process. Using a data-driven process will allow the leaders to analyze and interpret data to develop innovative unique strategies that could yield more charitable donations, ultimately leading to mission attainment and positive social change in the communities in which they are located.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview Title: Communication Strategies Leaders of Nonprofit Organizations Can Use to Improve Fundraising Revenues

Protocol:

1. The interview begins using the protocol.
2. I will introduce myself to the participants.
3. Participants will be given opportunity to read the inform consent form and provide their consent to participate in the research via email.
4. I will thank the participants for their agreement to participate in the research.
5. I will provide information to the participants on how they can withdraw from the research.
6. I will ask the participants' permission to record the interview.
7. I will begin recording the interview, noting the date, time, and location. In addition, I will have the appropriate writing tools to take notes as needed during the interview.
8. I will inform the participants of their alphanumeric code for identification (I.E. Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3) on the audio recording and place the information on the copy of the consent form.
9. I will begin the interview.
10. I will begin the interview with question #1 and follow through to the final question.

11. I will end the interview sequence.
12. I will thank the participants for his or her time in the participation of this study.
13. I will reiterate my contact information for any follow-up questions or concerns that the participants may have.
14. I will end the audio recording.
15. The interview ends.
16. I will call the participants a few days after the interview.
17. I will ask the participants to review what they have shared during and after the interviews.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. What communication strategies do you use internally to improve fundraising revenues?
2. What strategies do you use externally to improve fundraising revenues?
3. How do you measure the effectiveness of the strategies implemented to improve fundraising revenues?
4. What were the key challenges you encountered when you implemented those strategies?
5. What approaches have you used to overcome the key challenges you encountered when you implemented those strategies?
6. What additional information would you like to add about your organization's strategies for improving fundraising revenues?