

74%  
seventy-four percent

EXPLORING THE LIVES OF WOMEN LEADERS IN NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS | 5/2013

A strategic research project of the  
Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management  
at Robert Morris University

# All together now, let's LEAN IN!

I have to admit that when I first began to hear about Sheryl Sandberg's new book, *Lean In*, she had the same effect on me as the young Martha Stewart...another of those perfect women making the rest of us feel inadequate...but after years of research on women's lives in nonprofits, how could I not read the book that so many people were talking about? To my surprise and delight, I find Sheryl Sandberg good company – and an ally in our work to better understand how we can pose solutions to the seemingly intractable challenges of being a woman who has ambition, talent and loves her work – and her family – and her community. What particular challenges does a woman leader face?

*"Increasingly, prominent thinkers in the field of leadership studies like Marcus Buckingham are challenging traditional notions of leadership. Their research suggests that presenting leadership as a list of carefully defined qualities (like strategic, analytical, and performance-oriented) no longer holds. **Instead, true leadership stems from individuality that is honestly and sometimes imperfectly expressed. They believe leaders should strive for authenticity over perfection.** This shift is good news for women, who often feel obliged to come across as more stereotypically male. And it's also good news for men, who may be doing the exact same thing...In the meantime, we can all hasten this change by committing ourselves to both seek – and speak – our truth."*

*Lean In, p. 91*

Those of you in the 74% Kitchen Cabinet are entering our third year of work together. It has been a very rewarding experience as I have gotten to know many of you much better. You have spoken your truth – and it is a delight to behold! Pittsburgh people are marvelously candid and engaging. They have a genuine calling for nonprofit work. They are eager to do more – and plan to keep doing good until they die! I have completed more than sixty interviews that have helped us to distill the three key questions we explore today.

## **How can we assure young professional women have opportunity for increased responsibilities and leadership roles?**

### **How are older nonprofit professional women going to re-tool their careers and eventually retire with dignity?**

### **How can we strengthen the board of directors sense of responsibility to their employees?**

Our 990 and survey research has also explicated these questions. All of this research continues, as does our search for solutions to these challenges. And we continue to comb the world for other people's good thinking and steal from the best as we seek to build a movement of people as dedicated to equity and fairness in employment as each of you are.

But the people who know me well tease me that the last thing I read is the best thing I read, so to return to *Lean In*. One of the facts we've uncovered has held my attention for more than two years. You may remember that we examined the gender of the board chair as it relates to compensation. You may also remember that men with a male board chair who lead large local nonprofits make significantly more money on an annual basis than do women with a female board chair leading an organization of the same size. I'm sure all of you have theories about the

Why of that, as do I. I was pondering that situation as I read *Lean In*. Sheryl Sandberg tells a story about a case study developed at the Harvard School of Business about a highly successful venture capitalist, Heidi Roizen. When a class was using this case, the instructor divided the class into two groups. One read about Heidi...the other read the exact same material, only changing Heidi to Howard. Howard was praised and admired for his initiative and competence. Heidi was seen as “not the type of person you would want to hire or work for.” Is this bias against competent, hard-charging women part of what explains why women board chairs – and women CEOs – are penalized in compensation? Who wants to be Heidi?

Another *Lean In* insight that aligns with our 74% questions speaks to the career path for women. Alice Eagly, one of today’s speakers, has explored different paths for women’s careers. We have begun to try to draw the one for women in nonprofits as you see in this brochure. Sandberg’s neat turn of phrase is *a career path is a jungle gym, not a ladder*. That captures much of what we’ve been trying to say...and moving past a linear model into 3D definitely mirrors what I have been hearing in my interviews.

Our other two speakers are outstanding nonprofit management gurus. Susan Egmont has devoted her life to creating opportunity and justice for people throughout the national nonprofit world. She knows leadership transition inside out and will help us better understand how we prepare for career changes. And you are in for a treat when it’s time for Michael Daignault to take the floor. He is one of the nation’s leading consultants on nonprofit governance. When I asked Michael to speak on the board’s responsibility to their employees, he immediately began to talk about the ethics of compensation. He’s my kind of guy!

And so we continue...asking questions, seeking solutions and learning every day from you about how the world works – and how we want it to work. We think *Lean In* deserves some more attention and discussion. Sylvia Fields will tell you what we’re planning. Rebecca Lucore will dream with you about having national voice for our findings and engaging more people in this work.

Excelsior – *ever upward* – beloveds! Be sure you make time to savor the delights of summer in southwestern Pennsylvania. Your health and happiness are primary assets of our community. Seek authenticity over perfection...and go make the world we yearn to see!

*Peggy Morrison Outon*

**Peggy Morrison Outon**

*One of the 74%*

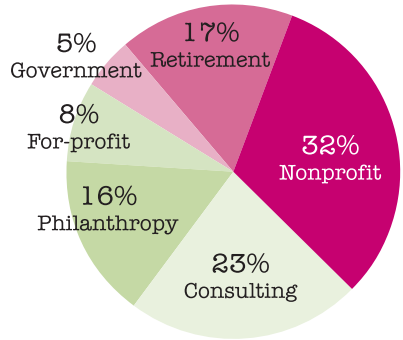
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# How are older nonprofit professional women going to retool their careers and eventually retire with dignity?

## Statistically Speaking

- > Although many women dream of a retirement that is filled with travel and time with loved ones, the truth is 41 percent plan to work past age 70 or do not plan to retire at all. Only 7 percent are “very confident” that they will be able to fully retire with a comfortable lifestyle.<sup>1</sup>
- > Over 16% of nonprofit leaders are 60 years or older. Almost a quarter (22%) of leaders say that a loss in their retirement savings has delayed a job transition.<sup>2</sup>
- > In the nonprofit sector, those who plan to leave their current jobs will likely stay in the nonprofit sector. (see chart at right)



About 70% will remain in a nonprofit<sup>3</sup>

## Ways to Stay Involved in the Sector<sup>4</sup>

1. Interim executive positions
2. Teaching, coaching, consulting, advising
3. Board leadership
4. Elected and appointed government service

### Speaker: Susan Egmont

Susan Egmont, co-author of *Managing Leadership Transition in Nonprofits: Passing the Torch to Sustain Organizational Excellence*, brings a deep understanding of the challenges organizations face during executive transition. An MBA from Emory University, Susan is a Certified Association Executive and a Certified Fund Raising Executive. She is a founder of the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network and a founding board member of the national Alliance for Nonprofit Management and the Georgia Center for Nonprofits.

“In 2004, I retired... (They) give me this fabulous surprise party. I’m living up the summer and cleaning closets and I got a call from the president who says, “Could you come back? I need you.” So I said, “Sure.” So I went back... and eventually came out of retirement.”

Interview Quote

<sup>1</sup> Collinson, Catherine. *Juggling Current Needs and Long-term Security: Every Woman Needs Her Own Retirement Strategy*. 13th Annual Transamerica Retirement Survey. Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Cornelius, Marla, Rick Moyers, and Jeanne Bell. *Daring to Lead 2011: A National Study of Nonprofit Executive Leadership*. CompassPoint and Meyer Foundation, 2011.

<sup>3,4</sup> Masaoka, Jan. *The Departing: Exiting Nonprofit Leaders as Resources for Social Change*. Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, with support from the Barr Foundation, 2007.

# How can we strengthen the board of directors' sense of responsibility to their employees?

## According to Research

- > Many board members are under-prepared for their role as employers. According to research many boards of directors are unfamiliar with their executives' roles and responsibilities.<sup>5</sup>
- > Nonprofit executives who have been in their position for one to three years, report the least satisfaction with their boards.<sup>6</sup>
- > More than half (56%) of the executive directors who participated in the Daring to Lead survey reported spending ten hours or less per month on board-related activities. Only 17% of these executive directors said they were very satisfied with the board's performance. Conversely, of those who spent more than ten hours per month working with the board, nearly a quarter (23%) were very satisfied with board performance.



45% of nonprofit executives had no performance evaluation at all

Only 18% of nonprofit executives had a useful performance evaluation

## Speaker: Michael G. Daigneault, Esq.

Michael Daigneault is a consultant, facilitator and trainer who counsels nonprofit boards facing governance challenges with expertise in leadership, ethics, and strategic issues. His past clients include Independent Sector, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and many others. Previously, Michael served as the ethics officer for the United Way of the National Capital Area. He is a Georgetown University Law Center graduate with a Juris Doctor in law and a Masters in Law.

“It’s interesting that I’m the one who triggers it (my evaluation). Maybe, if I didn’t, they would do it. I’m not sure... if you weren’t performing well, if you weren’t even doing a good job, if your board didn’t appreciate you, why would you raise the idea about doing an annual review?”

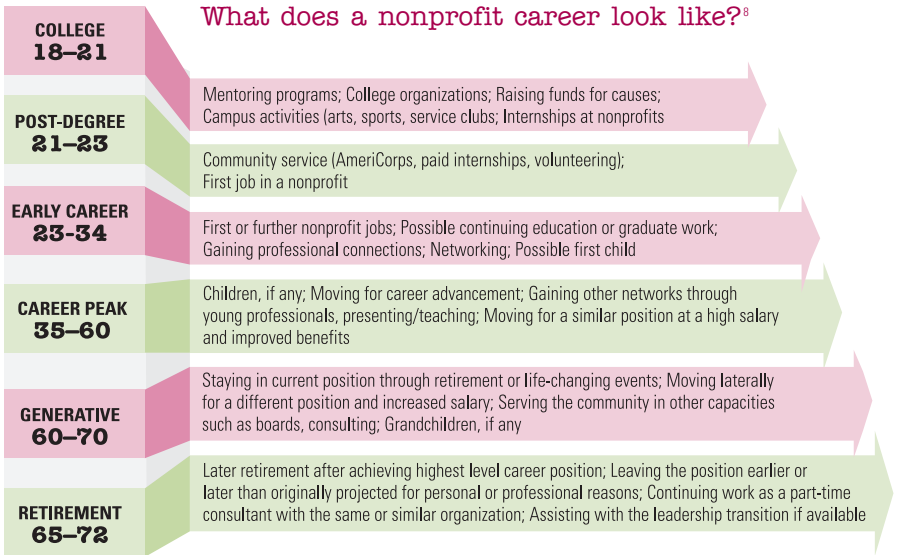
Interview Quote

<sup>57</sup> Cornelius, Marla, Rick Moyers, and Jeanne Bell. *Daring to Lead 2011: A National Study of Nonprofit Executive Leadership*. CompassPoint and Meyer Foundation, 2011.

# How can we assure young nonprofit professional women have opportunity for increased responsibilities and leadership roles?

## Female Nonprofit Career Paths

We are curious about the differing career paths for women and men. The classic career arc shows professionals peaking around age 50. However, many women are just coming into the fullness of their career at age 50. How do women's life choices and economic realities affect their career path?



### Speaker: Alice Eagly

Alice Eagly is a Professor of Psychology at Northwestern University. She is widely published on the psychology of attitudes including co-authoring the book *Through the Labyrinth: The Truth About How Women Become Leaders* which has helped shape our thinking in the 74% Project. She is the recipient of the Carolyn Wood Sherif Award for her contributions to the psychology of women as a scholar, mentor and leader.

“There’s so much opportunity for this region and if we just had a little bit more visionary and optimistic leadership instead of this kind of self-preservation model of leadership we could really, really rock it out.”

Interview Quote

\* Eagly, Alice, and Linda Carli. *Through the Labyrinth*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2007. AND Slaughter, Anne-Marie. “Why Women Still Can’t Have it All.” *The Atlantic*. 2012.

# Kitchen Cabinet Members

**Kitchen Cabinet Members, totaling 169 in May 2013, are applying their community knowledge, professional expertise and stellar leadership to fuel the power of 74%.**

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