



LEAP OF REASON

MANAGING TO OUTCOMES IN AN ERA OF SCARCITY

Leap of Reason for Nonprofits

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Leap of Reason for Nonprofits

The suite of [Leap of Reason materials](#) provides information to help nonprofit boards, management, and staff 1) better understand and start to prepare for the forces changing the social sector; 2) facilitate board and/or staff planning sessions; 3) contribute to leadership and staff development, and 4) take important steps toward becoming a high-performance organization.

Leap of Reason is the clearest case statement I have seen for the rationale for ALL nonprofits to adopt performance-management practices and culture."

– Ellen Bass, Director, Boston Capacity Tank, Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston

"I can say that without a doubt this book is the most useful, practical, down to the real-deal publication of this kind that I have come across in my decades of not-for-profit work."

– Michael Bailin, former president, Edna McConnell Clark Foundation

To facilitate your use of the [Leap of Reason materials](#) and encourage a broad deployment and distribution, the book and materials are provided at no expense and come with a [liberal copyright provision](#) allowing unlimited reproduction and distribution. The Leap of Reason team stands ready to help nonprofit leaders advance their work. Here are some suggestions to get you started:

To Generate Interest, Inspire Action

- Jumpstart board or staff discussions with short videos. The "[Relentless](#)" [five-minute highlight video](#) is a call to action in support of courageous nonprofit leadership. The [Booknotes video](#), produced in conjunction with McKinsey & Company, provides a concise overview of what “managing to outcomes” looks like.
- Sign up for monthly [Leap of Reason email updates](#) to learn from others working to make the leap to high performance.

To Enhance Board and Stakeholder Engagement

- Provide individual copies of [Leap of Reason](#) (print or electronic) to board members, staff, and select stakeholders.
- Use the [Leap of Reason Board Package](#) for board meetings, planning sessions, or retreats. It can be used to encourage boards to examine and more effectively assert their governance and stewardship roles. More bluntly, we hope this material prompts boards to do everything they can to ensure that a) their organizations are doing what they claim to do, b) what they do works, and c) they’re learning how they can keep getting better over time.
- Share the “[Relentless](#)” speech with board members, staff, and select stakeholders. Viewers tell us the speech has opened up their thinking and, for some, jolted them to get more engaged in strengthening, even rethinking, their organizations. The speech is available in a [five-minute highlight video](#), [PDF download of prepared remarks](#), [streaming video](#), and [podcast](#) formats.

To Introduce the Concept of High Performance into Your Organization

- Incorporate the topic of high performance using the book and/or related materials as standard reading in formal leadership and managerial development curriculum and programs. Numerous sources have cited “[Culture is the Key](#),” Chapter 3 of [Leap of Reason](#), as having particular value for leaders seeking to nurture a performance culture.

To Enhance Professional Staff Development

- Read the book as part of professional staff development sessions. A number of nonprofits are bringing staff together for lunch-and-learn sessions to discuss the book, chapter by chapter, and then assess what they are doing and how they can improve.

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To Assess Where You Are

- Use the "[Ideas into Action](#)" section in [Leap of Reason](#), which provides a framework to help plan for and evolve to the practice of managing to outcomes. If you're wondering "What should I do?" or "How do I get started?" then answering the questions with your board, management, and staff provides a structured approach that sets you on the path to managing to outcomes and high performance. Our website, [LeapofReason.org](#), also offers a host of references for learning more about the what, how, and why of your actions.
- Complete the [Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool](#) (OCAT), developed by McKinsey and Company for [Venture Philanthropy Partners](#). The OCAT helps organizations assess their operational strengths and weaknesses along 10 dimensions, including management, innovation, marketing, and technology

To Implement a Managing-to-Outcomes Approach

- Download a copy of David Hunter's e-book [Working Hard—and Working Well](#), a hands-on guide to developing the discipline of performance management in direct-service organizations. David decodes and defangs performance management, providing history, context, guidance, exercises, and tools, for those who want to do more to improve the lives of those they serve.
- These references may be of additional help:
 - [The Nonprofit Outcomes Toolbox](#) developed by Robert M. Penna, Ph.D. is a highly useful guide to outcome thinking.
 - "[How Can Nonprofits Switch to a Data-Informed Culture?](#)", a blog post by Beth Kanter, explains the evolutionary stages of a data-informed culture and specific tips for making the switch. [Measuring the Networked Nonprofit: Using Data to Change the World](#) by Kanter and K.D. Paine offers a wealth of information for nonprofits on their journey to high performance.
 - [Integrated Monitoring](#), developed by [inProgress](#), an organization with an international focus, is a valuable manual for nonprofits working to improve their performance.
 - [Rigorous Program Evaluations on a Budget: How Low-Cost Randomized Controlled Trials Are Possible in Many Areas of Social Policy](#), published by the [Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy](#), makes a compelling case that gathering "gold standard" evidence doesn't have to cost a fortune.
 - [PerformWell](#), a collaborative effort initiated by [Urban Institute](#), [Child Trends](#), and [Social Solutions](#), provides measurement tools and practical knowledge that human services professionals can use to manage their programs' day-to-day performance, which leverages research-based findings that have been synthesized and simplified by experts in the field.
 - Mario Morino's *VPPNews* column "[For Grantees to Take the Leap, Funders Must Step Up](#)" offers a framework for building a foundation for implementing a performance-management system.

Next Steps

We're happy to speak with you about the ways we could support the incorporation of [Leap of Reason](#), [Working Hard—and Working Well](#), and the growing base of related materials into your own work. Cheryl Collins, co-editor of the book, leads our outreach and distribution efforts and may be reached at info@leapofreason.org. We look forward to hearing about the progress you are making in your work; we encourage you to [share what you and your colleagues are learning](#) along the way.