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Strategies to Secure Sustainable Funding for Nonprofit Organizations

Jasmine Y. Hardy
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Jasmine Hardy

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2017

Abstract

Strategies to Secure Sustainable Funding for Nonprofit Organizations

by

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MS, Southern Connecticut State University, 2008

BS, Southern Connecticut State University, 2007

Consulting Capstone Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

December 2017

Abstract

There are 1.4 million active nonprofit organizations in the United States; however, funding sustainability often forces nonprofit senior leaders into closure, which can lead to increased unemployment and decreased services provided to local communities.

Nonprofit senior leaders seek help from scholars, at times, to identify strategies to secure sustainable funding sources, improve the sustainability of funding, or prevent or reverse losses of funding to their organizations. Through the conceptual lens of the general systems theory, the 2015-2016 Baldrige Excellence Framework and Criteria, and single- and double-loop learning, this single-case study explored strategies used to secure sustainable funding for nonprofit organizations from businesses, foundations, and individual donations. Through a purposeful sample of 3 senior leaders of a small nonprofit organization located in Baltimore, Maryland, data collection occurred through semistructured interviews, a review of public and internal documents, as well as performance outcomes. Through thematic analysis, 4 themes emerged: process strengths, process opportunities, results strengths, and results opportunities. Identifying strategies to secure sustainable funding may assist nonprofit senior leaders when struggling in an environment in which the supply of critical resources is low. The findings have implications for positive social change for nonprofit senior leaders and the community. Nonprofit senior leaders that secure sustainable funding may offer a positive influence in communities by reducing unemployment, creating new jobs, providing tax payments, promoting philanthropy, and improving lives.

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Dedication

I am thankful to my parents, family, friends, colleagues, fellow cohorts, and doctoral doves worldwide for your support throughout the years. I am thankful to my Holy Spirit, for always guiding my steps. I am thankful to those that have fought and died, on and off the battlefield, so that I may enjoy the right to an education.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

For this study, I used the 2015-2016 Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework to explore strategies some nonprofit senior leaders use to secure sustainable funding for their organization from businesses, foundations, and donations. As a requirement of Walden University's consulting capstone, I served as the researcher and consultant for this study.

Background of the Problem

The success of nonprofit organizations is an essential part of the economic growth of communities across the country (Norris-Tirrell, Blessett, & Knox, 2014). Stecker (2014) identified 1.4 million active nonprofit organizations in the United States, but some are forced into closure because of funding sustainability, as well as viability to fulfill social needs and deliver services to the communities served. Closures of nonprofit organizations increase unemployment and decrease nonprofit services provided to local communities (Stecker, 2014). Other causes of nonprofit organizational failure may include a lack of management knowledge and marketing techniques of senior leaders (McDonald, Weerawardena, Madhavaram, & Mort, 2014, 2014; Norris-Tirrell et al., 2014; Stecker, 2014). In addition, high competition, lack of local and government support, overexpansion, insufficient funds, or changes in the demand of the community can cause a nonprofit organization to fail (Lu, 2015a; Mataire, Morelli, Matsuoka, & Uehara-McDonald, 2014; McDonald et al., 2014; Sokolowski, 2013). The survival of nonprofit organizations is critical to ensure employment and maintenance of the quality of life for the local community, workforce, and the country. To increase viability,

nonprofit senior leaders must focus on identifying strategies to secure sustainable funding.

Problem Statement

Sustainability for some nonprofit organizations is in peril because of reductions in funding from local businesses, private and public foundations, as well as individual donations (Mataira et al., 2014). With more than 1.4 million active nonprofit organizations in the United States competing for increasingly diminishing funds and funding sources, current approaches to securing funding are not sustainable (Stecker, 2014). The general business problem is that some nonprofit senior leaders lack knowledge of strategies to sustain funding. The specific business problem is that some nonprofit senior leaders lack strategies to secure sustainable funding for their organization from businesses, foundations, and donations.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore strategies some nonprofit senior leaders used to secure sustainable funding for their organization from businesses, foundations, and donations. The specific population for this study included three senior leaders of a single nonprofit organization in Maryland who used successful strategies to secure sustainable funding for their nonprofit organization. Sustainable funding included the acquisition of funds to conduct business for five years or more. The contributions to social change may include the potential to increase the understanding of strategies nonprofit senior leaders use to secure sustainable funding and funding sustainability, and the maximization of community presence (e.g., the ability for

nonprofit senior leaders to share lessons learned about securing sustainable funding in a community of practice). Leaders from other nonprofit organizations may use the recommendations from this study to improve the sustainability of funding and prevent or reverse losses of funding, increasing the ability to satisfy the organizational mission of achieving positive social change.

Nature of the Study

Runfola, Perna, Baraldi, & Gregori (2016) asserted that the qualitative research method is used to gather information about individual or personal observations and explanations regarding an observed phenomenon. The qualitative method was appropriate, based on the purpose of this study. Park and Park (2016) determined the quantitative method was used to examine relationships among variables and test hypotheses. Therefore, the quantitative method was not appropriate because I was not examining relationships or differences among variables. Finally, the mixed method is appropriate when choosing to combine both qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Zivkovic, 2012). Therefore, the mixed method was not appropriate because there is no quantitative component to this study.

I used the case study design for this study. Use of a case study is an effective way to explore a case, bound in time and place, and to generate insights from interviews conducted in real-life settings (Runfola et al., 2016). Therefore, the case study design was appropriate for this study. In contrast, Gill (2014) and Levy (2015) asserted that scholars use phenomenological designs to describe a phenomenon through the perceptions and lived experiences of individuals. Therefore, the phenomenological design was not

appropriate for this study because exploring participants' experiences and perceptions were not the intent of this study. The ethnographic design is yet another approach to qualitative research and is used to explore culture in a real-life setting (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Therefore, the ethnographic design was not appropriate because the intent of this study was not to explore groups' cultures. Rather, my intent was to explore strategies nonprofit leaders used to secure sustainable funding for their organization.

Research Question

I used this qualitative single-case study to explore the following central research question:

What strategies do some nonprofit senior leaders use to secure sustainable funding for their organization from businesses, foundations, and donations?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you use to secure sustainable funding from local businesses, private and public foundations, as well as individual donations?
2. How do you measure the effectiveness of each strategy used?
3. What differences have you identified in strategy use for securing sustainable funding from local businesses, private and public foundations, and individual donations?
4. What processes, knowledge, and skills do you use to support strategies for securing sustainable funding?
5. What additional information do you want to offer about strategies to secure sustainable funding for nonprofit organizations?

Conceptual Framework

I used the general systems theory (GST) as a lens for this qualitative single-case study because nonprofit senior leaders often incorporate various skill sets and processes to maintain and sustain business practices. Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1953) reintroduced the GST in late 1920, building upon the previous work of him and other scientists. Von Bertalanffy developed the GST between 1926 and 1928. While identifying an explanation for biological organisms, von Bertalanffy (1950) provided insights on certain general behaviors or patterns seen in different fields of science, which are the key concepts of the GST. Moeller and Valentinov (2012) argued that nonprofit senior leaders can use the GST as an open system, maintaining that nonprofit senior leaders often struggle in an environment where the supply of critical resources is low. Furthermore, the GST was appropriate for this study because it enabled me to explore the findings from my study and review systems and strategies used by other nonprofit senior leaders that have secured sustainable funding for nonprofit organizations, thus aligning with my research question.

Operational Definitions

The following are definitions of concepts used in this study:

Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework: A holistic management and leadership tool used by senior leaders to address a dynamic environment, focus on strategy-driven performance, achieve customer and workforce engagement, and improve governance and ethics, societal responsibilities, competitiveness, and long-term organizational sustainability (Baldrige, 2015).

General Systems Theory: A theory used to determine the relationship between two organisms where the relationship is viewed as a system (Caws, 2015; von Bertalanffy, 1950, 1953).

Nonprofit Organization: A tax-exempt business created to provide greater quality of life and equity by providing services to the public with no intention of generating profits (Kim, 2015; Stecker, 2014).

Sustainability: The ability to maintain resources for five years or at a particular rate or level (McDonald et al., 2014; Starik & Kanashiro, 2013).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Marshall and Rossman (2015) defined an assumption in qualitative research as an unverified fact. Kirkwood and Price (2013) determined that understanding the assumptions associated with a study helps the researcher to interpret findings appropriately. I assumed four assumptions would influence this study. First, I assumed that the nonprofit senior leaders chosen answered the interview questions honestly. Second, I assumed that a single-case study design was most appropriate. Third, I assumed that a sample size of three nonprofit senior leaders from a single nonprofit organization in Maryland was adequate. Lastly, I assumed that using the 2015-2016 Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework and its Criteria, as a tool to evaluate my client organization, provided a system perspective for the evaluation of the research question. Harvey (2015) found that using a member-checking approach gives the interview

participants the opportunity to review their response data. I used a member-checking approach to validate any assumptions that emerged during the data-collection process.

Limitations

Limitations in a study refer to uncontrollable, potential weaknesses that may have an impact on a study (Marshall & Rossman, 2015; Zivkovic, 2012). Researchers have claimed that limitations include unverified facts that may contain risks that are assumed true until verified (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2015). Furthermore, Kirkwood and Price (2013) proposed that understanding the limitations of a research method allows the researcher to evaluate findings. I assumed five limitations would influence this study. First, using a single-case study design may decrease the generalizability of results because of the small sample size of three nonprofit senior leaders from a single nonprofit organization in Maryland. Second, the recall ability of experiences from the nonprofit senior leaders may limit the depth of information collected. Using probing questions lessened this limitation for me. Third, limiting the population to three senior leaders of a single nonprofit organization in Maryland who used successful strategies to secure sustainable funding for their nonprofit organizations restricted the breadth of perspectives and experiences shared. Fourth, as indicated by Yin (2014), limited results from information collected are possible because of the skills of the interviewer. Fifth, I assumed some participants maintained discretion when answering questions about aspects of the nonprofit organization, such as financial information or business failure. I used triangulation of data derived from interviews and the review of

documents, to include an analysis of performance outcomes data, to address limitations. I used a member-checking approach to address any limitations that may emerge.

Delimitations

I used triangulation of data derived from interviews and the review of documents, to include an analysis of performance outcomes data, to address limitations.

Delimitations identify the bounds or scope of a study (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Marshall & Rossman, 2015). Delimitations included the research question, conceptual framework used, and geographic region included in a study (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The researcher makes the explicit choice to include or exclude the delimitations of a study (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). I used the study population and sample size of three senior leaders of a single nonprofit organization in Maryland who used successful strategies to secure sustainable funding for their nonprofit organization to provide the parameters of this qualitative single-case study. The sample size lacked generalizability and may not represent the larger population of nonprofit senior leaders in the United States.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

This study was of value to business practice because of the leadership perspectives gained by nonprofit senior leaders in strengthening nonprofit organizations through securing sustainable funding. Nonprofit senior leaders often struggle with reductions in funding, as well as diminishing funds and funding sources that may affect the funding sustainability of nonprofit organizations (Mataira et al., 2014). Leaders of nonprofit organizations searching for strategies to secure sustainable funding from

businesses, foundations, and individual donations may benefit from or reduce the potential for business failure by accessing the results of this study. The contributions to professional or practitioner application are the potential increases for the local community (Liu, 2012). Contributions from this study include an increase the understanding of strategies nonprofit senior leaders used for securing sustainable funding and the opportunity to maximize the presence of the nonprofit organization within the local community by helping the population served through the services provided by the nonprofit organization.

Implications for Social Change

The implications for positive social change included the potential to provide nonprofit senior leaders with strategies to secure sustainable funding for their organization from businesses, foundations, and individual donations. Successful nonprofit organizational leaders have a positive effect on the economy (Stecker, 2014). Nonprofit senior leaders who secure sustainable funding may provide a positive influence in communities by reducing unemployment, providing new jobs, contributing to local communities through tax payments, and promoting local philanthropy.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

I used this qualitative single-case study to explore the strategies some nonprofit senior leaders use to secure sustainable funding for their organization from businesses, foundations, and individual donations. Nonprofit senior leaders often struggle with identifying sustainability in competitive markets (Lu, 2015a; McDonald et al., 2014). The lack of government funding and the decline of sustainable donors are obstacles for

nonprofit organizations (McDonald et al., 2014; Moeller & Valentinov, 2012). With donors and government agency contributions diminishing over time, nonprofit senior leaders have found that the lack of funding has garnered disastrous results (Mataira et al., 2014). Kucher (2012) provided survey results from the United States government that showed that 16% of nonprofit organizations met annual operating costs in the United States. Powers and Yaros (2013) identified that the pairing of nonprofit senior leaders and funding source donors had a significant influence on the success of the nonprofit organization.

I explored the strategies nonprofit senior leaders have used to secure sustainable funding. I used the Walden University Library and Google Scholar databases to acquire articles for the literature review. I used Academic Source Complete, Business Source Premier, Emerald, Gale, Google Scholar, Pearson Education, ProQuest Central, Sage Journals, and Science Direct as academic, peer-reviewed databases to complete the literature review. I included the following topics in the literature review: Social need, growth, challenges, funding qualifications, sustainability of nonprofit organizations, innovation in the nonprofit sector, donors, and the profile of a sustainable funding source. I used the key terms *nonprofit organization*, *government funding*, *sustainability*, *nonprofit funding*, *funding sources*, and *nonprofit donors* to search each database. The literature-assembling process included books, peer-reviewed articles, and websites. For the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program, 85% of academic sources referenced must have publication dates within the past five years, which represents the most up-to-date information available. To ensure compliance with the DBA 85% rule, I

consulted over 100 academic sources, of which 85% were peer-reviewed sources published within five years. I used 127 distinctive sources referenced in the literature review, 119 (86% of the sources cited) are recent (100% peer-reviewed research articles) sources published from 2012-2017. I used 110 articles and seven books published in or after 2012 (Table 1). There were nine academic books and zero dissertations cited in the literature review. I also used Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved data sources such as publicly available data, client organization internal data, interviews with senior leaders, as well as performance-outcome data.

Table 1

Literature Review Source Content

Literature Review Content	Total #	# Within 5-Year Range (2012-2017)	% Total Peer-reviewed Within 5-Year Range (2012-2017)
Books	9	7	7
Peer-reviewed articles	110	110	110
Dissertations			
Online resources	8	7	
Total	127	114	127

I used the purpose statement and research question to form the content of the literature review. I assumed the findings of the literature review might provide an understanding to future researchers and their studies, as well as for nonprofit senior leaders researching sustainability of funding. I used this qualitative single-case study to explore strategies some nonprofit senior leaders use to secure sustainable funding for their organization from businesses, foundations, and individual donations.

The target population of this study was three senior leaders of a single nonprofit organization in Maryland who used successful strategies to secure sustainable funding for their nonprofit organization from businesses, foundations, and individual donations. The implications for positive social change included the potential to increase the understanding of strategies nonprofit senior leaders used for securing sustainable funding and funding sustainability, and the maximization of community presence (e.g., the ability for nonprofit senior leaders to share lessons learned about securing sustainable funding in a community of practice).

Informed Consent

As a requirement of Walden University, the DBA program, and an ethical requirement, I obtained informed consent from each participant of the study before conducting research. As a widely accepted legal, ethical, and regulatory requirement, informed consent is an essential component for research involving human beings and ethical research (Barker, 2013; Siricharoen, 2012; Verner & Abdullah, 2012). Aluwihare-Samaranayake (2012) discussed and validated the ethics involved in informed consent, providing that gaining informed consent is mandatory by law. It is vital to communicate and ensure each participant is aware of participant rights, the research question, study methodology, and potential benefits and harms as human subjects (Jedynak, 2014; Lachman, 2013).

Jedynak (2014) proposed that the observation of rules of professional conduct and ethical considerations would generate higher professional standards, reduce conflicts, and limit accusations of dishonesty and impartiality. Jedynak (2014) examined the effects of

informed consent with sociologists in Poland, from the perspective of ethical responsibility and moral conduct. The evidence indicated that public confidence is essential in research studies and trust professions (Adena, 2016; Jedynak, 2014). Subsequently, Adena (2016) stated that observing professional conduct rules may result in higher standards, unbiased outcomes, and participants going unharmed. Social responsibility and the protection of human subjects is crucial in conducting acceptable research, which Aluwihare-Samaranayake (2012) expressed also enables the participant and facilitates the achievement of empowerment.

Phelan and Kinsella (2012) discovered obtaining informed consent, maintaining confidentiality, and collecting accurate and relevant data, as well as protecting participant data is a critical task, which included privacy rights and safeguarding. Providing the opportunity for each participant to receive information on how researchers will safeguard information aids in the understanding of confidentiality and consent (Barker, 2013; Phelan & Kinsella, 2012).

Annas (2017) conveyed that informed consent provides research participants with an informed choice, putting emphasis on the process and provides clear information and education of participant rights. Informed consent encouraged knowledge sharing, whereas, others deemed it as counterproductive (Sawicki, 2017). Providing proof of informed consent from each participant is a requirement of Walden University's IRB approval process. Most academic institutions have ethics committees or IRBs that review student studies that involve human subjects as research participants (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Phelan & Kinsella, 2012). The IRB is responsible for reviewing the research

proposals of students before any human involvement starts during the research process. I obtained IRB approval (#09-16-16-0625729) for my study by submitting a request to Walden University's IRB (Walden, 2017), which ensured my study complied with federal regulations and Walden University requirements. I assumed the results from this study might demonstrate the importance of informed consent when studying nonprofit organizations.

General Systems Theory

Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1950) defined the GST as a theory used to determine the relationship between two organisms, or a system, in 1928 (Caws, 2015; von Bertalanffy, 1950, 1953). Ludwig von Bertalanffy introduced the GST in 1928 and is considered the founder of the GST, which he identified as a tool used for many problems (Caws, 2015; von Bertalanffy, 1950, 1953). To move the theory forward, the theorist introduced the GST in a German language journal in 1937, with the original paper going unpublished until 1945 (von Bertalanffy, 1968). Von Bertalanffy initially based the GST on the relationship between biological systems and the symbiosis that occurs between plant and animal communities (von Bertalanffy, 1950, 1953). A system must remain open for energy to flow and to exchange information between two or more parties (von Bertalanffy, 1968). I used the GST as the conceptual framework to explore how nonprofit senior leaders used strategies to secure sustainable funding for their organization from businesses, foundations, and individual donations.

Von Bertalanffy's approach toward studying complex systems emerged from his study of biology, with a focus on interactive relationships (von Bertalanffy, 1968, 1972).

In his work, von Bertalanffy emphasized the organism as an open system, retaining a nonequilibrium steady state, while maintaining continuous action within the environment (von Bertalanffy 1950, 1968). Von Bertalanffy created the GST to help others define the most efficient method to achieve a goal. As the founder of the GST, he described the applicability of the GST to people and organizations as a breakthrough. Von Bertalanffy promoted the GST as a conventional, key method in science (von Bertalanffy, 1968). He often compared his findings to the works of Isaac Newton and the behavior of tides and planets, as well as the behavior of apples and annual crop yields within the farming industry (von Bertalanffy, 1968). In 2017, the GST is used not only to understand biological processes, but also to explore the relationships between two communities of practice or the interaction between two systems.

Von Bertalanffy (1950, 1953) often encouraged his goal of helping others become masters of the technological forces of the world, rather than victims. He focused on the individual as an essential component of social organizations, while establishing efforts toward embedding a grassroots involvement in global, participatory democracy with a goal of an increasingly worldwide and inclusive perspective in others (von Bertalanffy, 1968, 1972). Von Bertalanffy (1950, 1953, 1968) also emphasized broadening the system through evaluating the process of examining goals or problems from the global perspective and a variety of lenses by focusing on emerging and innovative ways to establish relationships and achieve sustainability. Von Bertalanffy's attempt to move GST from the biological realm to the social realm was opposed by his colleagues for

years; however, scholars showed increased interest in the GST as a feasible social theory approximately ten years before von Bertalanffy died (Caws, 2015).

Researchers have further refined the theory as a study of patterns of relationships between various systems, fields, areas of knowledge, or subsystems (Caws, 2015; von Bertalanffy, 1968). In recent years, scholars shortened the name of the GST to systems theory, as scholars refined the system into a framework to evaluate and classify the world (von Bertalanffy, 1968). I chose the GST because of the authenticity the theory brings to this study. Future researchers may gain insight when using the GST as a seminal theory for studies about sustainability; however, a 21st-century theory may generate different results. Furthermore, using a 21st-century theory may provide future scholars with a more current and timely worldview to explore sustainability.

Alternatives to the GST. As alternatives to the GST, the government failure theory, sustainability management theory, or resource dependence theory, are used to study nonprofit organizations and sustainability of funding. The government failure theory emerged from investigations into the relationship between outsourced services and population density (Grand, 1991). Researchers have used the government failure theory to determine the loss of government funds and dependence on funding for outreach for communities in need (Grand, 1991). Grand (1991) discovered that using this theory allows scholars to understand the loss felt by nonprofit senior leaders from a lack of government or other sustainable funding sources. As nonprofit senior leaders benefit from securing sustainable funding for their organization from businesses, foundations, and individual donations, the donations often extended to the surrounding population,

satisfying the physical and social needs of its residents. The relationship between the donations and populations often led to the incorporation of alternative resources and free services provided by nonprofit senior leaders (Froelich, 1999; Kucher, 2012).

Researchers may prefer to use 21st-century theories because of the challenges and potential opportunities missed when using older theories to address current issues (Starik & Kanashiro, 2013). I chose the GST because it is a seminal theory that allowed me to understand the dynamics of sustainable funding includes an emphasis on the availability of open systems and evolving resource dependence. Using a newer theory such as the sustainability management theory or resource dependence theory may provide future scholars more significant results.

Alternatives to the GST may stimulate research into the collaboration between two systems, as well as the sustainability of services within a complex network of inputs, outputs, and interactions with donors. Researchers have identified both the sustainability management theory and the resource dependency theory as alternatives to the GST (Froelich, 1999; Starik & Kanashiro, 2013). Scholars may use the sustainability management theory to evaluate the decisions and actions of individuals, organizations, and society (Starik & Kanashiro, 2013). The resource dependency theory may provide the ability of survival through the procurement of external resources for future scholars (Froelich, 1999; Starik & Kanashiro, 2013; Suárez & Hwang, 2013).

Maryland's Changing Economic Structure and Population Growth

Maryland averaged a household median income of \$75,847 in 2015, with a poverty rate of 9.7%, which was lower than the national average of 13.5% (Independent Sector, 2017). The population in Maryland fluctuated since the early 1900s, but remained steady in recent years despite declines in dense areas such as Baltimore County (Census, 2017). In 2016, the population in Maryland exceeded 6 million, with international migration integral to the growth of the population, despite the slowing down of gains since 2015 (Census, 2017). The international migration rate of 4.8 per 1000 persons ranked seventh among all states between 2010 and 2015 (Census, 2017). Changes in the economic structure and population growth and decline posed as challenges, which led to insufficient resources, creating an opening for nonprofit organizations in Maryland (Census, 2017; Independent Sector, 2017; Kim, 2015). A lack of programs and services available to those with diminished financial capacities also affected the needs of residents in Maryland.

The number of nonprofit organizations increased 42% between 2005 and 2015 because of demand and increases in the social need of community residents (Blackwood, Roeger, & Pettijohn, 2012; Kim, 2015). With 1.4 million nonprofit organizations operating in the United States, only 16% sustained operating costs in 2016 (Independent Sector, 2017). The role of the nonprofit senior leader was to create and sustain programs within the nonprofit organization to promote healthier communities, despite changes in the economic structure and fluctuations in population growth (Kim, 2015). Nonprofit senior leaders used nonprofit organizations to serve the public, while collaborating with

and supplementing the offerings of the government and maintaining a cohesive relationship with stakeholders (Adena, 2016; Kim, 2015). Leaders of effective nonprofit organizations aided in the stabilization of families, enhance survival, and increase the continuation of free programs and services provided throughout communities (Kim, 2015; Lu, 2015b; Sokolowski, 2013; Wiggill, 2014).

Social Need in Maryland

Many communities benefited from nonprofit organizations whose leaders efficiently provide services that meet the social and physical needs of residents (Lu, 2015a; 2015b). The social and physical needs of residents reflected the diminishing resources and income disparity of the overall community (Kim, 2015; Modi, 2012). In 2016, nonprofit senior leaders of approximately 29,707 registered nonprofit organizations provided products and services to residents in Maryland, meeting the social needs of local communities (Independent Sector, 2017). Deprivation, poverty, social burdens, and recessions often served as the reasons behind the need for nonprofit senior leaders to create and provide services to local communities (Lu, 2015a; Mataire et al., 2014; Modi, 2012). For example, I found that nonprofit senior leaders often stated that the reliance or dependence on nonprofit organizations may have emerged from unemployment or other financial hardships of residents (Lu, 2015a; Modi, 2012).

Guo (2012) found that social need was associated with education level, geographic location, and poverty status of an individual. Guo (2012) treated social need as synonymous with material hardship and defined it more specifically as the ability of an individual to meet their food, housing, and medical needs at the lowest level. Nonprofit

senior leaders provided solutions to members of communities served and have become dependent on the trends that influence the effectiveness and sustainability of the business environment (McDonald et al., 2014; Shehu, Becker, Langmaack, & Clement, 2016; Starik & Kanashiro, 2013). Remaining receptive to the changing conditions of the community allowed nonprofit senior leaders to fulfill the needs of its residents. Nonprofit senior leaders benefited by continuing to provide solutions and services that furthered the development of the community, as well as promoted the social needs of its residents (Follman, Cseh, & Brudney, 2016; Stecker, 2014; Toledano & Maplesden, 2016). In Maryland, nonprofit senior leaders offered solutions to community problems, satisfying the social needs of its residents (Kim, 2015). With changing demographics and social needs of residents fluctuating over time, the activities of nonprofit senior leaders must also change accordingly.

Growth of Nonprofit Organizations in Maryland

The nonprofit sector has grown to 1.4 million nonprofit organizations operating worldwide in 2016 (Independent Sector, 2017; Stecker, 2014). Registered nonprofit organizations increased by 42% in the last decade (Kim, 2015). There were 29,707 identified nonprofit organizations in Maryland in October 2016 (Independent Sector, 2017). Lu (2015b) assessed that the growth of nonprofit organizations in Maryland stemmed from a reliance on community assistance needed to supplement or provide services in a diminished economy. Demand often grew where communities needed free services the most, creating a dependence on nonprofit organizations and senior leaders (Lu, 2015a; Lu, 2015b; Shier & Handy, 2015). An increased demand for services and a

fluctuating population in the 1900s led nonprofit senior leaders to create nonprofit organizations across the country.

Nonprofit senior leaders attributed the growth of nonprofit organizations in Maryland to the changing needs of its residents and acquisition of sustainable funding sources. Meeting the physical and social needs of academic and cultural initiatives grew to 29,707 in Maryland in October 2016 (Independent Sector, 2017). As resources diminished, nonprofit senior leaders evolved, using innovation and communication to develop new methods to achieve sustainability (Liu, 2012; Lu, 2015a; Matairea et al., 2014; Wiggill, 2014). Innovation for some nonprofit senior leaders included collaboration with for-profit organizations to form hybrid organizations. Researchers considered a hybrid organization as a for-profit company working within a nonprofit organizational market, often providing similar products and services for a fee (Follman et al., 2016; Lu, 2015a; Sokolowski, 2013). Rather than demonstrate a commitment to for-profit work, some nonprofit senior leaders focused on innovative measures, such as a commitment to advocacy and social action to fulfill the social and physical needs of residents (Follman et al., 2016; Lu, 2015a; Shier & Handy, 2015; Sokolowski, 2013).

Presence of Nonprofit Organizations in Maryland. The presence of nonprofit organizations in Maryland initially grew because of the need to meet the requirements of its residents (Lu, 2015a). The growth occurred because of the increase in demand for services and fluctuation of the population. The presence of nonprofit organizations in Maryland continued to increase as nonprofit senior leaders continued to meet the changing needs of the community (Independent Sector, 2017; Kim, 2015).

Nonprofit senior leaders provided services to address social issues and policy advocacy, despite government contributions (Clear, 2017; Kim, 2015; Lu, 2015b). Most nonprofit organizations provided services in the following subsectors: religion, human services, mutual, public, and societal benefit, education, healthcare, arts, culture and humanities, environment and animal related, and international (Blackwood et al., 2012; Hu, Kapucu, & O’Byrne, 2014; Lu, 2015b). In October 2016, the Independent Sector (2017) reported that there were 29,707 nonprofit organizations in Maryland, inclusive of 501(c)(3) public charities and private and public foundations, as well as other 501(c) nonprofit organizations, civic leagues, chambers of commerce, veteran’s organizations, etc. (Table 2).

Table 2

The Nonprofit Sector in Maryland

Nonprofit Service Area	Percentage of Maryland Nonprofits
Religion	24%
Human services	23%
Mutual, public, and societal benefit	16%
Education	15%
Health care	8%
Arts, culture, and humanities	8%
Environment and animal related	4%
International	2%

Note. From Independent Sector. (2017). *Independent Sector 2016-2017 Annual Report*. <https://www.independentsector.org/resource/2016-2017-annual-report>

Qualifying a Nonprofit Organization for Funding

Qualifying a nonprofit organization for funding required nonprofit senior leaders to prove trustworthy, efficient, and credible in reputation and fundraising efforts (Reda, 2012). To obtain status as a nonprofit organization, the nonprofit senior leader must have understood and met the requirements of local, state, and federal regulations. Ensuring trustworthiness and meeting requirements for funding were the responsibilities of nonprofit senior leaders and essential in qualifying the nonprofit organization for funding (Shehu et al., 2016). Nonprofit senior leaders benefited from staying current with funding requirements to remain in business.

The most critical component for nonprofit senior leaders in qualifying as a nonprofit organization was to prove to potential donors that with adequate funding, the nonprofit organization could meet the needs of the community (Blackwood et al., 2012; Hu et al., 2014). Nonprofit senior leaders ensured the mission, vision, and performance of

the organization accurately reflected and aligned with the needs of the community for effectiveness (Kim, 2015; Reda, 2012; Sokolowski, 2013). Senior leaders of nonprofit organizations in Maryland must create solutions that met the needs of the community, as well as be formed for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, or educational purposes and met the requirements for federal and state tax exemptions to qualify as a nonprofit organization (Independent Sector, 2017). Researchers posited that nonprofit senior leaders met established requirements, justified the needs of the community, confirmed the necessity of need, and benefited the government as a nonprofit donor to receive government funding (Kim, 2015; Sokolowski, 2013). Government funding may have been difficult to secure (Kim 2015). Therefore, nonprofit senior leaders must have justified and confirmed with donors the benefits the nonprofit organization offered to the community (Modi, 2012).

Fundraising was also imperative to securing adequate funding to meet the needs of the community. Donors tended to engage with organizations that promoted similar interests, which indicated the internal motivations and desires of donors (Blackwood et al., 2012; Reda, 2012; Shehu et al., 2016). Raising funds led to nonprofit senior leaders qualifying for funding from other donors because some donors required proof of internal stability and sustainability before committing funds. Powers and Yaros (2013) discovered that nonprofit senior leaders benefited from the diversity that came with fundraising, as an alternative to sustainable funding. Nonprofit senior leaders gained a diverse array of funding sources when seeking donors, such as funding from businesses, foundations, and

individual donations. Each donor represented a diverse background; therefore, the nonprofit senior leader gained the experience, expertise, and worldview of all donors.

The Declining Economy in Maryland

Deprivation and poverty were characteristics of many communities in Maryland (Independent Sector, 2017; Kim, 2015). In 2000, nonprofit senior leaders and organizations plateaued because of a decrease in government funding support (Kim, 2015; Lu, 2015b; Matairea et al., 2014). In a fluctuating economy, the residents of Maryland encountered diminished purchasing power and higher unemployment rates, which increased the need for free services (Independent Sector, 2017; Kim, 2015). Unforeseen social burdens, recessions, and a lack of government funding often resulted in changes to the social and physical needs of residents, turning communities to the services provided by nonprofit senior leaders (Hu et al., 2014; Kim, 2015; Matairea et al., 2014; Modi, 2012).

In the late 1990s, leaders of for-profit organizations sustained steady growth in business, creating an increased imbalance between for-profit and hybrid organizations, as well as nonprofit organizations (Follman et al., 2016; Lu, 2015a; Sokolowski, 2013). Increased demand for services offered by for-profit and hybrid organizations presented significant challenges for nonprofit senior leaders, which community residents depended on to receive free services (Hu et al., 2014; Lu, 2015a; Sokolowski, 2013; Wiggill, 2014). Nonprofit senior leaders who failed to gain donor support created gaps in the market, which resulted in opportunities for for-profit organizations and posed challenges to the local community (Lu, 2015a; Shier & Handy, 2015; Sokolowski, 2013).

Kim (2015) offered for-profit organizations becoming increasingly common because leaders ascended quickly into the market in Maryland, offering similar services to nonprofit organizations. The motivation behind the for-profit business was the same; however, the effect on the community differed drastically because of the physical and social needs of the community. Hybrid organizations, or for-profit businesses that paired with nonprofit organizations and operated in nonprofit markets, also provided an adversarial effect on the nonprofit senior leader (Follman et al., 2016; Shier & Handy, 2015; Sokolowski, 2013). Leaders of hybrid and for-profit organizations saw poor economies as an opportunity to invade the nonprofit sector, often decreasing the presence and availability of nonprofit organizations (Follman et al., 2016; Shier & Handy, 2015; Sokolowski, 2013). Nonprofit senior leaders identified a decline in the economy in Maryland as an ongoing issue.

Challenges for Nonprofit Organizations in Maryland

Challenges for nonprofit organizations in Maryland included (a) volunteer recruitment, (b) soliciting funds, (c) managing debt, and (4) leadership gaps (Clear, 2017; Lu, 2015a; Sokolowski, 2013). The most recognizable challenge for most nonprofit senior leaders was long-term sustainability, followed by competition (Hu et al., 2014; Lu, 2015a; McDonald et al., 2014; Wiggill, 2014). The challenges became increasingly difficult for nonprofit senior leaders to recruit employees and volunteers, as well as deliver programs and services that matched the needs of residents (Clear, 2017; Hu et al., 2014; Lu, 2015a).

Individuals that volunteered at nonprofit organizations started as well-intentioned novices that grew into trained, unpaid professionals with the help of the nonprofit senior leader (Follman et al., 2016; Shehu et al., 2016). A volunteer that understood the importance of the work the nonprofit organization provided to the community increased volunteer dedication and identity (McDonald et al., 2014). In addition, losing volunteers proved problematic for some nonprofit senior leaders (Clear, 2017). Furthermore, nonprofit senior leaders stated that smaller organizations tended to have a higher level of advocacy among its volunteers (Clear, 2017). Nonprofit senior leaders realized the challenge of not only providing services to the community, but also to volunteers that assisted the nonprofit organization.

Soliciting funds despite a lack of continued support was also a challenge some nonprofit senior leaders faced (Blackwood et al., 2012; Follman et al., 2016; Hu et al., 2014). Financially vulnerable nonprofit senior leaders were less likely to receive donations from committed donors because of current or pending debt. The debt of the nonprofit senior leaders proved challenging for potential or current donors (Calabrese & Grizzle, 2012). Some donors wanted to hold a position of input with nonprofit senior leaders in an attempt to make decisions as to where their donations were applied (Adena, 2016; Calabrese & Grizzle, 2012; Wiggill, 2014). Potential donors wanted to ensure their donations were covering current and future expenditures and no previous programming efforts. New donors also required nonprofit senior leaders to seek debt management training before donating (Cheney, Merchant, & Killins, 2012).

Some nonprofit senior leaders suffered from leadership gaps, which proved challenging for the nonprofit organization (Gilstrap & Morris, 2015). The leadership gaps of nonprofit senior leaders included poor decision-making or a lack of financial management skills (Cheney et al., 2012; Gilstrap & Morris, 2015). Despite donations from sustainable funding sources, these leadership gaps proved challenging for nonprofit senior leaders in satisfying the needs of volunteers.

Other challenges for nonprofit senior leaders included the increased presence of hybrid, for-profit, and government organizations that provided services similar to nonprofit organizations (Follman et al., 2016; Lu, 2015a; Sokolowski, 2013; Wiggill, 2014). Other notable challenges incurred by nonprofit senior leaders included technological advancements, continuous engagement with donors for support, relationship building, civic management, shifts in the demographic makeup or population of a community, and the introduction of both private sector and government entities (Acs, Boardman, & McNeely, 2013; Clear, 2017). The deductions that nonprofit organizations offered to government, private, corporate, and community organizations often diminished, which also created challenges for nonprofit senior leaders (Kim, 2015; Kucher, 2012; Norris-Tirrell et al., 2014).

Sustainability of Nonprofit Organizations

The sustainability of a nonprofit organization was often challenged by shortages of federal revenue, shortened or canceled government agreements, and diminished donor and foundation funding (Mataira et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2014; Sokolowski, 2013). Nonprofit senior leaders of smaller nonprofit organizations often relied on the charitable

efforts of locals, as well as donations from the community and corporate donations (Baker, Kan, and Stephen, 2011; Follman et al., 2016; Hu et al., 2014). Maintaining sustainable funding and donor relationships was essential for nonprofit senior leaders to make an evident difference, maintain effectiveness, as well as competitiveness (Kim, 2015; Liu, 2012; Matairea et al., 2014). Researchers noted that the value of sustainability was essential to the nonprofit senior leader, the nonprofit organization, and the government (Choi & Choi, 2014; Kim, 2015; Liu, 2012; Lu, 2015b).

To achieve sustainability, leaders of declining economies often drew on new and innovative strategies from the community, to include residents, nonprofit senior leaders, hybrid organizations, and for-profit organizations (Follman et al., 2016; Modi, 2012; Sokolowski, 2013; Toledano & Maplesden, 2016). Many nonprofit senior leaders struggled with sustainability, but strived to establish and retain adequate funding during an economic downturn (Baker et al., 2011). Developing solutions to challenges within the communities served helped nonprofit senior leaders survive in a declining economy (Follman et al., 2016; Hu et al., 2014).

Leveraging links between committed donors and nonprofit senior leaders helped strengthen sustainability (Sokolowski, 2013). Successful nonprofit senior leaders must continuously find ways to secure sustainable funding (Choi & Choi, 2014). Sustainability may come from businesses, foundations, and individual donations (Matairea et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2014; Modi, 2012). Baker et al. (2011) theorized that using a shared value network proved useful when attempting to satisfy the sustainability needs of nonprofit senior leaders. Baker et al. (2011) further articulated that a shared value

network was a unified effort between nonprofit organizations, stakeholders, and the community; designed to strengthen financial ties to sustain necessary services.

The initiatives promoted by advocacy groups and program leaders often determined the assessment and retention of services provided by nonprofit senior leaders (Clear, 2017; Powers & Yaros, 2013; Prendergast & Maggie, 2013). The initiatives, whether in education, athletics, or human services, often compelled potential donors to act on behalf of the interests of society (Lu, 2015b; McDonald et al., 2014). For example, a nonprofit senior leader with a sports-based organization generated the attention of current and former athletes and athletic organizations, while fostering self-dependence (Sokolowski, 2013). Sokolowski (2013) advised that when nonprofit senior leaders fostered a balanced environment of self-dependence and advocacy, they attracted large donors to their nonprofit organization. By taking steps to reduce full dependency on free services, nonprofit senior leaders benefited from providing programs that filled gaps in deficient areas.

To remain sustainable, nonprofit senior leaders benefited from leveraging current and cultivating emerging relationships with small and large donors (Follman et al., 2016; Hu et al., 2014). Follman et al. (2016) and Stecker (2014) discovered that nonprofit senior leaders foster new and lasting relationships within the community to obtain donors. Partnering with other similar organizations or those in need allowed nonprofit senior leaders to appear more attractive to donors, especially when the nonprofit senior leader paired with a disadvantaged or environmentally sensitive cause, such as hurricane or tornado relief efforts (Baker et al., 2011; Follman et al., 2016). It was imperative for

the nonprofit senior leader to ensure that the mission, vision, values, and contributions to the nonprofit organization remained aligned with current and future donors to remain sustainable.

Innovation in the Nonprofit Sector

Nonprofit senior leaders benefited from using creative and innovative means for generating revenue and promoting the business (Choi, 2016). Marketing tools such as internal marketing campaigns have returned positively for nonprofit senior leaders since the 1970s (Choi, 2016); however, traditional fundraising efforts did not generate the same results as in years past, which created new challenges (Baker et al., 2011; Follman et al., 2016; Hu et al., 2014). Nonprofit senior leaders used innovation to increase social change in the communities served (Choi & Choi, 2014; Shier & Handy, 2015). Innovation was an emerging concept (Choi & Choi, 2014) and was defined as the method nonprofit senior leaders used to adapt or change practices in use because of internal demands or changes to the external environment of the nonprofit organization (Shier & Handy, 2015).

Nonprofit senior leaders used social innovations to create or enhance changes that benefited the organization and the community served (Choi & Choi, 2014; Shier & Handy, 2015). Using social innovation efficiently provided the nonprofit senior leader the means to stimulate ideas and build an atmosphere of imaginative thinking (Mataira et al., 2014). Nonprofit senior leaders maximized social impact by receiving training in organizational processes such as leadership and organizational development, available technologies, and sustainability, which were essential to the planning of the nonprofit senior leader and success of the nonprofit organization. While most nonprofit senior

leaders operated with a deficit in funding, social innovation was difficult to implement, but understanding and overcoming these challenges helped redirect sustainability for the nonprofit senior leader (Mataira et al., 2014).

Drawing on innovation was vital for nonprofit senior leaders, which helped with providing solutions in communities (Choi & Choi, 2014; Shier & Handy, 2015). Changes to programs and initiatives that met the changing social and physical needs of the community served, fundraising initiatives, resource sharing, and advances in technology all reflected innovation in the nonprofit sector (Choi & Choi, 2014; Shier & Handy, 2015; Stecker, 2014). Nonprofit senior leaders reaped gains by infiltrating and changing the culture of poverty by incorporating innovation, leadership, resource allocation, and partnering with committed donors (Choi, 2016; Kim, 2015; Lu, 2015b). Resource development, combined with innovation, leadership, and partnering with committed donors allowed the nonprofit senior leader to influence change within a community in a declining economy (Baker et al., 2011; Follman et al., 2016). Committed donors, combined with innovative techniques, proved essential to sustaining nonprofit organizations.

Sustainability of Donors

To remain sustainable, the nonprofit senior leader demonstrated and met the needs of the residents of the local community. Building strong relationships with the communities served by the nonprofit senior leader proved important (Lu, 2015a; Mataira et al., 2014; Powers & Yaros, 2013). The building of relationships emerged through fundraising efforts and promotion across various platforms, to include social media

platforms, working with other nonprofit senior leaders, and soliciting local donations (Follman et al., 2016; Sriramesh, Rivera-Sánchez, & Soriano, 2013; Stecker, 2014). With the most critical funding source for nonprofit organizations often the government (Kim, 2015; Lu, 2015b; Mataira et al., 2014), to meet requirements for funding, nonprofit senior leaders demonstrated a need for funding and the ability to meet the needs of the community served (Follman et al., 2016; Hu et al., 2014; Kim, 2015). The finances gained through relationship building helped nonprofit senior leaders improve social conditions by sustaining the services provided (Follman et al., 2016; Stecker, 2014).

Mataira et al. (2014) confirmed government funding became increasingly difficult to acquire for nonprofit senior leaders, making the need for sustainable funding sources vital. Nonprofit senior leaders conveyed the importance of funding sustainability to all potential donors (McDonald et al., 2014; Starik & Kanashiro, 2013). The sustainability of funding allowed the nonprofit senior leader to continue to provide services to the community, as well as meet the evolving needs of residents.

Senior leaders strengthened their ability to meet the continuing needs of the community from the funds provided by committed businesses, foundations, and individual donations. Modi (2012) encouraged that the goal of a nonprofit senior leader was to fulfill the needs of the community through the services provided by nonprofit organizations, despite the current state of the economy. The ability of nonprofit senior leaders to maintain sustainability, even in a downturned economic state, also drew potential donors (Hu et al., 2014; Modi, 2012). Trustworthiness, credibility, effectiveness, reputation, and fundraising efforts were all critical factors that potential

sustainable donors considered when supporting a nonprofit organization (Anney, 2014; Elo, Kaariainen, Kanste, Polkki, Utriainen, & Kyngas, 2014).

Nonprofit senior leaders viewed donor sustainability in four elements: (a) analyzing the budget, (b) considering the number of activities presented by the nonprofit organization per year, (c) realizing the level of reputation of the nonprofit organization and nonprofit senior leaders, which relate to (d) donor funding. This cycle was repeated as much as possible by nonprofit senior leaders to retain donor funding and achieve donor sustainability (Prendergast & Maggie, 2013).

Contributions. Nonprofit senior leaders used committed donors, fundraising, government support, and private and public foundation funds as contributors to maintain community resources, increase economic structure, and motivate populations toward growth (Adena, 2016; Kim, 2015; Mataire et al., 2014). Maryland residents contributed 5.3 billion dollars to charity each year, which represented 3.2 percent of household income annually (Independent Sector, 2017). The contribution of committed donors provided programs and services that led to the sustainability of services in the nonprofit sector (Blackwood et al., 2012; Hu et al., 2014; Kim, 2015). The contributions of nonprofit senior leaders and nonprofit organizations provided much-needed goods and services to impoverished and struggling communities. Using for-profit organizations as donors was a conventional, yet resource-rich method to raise money for nonprofit senior leaders (Suárez & Hwang, 2013).

The donations from a committed donor aided in the promotion of programs and services provided by the nonprofit organization; which improved social standards and

resource distribution where necessary in local communities. In addition, nonprofit senior leaders benefited from aligning business activities of the nonprofit organization with the needs and desires of donors because proper alignment aided in the decrease or elimination of donor fatigue. Donor fatigue also served as a challenge for nonprofit senior leaders of small organizations, leading to instability in obtaining sustainable funding (Follman et al., 2016; Gilstrap & Morris, 2015; Hu et al., 2014). Combatting donor fatigue was important for nonprofit senior leaders, which decreased as nonprofit senior leaders promoted the achievements and contributions of donors (Liu, 2012; Prendergast & Maggie, 2013; Powers & Yaros, 2013).

Connecting with Donors. Researchers implied the sustainability and survival of the nonprofit organization were essential to the private and public sector, alike (McDonald et al., 2014; Powers & Yaros, 2013; Stecker, 2014). To create a competitive edge, nonprofit senior leaders turned to social media to connect with current donors and to reach a wider audience (Liu, 2012; Powers & Yaros, 2013; Stecker, 2014). Senior leaders constructed robust communication plans, and alignment with donor mission, vision, and values were essential for nonprofit senior leaders in soliciting donations to avoid financial hardships. Researchers touted consistent donor contributions were necessary to nonprofit senior leaders' ability to contribute to the community and maintain sustainability (Liu, 2012; Matairea et al., 2014; Powers & Yaros, 2013).

Nonprofit senior leaders with well-developed connections inspired collaborations across networks, strengthening the position of the nonprofit organization (Mohammed & Thomas, 2014). Senior leaders using social media platforms increased their ability to

connect with current and potential donors (Mataira et al., 2014; Sriramesh et al., 2013; Wiggill, 2014). Sriramesh et al. (2013) expressed that connecting with donors was a critical activity for nonprofit senior leaders. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and PayPal were everyday communication and networking platforms used by nonprofit senior leaders and donors (Sriramesh et al., 2013).

Nonprofit senior leaders maintained and developed the knowledge and skills necessary to utilize online, electronic methods of communication, promotion, and payment acceptance (Clear, 2017; Mataira et al., 2014). Keeping up with emerging technologies helped nonprofit senior leaders to identify, connect with, and secure commitment from current donors, as well as provided an opportunity to communicate with and obtain funding from potential donors (Mainardes, Lauret, Degasperi, & Lasso, 2016; McDonald et al., 2014). Using social media platforms also allowed nonprofit senior leaders the opportunity to provide information about the success and costs of the success for donors (Mataira et al., 2014). By nonprofit senior leaders making the availability of information more accessible for everyone, nonprofit senior leaders provided donors the opportunity to review information and realize connections with the nonprofit organization (Wiggill, 2014).

Nonprofit senior leaders benefited from displaying for public view the mission, and vision of the nonprofit organization on social media platforms, which was most effective. Donors were more likely to give when cultural and social dimensions aligned (Adena, 2016; Calabrese & Grizzle, 2012). Nonprofit senior leaders benefited from ensuring social media platforms included an explanation of services provided to the

community, as well as a request for financial support, to attract the attention of large and small donors (Mataira et al., 2014; Prendergast & Maggie, 2013; Suárez & Hwang, 2013; Wiggill, 2014). Allowing donors to review pertinent information about the nonprofit organization allowed donors to see value and created an opportunity for donors to see how the actions and decisions of nonprofit senior leaders reflected positively on the donor (Liu, 2012; Wiggill, 2014).

Nonprofit senior leaders that provided pertinent information on social media platforms allowed current and former donors the opportunity to review the information about the organization and the opportunity to donate at their leisure. Nonprofit senior leaders that had an electronic or online method for accepting financial donations on their social media platforms was vital because donors contributed more readily and at their leisure (Sriramesh et al., 2013). Nonprofit senior leaders used existing connections with donors to establish and maintain long-term relationships (Liu, 2012; Lu, 2015b; Mataira et al., 2014; Powers & Yaros, 2013). Nonprofit senior leaders connecting with donors also helped the nonprofit senior leader retain committed donors.

Committed Donors

Committed donors represent a sustainable funding source that promoted the physical and social needs of the community (McDonald et al., 2014; Prendergast & Maggie, 2013; Wagner, 2015). Nonprofit senior leaders relied on sustainable funding, the bountifulness and dedication of committed donors, and charitable giving (McDonald et al. 2014). In 2016, annual giving from Maryland foundations included approximately 736 million dollars, while holding nearly 126.6 billion in assets (Independent Sector, 2017).

Nonprofit senior leaders in Maryland employed 250,300 persons, making up roughly 13% of the workforce (Independent Sector, 2017). Furthermore, leaders of Maryland foundations gave over \$736 million per year (Independent Sector, 2017). Nonprofit senior leaders often faced conflict and concern as cash donations tended to slow or stop after the initial donation (Mainardes et al., 2016; Wiggill, 2014). As a process improvement plan for nonprofit senior leaders, understanding the life cycle of committed donors was important for nonprofit senior leaders.

Donor views differed from those of nonprofit senior leaders or the mission and vision of the organization. Therefore, nonprofit senior leaders benefited from a shared leadership in the decision-making process (Mainardes et al., 2016; Mohammed & Thomas, 2014; Wagner, 2015). The act of giving also provided natural benefits to donors, such as suppressing selfish urges, increasing happiness, increasing health, reducing inflammation, and strengthening immunity (Wagner, 2015). When donor motivation and the philosophy of the nonprofit senior leaders aligned, donors were more likely to donate (Prendergast & Maggie, 2013; Wiggill, 2014). Donors contributed more readily or at higher amounts when inspired by or firmly connected to the decisions of nonprofit senior leaders. Donors also contributed when the record of service by nonprofit senior leaders was known (Liu, 2012; Lu, 2015a). The motivation of committed donors varied, based on the size of the nonprofit organizations and worldview of the senior leaders, employees, volunteers, and stakeholders (Mohammed & Thomas, 2014; Wiggill, 2014).

Interests of Committed Donors. Nonprofit senior leaders continued to balance the physical and social needs of residents, continued to raise money, as well as

maintained an understanding of the interests of current and potential committed donors to remain competitive (Lu, 2015a; McDonald et al., 2014). The demonstration of funding needs, and the success of the organization was contingent upon nonprofit senior leaders drawing on the specific interests of committed donors (Choi, 2016; Hu et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2014). Furthermore, nonprofit senior leaders failed to gain or maintain the interests of donors, the ability to provide services and remain sustainable diminished (Baker et al., 2011). Understanding the worldview and interests of donors was most important in maintaining positive relationships with nonprofit senior leaders (Kim, 2015; Lu, 2015b).

Committed donors were not hesitant in indulging in philanthropic efforts, often serving as the link between nonprofit senior leaders and networks of novice and elite donors (Suárez & Hwang, 2013; Wagner, 2015). Donors under 40 years old, specifically, often identified where their donations would have the most significant impact (Wagner, 2015). To do so, these donors tended to focus on a small number of nonprofit organizations to determine characteristics that align most with their interests, combined with how their involvement, connections, and resources overlap or serve a variety of purposes (Lu, 2015a; Wagner, 2015). Committed donors often focused on the outcome or long-term effects of their contributions to the nonprofit organization, emphasizing areas that had the greatest significance (Wagner, 2015).

Nonprofit senior leaders benefited from maintaining an intimate knowledge of donors, to include previous activities, perceived benefits, and costs associated with committed donors (Norris-Tirrell et al., 2014; Prendergast & Maggie, 2013; Powers &

Yaros, 2013). The interests of donors changed; therefore, it was crucial that nonprofit senior leaders remain connected and committed to donors (Powers & Yaros, 2013; Prendergast & Maggie, 2013). Researchers communicated that the benefit of cultivating and maintaining an open and honest relationship with donors was beneficial to the short- and long-term success of nonprofit senior leaders. Conversely, nonprofit senior leaders appealing to the interests of donors was imperative because the benefits often outweighed the costs to the donor (Lu, 2015a; Powers & Yaros, 2013).

Motivation of Committed Donors. Understanding the motivation or altruism of potential committed donors was necessary for the nonprofit senior leader (Modi, 2012; Reda, 2012; Wagner, 2015). When nonprofit senior leaders understood the motivations of donors, they presented a favorable position to receive donations (Prendergast & Maggie, 2013; Shehu et al., 2016). The motivations of donors waivered, depending on the size of the nonprofit organization, as smaller nonprofit organizations often presented increased risk because of the level of sustainability required to meet the physical and social needs of the community served (McDonald et al., 2014; Modi, 2012). Nonprofit senior leaders of larger organizations often received favorable results when receiving donations because of the sustainability of business practices, benevolent efforts of donors, and environmental controls used (McDonald et al., 2014; Modi, 2012; Wagner, 2015). Researchers noted other factors influenced the motivation of committed donors, which included intrinsic or psychological reasons such as self-esteem, compassion, fear, and pity, as well as social status, financial security, ego, empathy, and level of social responsibility (Mainardes et al., 2016; Shehu et al., 2016; Wagner, 2015).

Benefits for Committed Donors. Committed donors used philanthropy as a marketing strategy to garner a long-term commitment from customers, which was a benefit for nonprofit senior leaders (Liu, 2012; Mataira et al., 2014; Prendergast & Maggie, 2013). The benefits provided to committed donors that supported nonprofit senior leaders through funding included tax exemptions, well-being improvements, positive influences to social injustices, spirituality boosts, an increased customer base, potential revenue from cross-marketing techniques, and an enhanced public awareness of the causes or social needs supported by the nonprofit senior leaders (Liu, 2012). Committed donors earned the support of local communities and possibly, gained new audiences and significance within their relevant area of expertise (Mataira et al., 2014).

Committed donors also benefited from their representation on boards and positions of governance in association with nonprofit organizations (Rossi & Leardini, 2015). Some donors enjoyed the engagement and power that emerged from donating to nonprofit organizations. Researchers have agreed that economic growth and financial benefits served as a secondary explanation for individual donations (Gilstrap & Morris, 2015; Suárez & Hwang, 2013). Other donors enjoyed the recognition, affiliation, association, tax considerations, or other fulfillment of personal values (Follman et al., 2016). Donors also benefited when they received the intrinsic satisfaction of being thanked for prompt donations when nonprofit senior leaders provided updates on where donations have benefited others, and when they were familiar with the donation process (Liu, 2012; Prendergast & Maggie, 2013; Wiggill, 2014). The benefits listed above

asserted by nonprofit senior leaders reflected ways a committed donor benefited from providing financial support to nonprofit organizations.

Sharing the Marketplace as a Hybrid Organization

Sharing the marketplace as a hybrid organization helped nonprofit senior leaders maintain sustainability because of the collaborative efforts gained from merging with a for-profit organization (Roundy & Halstead, 2016). Roundy and Halstead (2016) defined a hybrid organization as one where leaders combined a nonprofit organization or organization with a nonprofit organization as a parent company, with a for-profit organization to form a new business venture. Suárez and Hwang (2013) found that sharing a social goal or belief system often led nonprofit senior leaders to partner with other organizations. Roundy and Halstead (2016) identified that the creation of hybrid organizations was a result of supporting the free enterprise system, which also promoted social entrepreneurship. Sharing the marketplace as a hybrid organization involved two critical aspects for senior leaders, which included identifying a social problem and business methods shared by both the nonprofit organization and for-profit organization (Roundy & Halstead, 2016). Furthermore, Stecker (2014) charged the problem-solving expertise gained from sharing the marketplace by the leaders of nonprofit organizations and for-profit businesses often increased, helping to steer the impact of business and government through social entrepreneurship (Stecker, 2014).

Social entrepreneurship. The term *social entrepreneurship* emerged in the early 19th century, was coined in the mid-1970s, and became popular in the 1990s (Roundy & Halstead, 2016). Social entrepreneurship grew over the past two decades (Andersson &

Self, 2015; Suárez & Hwang, 2013). In many countries, nonprofit senior leaders used social entrepreneurship to close the gap between services offered by nonprofit organizations, for-profit organizations, and government (Andersson & Self, 2015; Wang, Duan, & Yu, 2016). Using social entrepreneurship as a networking tool helped nonprofit senior leaders create social value and solved community programs related to the availability of programs and services (Suárez & Hwang, 2013; Toledano & Maplesden, 2016; Wang et al., 2016). Andersson and Self (2015) asserted the concept of social entrepreneurship as a best practice approach used by nonprofit senior leaders for not only the survival of the nonprofit organization, but also as a tool to generate social influence and providing solutions to the issues of the community served.

Diversifying to Gain. Stecker (2014) supposed that when senior leaders combined nonprofit organizations with for-profit organizations to create hybrid organizations, the combination helped nonprofit senior leaders diversify, increase advantage in the marketplace, and generate funding for nonprofit organizations. Suárez and Hwang (2013) also asserted that leaders pair nonprofit organizations with for-profit organizations to meet mission objectives (Suárez & Hwang, 2013). Increasing this business model over time within the business environment benefited senior leaders because of the repeated unreliability of sustainable funding (Roundy & Halstead, 2016; Stecker, 2014). As nonprofit senior leaders diversified, analyzed current and potential sources of funding, determined future funding, and created plans to improve funding sustainability, they coordinated and implemented new strategies to gain competitive advantages (Calabrese & Grizzle, 2012; Follman et al., 2016).

Community Relations. Nonprofit senior leaders that engaged with the local community increased the opportunity to meet the social and physical needs of residents, as well as the intrinsic and social needs of donors (Kim, 2015; Liu, 2012; Prendergast & Maggie, 2013). Engaging in community relations helped nonprofit senior leaders understand the wants and needs of the community because the demands of each economy varied (Kim, 2015; Toledano & Maplesden, 2016). Nonprofit senior leaders used concepts such as collaboration, marketing, and social media to create viable opportunities for engagement in community relations on behalf of the residents, the nonprofit organization, and future donors (Liu, 2012; Siricharoen, 2012; Sriramesh et al., 2013). Nonprofit senior leaders that used communication management efficiently tended to increase community relations, both with residents and donors (Wiggill, 2014).

Girls' Youth Sports

The implementation of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibited the discrimination of women and girls in federally funded education, to include sports programming (Kaestner & Xu, 2010; Rauscher & Cooky, 2010; Vescovi, Brown, & Murray, 2007). The decision-makers that drafted Title IX helped to increase the participation of youth girls' in sports by 600% from 1972 to 1978 (Kaestner & Xu, 2010). An increase in female physical activity and improved weight control occurred because of the drafters of Title IX (Kaestner & Xu, 2010; McPhie & Rawana, 2015). Since the 1990s, participation in girls' youth sports continued to increase, providing positive sports-based development (Rauscher & Cooney, 2016; Walls, Kasle, Aaronson, Harley, & Waldman, 2017). Girls' participation in youth sports was tied to many positive attributes,

to include increased self-awareness, positive body image, physical growth, and academic achievement (McPhie & Rawana, 2015; Rausher & Cookey, 2016). These same positive attributes gained by the girls often transcended into the adult lives of the girls (Vescovi et al., 2007; Walls et al., 2017).

Lacrosse. First played by North American Indians during the 15th century, scholars defined lacrosse as a niche sport, with a small base of players and fans (Bowman, Breedlove, Breedlove, Dodge, & Nauman, 2015; Vescovi et al., 2007). Canadians later adopted the sport, as well as Americans during the 1600s and 1700s. Originating in Scotland, women's lacrosse differed from men's lacrosse because each developed distinctly from the other (Bowman et al., 2015; Wiser, 2014). The National Lacrosse League was one of many organizations where leaders aim to increase the popularity of the sport through fan engagement (Greenhalgh, Dwyer, & LeCrom, 2017; Kerr & Males, 2010). Leaders of the U.S. Lacrosse Coaches Association and the U.S. Lacrosse Foundation were also pivotal in ensuring the health and safety of female lacrosse players (Walls et al., 2017). The U.S. Lacrosse Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization where leaders, staff, and volunteers provide leadership to over 450,000 members, with 68 chapters in 45 states (USLacrosse.org, 2016). Leaders of most national lacrosse organizations operated by a national governing body, as well as volunteer and paid staff members that focused on education, outreach and inclusion, and funding sustainability.

Donor Efforts towards Lacrosse. Most lacrosse organizational leaders operated with websites, providing basic information about the mission of the organization, teams,

coaches, schedules of events, and contact information for public view (Rauscher & Cooky, 2016). Leaders ensured programmatic efforts in sustaining the developmental needs of the players; therefore, sustainable funding for nonprofit organizations and nonprofit senior leaders was critical to the success of the players (Cheney et al., 2012; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Walls et al., 2017). With over 7,000 donors and more than 300 volunteers that assisted the U.S. Lacrosse Foundation by serving on national boards and committees, the organizational leaders were committed to creating opportunities to play, elevating the visibility of the sport, and pioneering national standards through education and leadership (USLacrosse.org, 2016). Most lacrosse foundation and organizational leaders provided opportunities for donors to give directly to their websites, offering current and future donors the chance to make donations anonymously, in any amount, and at their leisure. Grants also served as a funding source for organizational leaders; however, some lacrosse organizations have remained self-funded (Rauscher & Cooky, 2016).

Transition

The existing body of literature on strategies to secure sustainable funding for nonprofit organizations was varied. Researchers who explored nonprofit sustainability strategies offered nonprofit senior leaders limited evidence on processes to secure sustainable funding. My analysis of literature review findings provided a need for nonprofit senior leaders of small nonprofit organizations to explore sustainable strategies to secure funding from businesses, foundations, and donations. My review of professional and academic literature included peer-reviewed journal articles related to the topic of

strategies to secure sustainable funding for nonprofit organizations, to include the exploration of theories and concepts that current and future leaders of nonprofit organizations can use or enhance in future research.

In Section 2, I included a comprehensive analysis of the research purpose, population and sampling, methodology and design, the role of the researcher, data collection instruments, and techniques. I included pertinent information about the data analysis, reliability, and validity used in this research study. Lastly, I provided measures to protect each study participant as human subjects and data storage requirements are identified.

In Section 3, I included a detailed synopsis of the research conducted for the DBA consulting capstone. To conduct the research for and about my client organization, I used the 2015-2016 Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework and its Criteria for Performance Excellence to complete in-depth research. My use of an integrated, systems-based approach to completing the research in Section 3 helped me to explore the following key areas: leadership; strategy; customers; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; workforce; operations and results, as well as performance outcomes.

Section 2: The Project

In Section 2, I included a review of the study purpose, research method and design, the role of the researcher, and data collection methods and techniques. I used semistructured telephone interviews as the primary method to collect data for each participant. Furthermore, I reviewed organizational documents to collect information and data relative to how three senior leaders of a small, single nonprofit organization in Maryland explored strategies to secure sustainable funding from businesses, foundations, and individual donations.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore strategies some nonprofit senior leaders used to secure sustainable funding for their organization from businesses, foundations, and individual donations. The specific population for this study included three senior leaders of a single nonprofit organization in Maryland who used successful strategies to secure sustainable funding for their nonprofit organization. Sustainable funding included the acquisition of funds to conduct business for five years or more. I identified that the contributions to social change included the potential to increase the understanding of strategies nonprofit senior leaders used for securing sustainable funding and funding sustainability, and the maximization of community presence (e.g., the ability for nonprofit senior leaders to share lessons learned about securing sustainable funding in a community of practice). Leaders from other nonprofit organizations may use the recommendations from this study to improve the sustainability

of funding and prevent or reverse losses of funding, increasing the ability to satisfy the organizational mission of achieving positive social change.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is often the primary instrument for data collection in a qualitative method, as noted by Xu and Storr (2012). For this qualitative, single-case study, I served as the primary instrument for data collection in the research process. I had no direct experience working with a nonprofit organization, the participants used in this study, or as a consultant. Bromley, Mikesell, Jones, and Khodyakov (2015) provided guidance on incorporating the Belmont Report into research studies for ethical considerations. I used the Belmont Report as a guide for ethical research practices, to identify the nature and definition of informed consent, to determine my role related to ethics, and to understand respect for persons.

Walden University administrators required all participants in the study to sign a consent form, as a condition of voluntary participation in the study. I treated each participant ethically while adhering to Walden University IRB requirements, which included following the guidelines of using preapproved data sources and tools. The Walden University IRB is responsible for ensuring that each student adheres to the ethical standards of the University, as well as the federal regulations of the United States. Walden University leaders require each student to obtain IRB approval to protect the interest of human subjects and when collecting or analyzing data (Walden, 2017).

Before collecting data, I obtained IRB approval. I used documents provided by the client leader and public websites to analyze performance outcomes. In case study

research, reviewing documentation provided by organizations allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the organization (Singh, 2014). I used interviews conducted by telephone as the primary method for collecting information from each participant. Brayda and Boyce (2014) noted that interviews provided useful information when participants felt at ease, which often resulted in the sharing of rich and thick narrative details. I aligned the semistructured interview questions with my central research question, along with the 2015-2016 Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework.

Obtaining comprehensive or rich and thick data was often a result of using semistructured interview questions, which Brayda and Boyce (2014) highlighted as crucial in gaining the type of data required in case studies. Using document review, combined with participant interviews allows a researcher to collect information pertinent to reinforce the conceptual framework and research question (Jamshed, 2014; Wahyuni, 2012). Furthermore, using surveys, observations, or document review alone does not provide data comparable to conducting semistructured interviews (Brayda & Boyce, 2014; Harvey, 2015).

Castillo-Montoya (2016) encouraged using an interview protocol for data collection purposes. I used a case study interview protocol to establish rapport with each participant, as a guide for drafting pertinent and consistent interview questions, to confirm data saturation, and to ensure bias mitigation. I recorded each interview and transcribed notes to evaluate the data, develop results, to memorialize information, and to remain aware of areas that I may inject bias. I mitigated bias and avoided viewing data

through a personal lens or perspective by maintaining an open mind in reviewing the information shared by each subject in each participant response. To safeguard the integrity of participant responses, I used member checking. Further, to eliminate bias and ensure data saturation, I used a case study interview protocol.

Participants

Weng (2015) promoted eligibility criteria as a guideline for participant selection. Eligibility criteria helps identify characteristics exhibited by each participant that aligned with the overarching research question (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Singh, 2014; Xu & Storr, 2012). Proper alignment of the eligibility criteria and participant characteristics helped me discern results from the study. Furthermore, selecting participants that have a rich understanding of the research topic has proven valuable in identifying detailed and accurate data (Harvey, 2015; Singh, 2014; Walden, 2017). The eligibility criteria I used included the selection of nonprofit senior leaders chosen to participate in Walden University's DBA consulting capstone. The Walden University IRB required each nonprofit senior leader chosen for the DBA consulting capstone to meet specific requirements. The Walden University IRB required each participant included in the study to sign a consent form and voluntarily participate in the study. The Walden University IRB required participants' roles and responsibilities as senior leaders of the client organization to include the following areas: (a) creating or enforcing the client organization's mission, vision, and values, purpose, and core competencies, (b) workforce development and retention, (c) communication and interaction with customers, stakeholders, and partners, and (d) the ability to provide data and information for

document review and analysis. Senior leaders included in the study must also set goals, process improvements, share knowledge, and handle complaints.

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore strategies some nonprofit senior leaders used to secure sustainable funding for their organization from businesses, foundations, and individual donations. Participants for this study included three senior leaders of a small, single nonprofit organization in Maryland that used strategies to secure funding for their nonprofit organization. I identify the nonprofit client organization using the pseudonym ABC Company. I used the pseudonym, SL, for the three senior leaders. Students enrolled in the DBA consulting capstone worked directly with a preassigned nonprofit organization and its senior leaders. Walden University administrators conducted an in-depth interview to select each nonprofit SL and organization selected to collaborate with Walden University for the DBA consulting capstone. The nonprofit SLs and scholar-consultants worked collaboratively to achieve consensus on a suggested timeline. Client leaders and scholar-consultants used the timeline to achieve milestones and provided deliverables of final products, to include client-approved consulting recommendations, analysis of documents, and performance outcomes that reflect a systems-based perspective. Each scholar within the DBA consulting capstone used the version of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework (2015) in place at the start of the research study as a structure for collecting and analyzing data and information to ensure that data collection and analysis reflected a holistic, systems-based perspective in evaluating the overall performance of the client organization.

The specific population for this study included three SLs of a small, single nonprofit organization in Maryland that used successful strategies to secure sustainable funding for their nonprofit organization. The SLs provided mentoring, leadership, and athletic program support to middle and high school girls in the Maryland public school system. The client leader ensured the day-to-day operations of ABC Company, as well as maintained the financial, recruiting, communications, and social media functions of the business. Two additional SLs within ABC Company provided assistance and coaching services, as well as hands-on training for the community served. All were former collegiate athletes that served as athletic coaches at middle schools in Maryland and for ABC Company. Each member of ABC Company provided essential elements to the success of the nonprofit organization, and contributed critical aspects of management and operations. Each SL was experienced and proficient in nonprofit organizational leadership and management.

To meet program requirements, I contacted my client leader to introduce myself, to review the requirements of our consulting relationship and to confirm my participation as a scholar-consultant in the DBA consulting capstone. In establishing this relationship, I developed a level of communication and rapport with my client leader and other SLs. I applied for research approval from the Walden University IRB and attached the approval statement to the IRB application. I notified the nonprofit client leader of my IRB approval and the corresponding number, which was a requirement for the DBA program (Walden University, 2017). When I obtained IRB approval, I began communicating with my client leader and evaluating preapproved data sources. I provided my client leader

with a consent form, which included the purpose of the study, participation requirements, potential risks and benefits, and the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Establishing communication and consent agreement information was influential in building and retaining the researcher-client relationship (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012; Walden, 2017; Xu & Storr, 2012). Obtaining consent was also a critical component of the data collection process (Phelan & Kinsella, 2012; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2014). I completed multiple service orders (Appendix A) and a consent agreement to manage my consulting project.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted that the relationship between the researcher and the participant was vital. To establish a working relationship with the participants, I maintained frequent interactions with each participant and conducted a series of interviews using open-ended questions. To retain a lasting consulting relationship with the client leader, I employed a member-checking approach as a strategy to build a lasting relationship of trust and clear communication, as well as to ensure data validity and reliability. Member checking is an essential element to ensure an accurate account of an interview (Amerson, 2011; Harvey, 2015). With ABC Company selected by Walden University administrators for inclusion in the DBA consulting capstone, I worked with the client leader to identify two additional senior leaders to interview, as a requirement of the DBA consulting capstone. Having three SLs participate in the study helped me to triangulate and validate interview data, as well as to provide rich and thick data from which to identify themes related to organizational strengths and opportunities. Using a member-checking approach also helped me to validate my interpretation and analyses of

data and information gathered during interviews and document analysis. My use of three SLs helped me to augment the amount of data necessary for alignment with my analyses of public and private documents and performance outcomes. I also used member checking as a strategy to build and maintain a lasting relationship of trust and authentic two-way communications with the SLs, whom I expected to retain as clients after completion of the DBA program.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

I used the qualitative research method to explore strategies that some nonprofit SLs used to secure sustainable funding for their organization from businesses, foundations, and donations. I used the qualitative research method to gather information and explanations about individual and personal experiences about an observed phenomenon (Levy, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2015; Runfola et al., 2016). The qualitative research method was distinctively different from the quantitative research method because of the study of science, answering of *what* questions, and the testing of hypotheses for statistical measurements (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Park & Park, 2016). Results derived from qualitative research provided a rich and complex description when exploring a research phenomenon because of the researcher-participant relationship established and in using open-ended questions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Park & Park, 2016). This method was appropriate because I used interviews to collect data that provided information and explanations about individual and personal experiences about

the strategies used by nonprofit senior leaders to secure sustainable funding sources for their organization.

According to previous research, the research question must match the strategy of inquiry (Amerson, 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 2015; Park & Park, 2016). I chose a qualitative method over quantitative or mixed methods because I explored a phenomenon, and did not examine relationships between variables (Park & Park, 2016; Runfola et al., 2016). I chose a qualitative method because I used interviews as a primary method for data collection. Interviews allow the researcher to explore and formalize the experiences of a target population to promote quality choices and recommendations for others (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2015; Wahyuni, 2012). Last, I chose the qualitative research method because it aligned with my research question and allowed me to realize essential processes, events, and relationships in the context of the nonprofit sector.

Research Design

Research designs for a qualitative method include phenomenology, ethnography, and case study (Gill, 2014; Yazan, 2015). I used the single-case study design to support the qualitative research method. The case study design must be used when exploring a case, bound in time and place, to generate insights from interviews conducted in real-life settings (Amerson, 2011; Marshall et al., 2013; Runfola et al., 2016). I explored the strategies used by some nonprofit senior leaders to secure sustainable funding sources for their organization from businesses, foundations, and donations. Using a case study design can assist the researcher in identifying operational linkages among particular events over

time (Amerson, 2011; Starman, 2013; Yin, 2014). I chose the case study design because I used in-depth interviews to uncover new information, beliefs, and values of the target population. This data allowed me to determine the benefits of strategies used, and to identify the need to use different strategies. This design was appropriate for studies that occur in the natural setting of the research participant, as asserted by Lincoln and Guba (1985), and included a variety of data sources, as stated by Amerson (2011) and Starman (2013). Using communication and document review, I gathered information related to the personal framework of the target population to form hypotheses or identify themes.

A single- or multiple-case study is also available for use (Amerson, 2011; Singh, 2014; Yin, 2014). Single-case studies encompass the investigation or examination of a single case (Yazan, 2015). Using a single-case study allowed researchers to focus on a single inquiry in its entirety (Gaya & Smith, 2016; Siggelkow, 2007; Yazan, 2015). The single-case study is used to identify data, unique features, and objectives of the case because of the concentration involved (Gaya & Smith, 2016; Siggelkow, 2007; Yazan, 2015). Scholars use multiple-case studies to incorporate the investigation or examination of multiple cases (Gaya & Smith, 2016; Siggelkow, 2007; Yazan, 2015). Using multiple sources of information provided context and data to help shape the emerging data through a broader triangulation of sources (Gaya & Smith, 2016; Siggelkow, 2007; Yazan, 2015). There are several types of case study types, to include, exploratory, explanatory, or descriptive. The exploratory case study is used when the research questions and hypotheses are unknown or for building theory (Gaya & Smith, 2016; Verner & Abdullah, 2012; Yin, 2014). The explanatory case study is used for theory testing and to

learn causal relationships (Singh, 2014; Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2014). The descriptive case study is used for theory building and to describe a phenomenon, in context, by its different characteristics (Starman, 2013; Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2014). Using a case study can present challenges because the data collection process can involve inputting numerical data into the research, without losing the significance of the study, introducing quantitative or mixed methods research methods (Starman, 2013; Wahyuni, 2012; Yazan, 2015).

Other prevalent research designs include phenomenology and ethnography. Using the phenomenological design provided description, not explanation, of a phenomenon (Ferreira & dos Santos, 2016; Gill, 2014; Wahyuni, 2012). The phenomenological research design is used to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon through the lived experiences of others through generalities, not cause and effect (Ferreira & dos Santos, 2016). Using the phenomenological research design allows the researcher to explore a shared meaning through researching the experiences, reactions, and perceptions of others (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012; Gill, 2014; Moustakas, 1994). The exploration is completed by searching for the nature of the meaning, description, method, and perception of the effects of the experience, with prejudice, theory, or definition (Ferreira & dos Santos, 2016; Moustakas, 1994). Using the ethnographic design allows scholars to explore culture in real-life settings through informal interviews with participants with similar backgrounds (Marshall & Rossman, 2015; Wahyuni, 2012). The ethnographic research design is used to seek particular and uniform, as well as past and present examples to place into context together (Vogel, 2016). Ethnography is also used to study

a culture, issue, or shared experience in a specific and limited area, as opposed to an open setting, as expressed by Hales, de Vries, and Coombs (2016) and Vogel (2016). Using the case study to uncover valuable information for future sharing within management and leadership environments was critical, as written by Starman (2013) and Yazan (2015). I chose the single-case study research design because of the value gained from the experiences of others and the resulting analyses.

In qualitative studies, using a sample size that will promote the research question and understand the identified phenomena (Dworkin, 2012; Hayat, 2013). To ensure data saturation for this single-case study, I used a purposeful sample of ABC Company SLs in Maryland. To satisfy the requirements of the DBA consulting capstone, I used a purposeful sample of ABC Company SLs. Small sample sizes are more beneficial when there is a need for an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, rather than the need for large volumes of data (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Dworkin, 2012). I used a small grouping of three nonprofit SLs, as participants, to explore strategies some nonprofit senior leaders used to secure sustainable funding sources for their organization from businesses, foundations, and individual donations.

Population and Sampling

The case study research design as an empirical inquiry to investigate and conduct in-depth, real-world analysis of a contemporary phenomenon, where the boundaries and context may unapparent (Amerson, 2011; Yin, 2014). This study incorporated a purposeful sample consisting of three SLs of a small, single nonprofit organization in operation for five years in Baltimore, Maryland. Qualitative research often incorporated

purposeful sampling when resources were limited, but vast amounts of information was needed (Dworkin, 2012; Hayat, 2013). Using a purposeful sampling method was justified when a sample population was explicit and well-defined (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Hayat, 2013). In case study research, using data saturation allowed for the attaining of comprehensive knowledge about the phenomenon studied (Marshall et al., 2013). Furthermore, data saturation was the continuation of data gathering for new information until no new information was acquired (Marshall et al., 2013). When data and information gathered from document reviews and semistructured interviews revealed no new information, I reached data saturation.

Walden University administrators created the DBA consulting capstone with specific requirements and protocols for the professional doctorate. Participants chosen for this study included SLs of a small, single nonprofit organization in Baltimore, Maryland. I used the client leader, who was also the founder of ABC Company, and two SLs as participants in this study. The protocol created by Walden University administrators for the DBA consulting capstone included Walden University vetting a client organization that I would work with directly, as a researcher, based on my acceptance in the DBA consulting capstone.

I held a series of conference calls between the client leader and myself to explain the research process in detail and to request and confirm participation. The client leader signed the DBA research agreement (Appendix B [redacted]), which served as the master service agreement for the consulting relationship between Walden University and the client organization. I communicated directly with the client leader to ensure I received a

signed informed consent agreement, which served as authorization to interview ABC Company SLs. The client leader provided the signed informed consent agreement to me via e-mail. I also asked each participant to communicate their consent to participate in the interview process via e-mail.

I conducted semistructured interviews, via telephone, using multilevel, open-ended questions. Using open-ended questions elicited relevant and explicit information from each participant in a qualitative study (Anyan, 2013; Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Jamshed, 2014). Each semistructured interview was conducted via telephone to align with IRB requirements and approval. I scheduled interviews to last approximately 60 minutes, which took the time of the client leader and SLs into consideration. I also used text and e-mail communications to obtain data. I interviewed each participant until the amount of data was flattened. I reached data saturation when I yielded no new information. I used methodological triangulation to validate all data received and to confirm data saturation. Methodological triangulation allowed for multiple methods of triangulation, which extended the understanding of the study topic. Using methodological triangulation enhanced the results of a study, leading to balanced and saturated data (Anyan, 2013; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Ngulube, 2015). I used methodological triangulation to ensure I achieved data saturation and to ensure equal consideration for data gathered during the analyses and coding process.

As part of the analysis and coding process, I identified themes that emerged from the research. I aligned the themes with ABC Company's organizational culture and structure, leadership, strategies, customers, workforce, operations, finance. I cross-

referenced all participant interview transcripts when conducting data comparisons. I aligned all interview questions with the 2015-2016 Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework to ensure I covered all areas during triangulation. I also identified keywords, phrases, or other instances of repetition across participant interview transcripts. I coded themes manually by highlighting and sorting information on an Excel spreadsheet.

I embedded my interview questions into the 2015-2016 Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework and its Criteria to ensure my perspective reflected a holistic, systems-based view of the key work processes, organizational performance outcomes, processes, and results to ensure I collected rich and thick data. Collecting rich and thick data provided more substance and meaning for the research (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2015). To collect rich and thick data, I conducted an organizational assessment of ABC Company SLs and critical performance indicators. I collected organizational performance data by analyzing organizational data, reviewing internal documents provided by the client leader, and analyzing public competitor data. I analyzed collected data to determine SLs and ABC Company's effectiveness and efficiency of financial sustainability.

Ethical Research

Research ethics protocols include privacy and confidentiality, informed consent, protection of vulnerable groups, and the principle not to harm, as noted by Barker (2013). I obtained informed consent, via the e-mailed consent agreement, to protect ABC Company SLs serving as participants in this study. The Consent Agreement I provided to the SLs included a brief introduction to the study, interview procedures, voluntary nature

of the study, risks and benefits of the study, privacy information, researcher, and Walden University contact information, and details about the opportunity to ask questions. I also included my Walden University IRB approval number (#09-16-16-0625729) in the consent agreement e-mail message for the records of the client leader. Sawicki (2017) and Yin (2014) asserted researchers must protect the identity and rights of participants. Leaders of universities, government agencies, and professional associations have adopted specific ethical standards to guarantee human rights during research studies, including the right to withdraw from a study (Jedynak, 2014). I also outlined the procedures for voluntary withdrawal from this study, for all participants, within the consent agreement e-mail.

To avoid bias, Annas (2017) found that notifying each study participant during the consent process of the unavailability of incentives is critical for clarity. Within the consent e-mail message, I informed each SL that no financial incentives were available for participation. The study results I provided confirmed potential contributions to business practice and social change for nonprofit SLs, which may indirectly benefit each SL. I believed the intangible incentive for participation in this single-case study would be the knowledge gained from the study for senior leaders because I shared a portion of the study with each SL. I provided the interview transcripts with each SL, to adhere to the member-checking protocol, and I delivered my redacted Section 3 and performance outcomes with my client leader for approval before publication of the study.

I developed this single-case study with the identification of the research method and design, along with a suitable population to respond to interview questions targeted to

explore the strategies that nonprofit some senior leaders used to secure sustainable funding. To limit the risks to participants, I created ethical questions and used an ethical interview technique. The interview protocol I used included establishing a rapport with the pre-approved study population, using an appropriate research method and design, creating targeted and pertinent interview questions to allow me to gain a deeper understanding of the strategies used to secure sustainable funding, and using interview techniques and ethical questions that posed limited risk to senior leaders. I used member checking to validate data derived from the interviews with SLs of ABC Company.

I also provided my client leader with a service order that outlined the scope of work, work phases, outcomes, deliverables, and summary of services for the duration of the study. The service order I used aligned with the DBA research agreement (Appendix B), which served as the master service agreement for my consulting services. The service order I used also aligned with the Walden University code of conduct, as stated in the 2016-2017 student handbook. I will secure the data on a password-protected thumb drive in a locked box in my home office, to which I will retain the key and password. I will retain all stored data for a 5-year period. After five years, I will destroy the data by permanent electronic deletion. I will protect each participant and all interview information through coding, redaction, and password protection. I did not use any personal information or identities for any purposes outside of this research. I addressed each interview participant or SL, and the nonprofit organization as ABC Company. I ensured the protection of names aligned with the Walden University code of conduct, the DBA research agreement, and the service order, which addressed the areas of non-

discrimination, non-harassment, professional conduct, and academic integrity. To establish a foundation of ethical conduct, I used the DBA research agreement, code of conduct, and IRB approval. I used the DBA research agreement as the foundation for a lasting relationship with the client organization. The code of conduct that I used aligned with Walden University core values of quality and integrity and applied to all consulting relationships. I used all service orders to define the scope of work, outcomes, deliverables, additional services, service summary, estimated time, and length of engagement for my client leader.

Data Collection Instruments

In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary data-collection instrument for the interview process in the case study design (Rowley, 2012; Xu & Storr, 2012; Yin, 2014). I served as the primary data collection instrument, using two data-collection methods; semistructured interviews, and a review of public and internal documents provided by the leaders of the nonprofit organization for data collection, as well as performance outcomes identified through the interviews. I conducted semistructured interviews with multi-level, open-ended questions, with three nonprofit SLs of a small, single nonprofit organization in Baltimore, Maryland.

Using a semistructured interview technique uncovered detailed information from study participants for data analysis (Marshall et al., 2013; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Interviews were also a tool used to reach data saturation quickly (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Marshall et al., 2013). I compiled five interview questions to ask each study participant that were related to the research question and the conceptual framework of the study. To

maintain standardization between each research participant, I used each interview question and elements of the 2015-2016 Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework. Researchers used interview protocols for consistency and as a guide in the interview process (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). I embedded each interview question into the criteria questions, which included the 2015-2016 Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework. I reviewed each interview question with my client leader before conducting interviews with the remaining SLs. To increase reliability and validity, I reviewed my notes after each interview to determine if personal bias existed and to memorialize the data to avoid falsification of participant responses and reduce errors in data collected.

I used the 2015-2016 Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework and its Criteria to develop my interview questions and line of inquiry for each semistructured interview, which helped me develop a case study protocol. Yin (2014) found that a case study must include (a) background information, (b) primary issue investigated, (c) data-collection procedures, and (d) interview questions. To assist me during the data-collection process, other instruments used in this study included a recording device, a laptop computer to secure interview notes, and telephone. Bernard (2013) asserted that using a recording device assisted the researcher with memorializing the data learned during the interview process. The essence of the words communicated by each study participant enhanced the data provided in data analyses, aiding in achieving data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Xu & Storr, 2012). The insight I gained through the

recording process allowed me to reflect on interview data, which provided additional insight during data analyses.

Member checking enhanced reliability and validity (Carlson, 2010; Harvey, 2015; Kornbluh, 2015). Using member checking was also vital for scholars in the assessment of trustworthiness (Kornbluh, 2015). I used member checking to enhance reliability and validity, as well as to provide each study participant an opportunity to review and comment on the interview, which confirmed the use of each interview question and identified any areas of future follow-up. I used methodological triangulation to validate the data-collection methods used. Last, I conducted a review of performance-outcome data by collecting relevant data, to include internal documents, reports, financial statements, and information posted on social media platforms, which assisted me in analyzing the performance outcomes about critical processes described in each interview. I requested that all internal documents and proprietary information be transmitted electronically, of which, I saved securely by encrypting each document in my electronic file. In Section 3 of this doctoral study, I included analyses of qualitative and quantitative data related to the nonprofit organization's performance in product and processes, customer, workforce, operations, leadership and governance, and financial and market results.

Data Collection Technique

In this qualitative single-case study, I used semistructured interviews and document reviews to explore the depth and complexity of ABC Company, using a purposeful sample of the client leader, and SLs of the organization. I used

methodological triangulation and member checking to ensure the data saturation, as well as served as the primary data-collection instrument. I used the case study protocol to assist me with the completion of each interview. The advantages of using interviews as a data-collection technique for researchers was the gaining of first-hand knowledge shared by the interviewee (Marshall et al., 2013). In addition, interviews provided the researcher with open-ended responses to the interview questions, as compared to one-word answers (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Jamshed, 2014). The disadvantages of using interviews as a data-collection technique were the inferences the researcher could gather from the commentary of the interviewee. Moreover, bias and miscommunication arose during data collection, which served as a disadvantage (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Harvey, 2015; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012).

The advantages of conducting document reviews included allowing the researcher to examine the information from public and private sources (Anyan, 2013; Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014; Jamshed, 2014). In particular, internal documents reviewed by the researcher provided unique and explicit knowledge, not offered to the public (Anyan, 2013; Jamshed, 2014; Ngulube, 2015). Disadvantages of conducting document reviews included a lack of trustworthiness and availability of current records (Anyan, 2013; Cleary et al., 2014; Kornbluh, 2015).

I collected data through using multi-level, open-ended questions for a semistructured interview with all study participants. The primary instrument in qualitative research data collection is the researcher (Marshall et al., 2013; Xu & Storr, 2012). Interviews were the primary source of data for qualitative studies (Yin, 2014),

often yielding relevant and suitable data (Bernard, 2013; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Using interviews as the data-collection technique provided me with a deeper understanding of the strategies and process that SLs used for sustainability. To support reliability and validity of the study, I used organizational documents that also helped me obtain background information and data. I used methodological triangulation for all data collected. Specifically, I used member checking of each interview and data gathered through a review of public and private documents to validate the data, as well as conducted a review of performance-outcome data.

Data Organization Techniques

Chen, Mao, and Liu (2014) stated that data collection, storage, and analyses were the duties of the researcher. Xu and Storr (2012) asserted that organizing data helped the researcher to remain focused on the desired task. Identifying themes and coding for data analysis and interpretation was essential to the data analysis process and the interpretation of meaning (Anyan, 2013; Elo et al., 2014). For a clear interpretation of meaning, I coded themes to organize the data, concepts, and experiences described by interview participants to provide high-quality data for analyses.

To keep track of data and emerging understandings, I organized all data and interview notes electronically. Davidson (2012) found software and technology programs useful for data organization. I used Microsoft Excel as a software program to help me create and code themes derived from the semistructured interviews held with each study participant. The rationale for me using Microsoft Excel software was that such a process facilitated the ability to analyze, organize, and identify insights in qualitative data at no

cost. Using Microsoft Excel also yielded efficiency and time savings during the research process.

I stored all raw data and documentation collected in password-protected files securely stored on a new and clean thumb drive, in a locked box in my home office, to which I retained the key and password. I protected each participant and all interview data through coding, redaction, and password protection. I used my thumb drive for research related to this doctoral study as an added cybersecurity measure. All raw data was secured, to be stored for five years, and then destroyed.

Data Analysis

For data analysis, I used methodological triangulation to compare raw data derived from each SL interview with information from internal documents, private and public websites, as well as performance outcomes. In case studies, Jack and Raturi (2006) promote using methodological triangulation. I processed the data received and obtained for analyses, with myself as the data collection instrument, to uncover codes and themes using a review of interview recordings. I identified themes, mind-maps, and coded the data using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. I focused on key themes and theme correlation by conducting the literature review, an analysis of participant data, and the conceptual framework. This analysis helped me to understand how the key themes described the phenomenon and grouped within the Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework (2015) and its Criteria. I compared key themes identified with the conceptual framework and any new studies published since beginning my study.

Elo et al. (2014) stated that using codes and themes was crucial in organizing data, concepts, and experiences to yield rich and thick descriptions to provide high-quality data. I chose to use Microsoft Excel software for organizational efficiency, code and theme identification capabilities, ease of use, and time-saving. Memorialization of interviews with each participant provided a method to identify and categorize themes, as well as reduced errors or falsification of data collected.

The outcome I identified through data analyses provided a mind map of clearly identified themes. I correlated key themes with recent studies identified from reviewing the raw data and through new studies published and the conceptual framework. I connected how themes such as sustainability and funding sources, as well as the conceptual framework, related to new articles or ideas published and provided these new findings to the client leader for review and approval for publication at the conclusion of the study.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Noble and Smith (2015) declared that the soundness of a study aided the researcher in determining the reliability of the study. To establish reliability, scholars used well ordered, repeatable, and scalable sound practices to ensure others could replicate the study, as well as achieve consistent results to establish dependability (Amerson, 2011; Noble & Smith, 2015). Practices I used to ensure reliability also included embedding the evaluation of data into the study so that learning was possible. Defining dependability was evidence of the strength of the findings over time.

Establishing dependability by ensuring the information presented aligned and supported the data received in the study proved essential (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012; Anney, 2014). I outlined the systematic processes for the study to demonstrate dependability and to ensure repeatability for future researchers. To establish dependability, I provided each interview participant with my findings, interpretations, recommendations, and supporting data received. Sharing this information with each interview participant provided the opportunity to interview participants to ensure that the information received was accurate and applicable to the study. To enhance the dependability of the study, using member checking allowed researchers to validate the interview process (Harvey, 2015; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I used member checking as follow-up interviews to ensure the data gathered were correct and inclusive of the thoughts and experiences of the interview participants. The follow-up interviews I conducted for member checking helped me reach data saturation by obtaining in-depth information and enhancing the academic rigor of my study.

Validity

Validity in a qualitative study was referring to credibility, transferability, and confirmability of data and information (Heale & Twycross, 2015; Noble & Smith, 2015), whereas, validity in a quantitative study, referred to internal validity and external validity (Heale & Twycross, 2015; Yin, 2014). Establishing internal and external validity in a study helped to ensure the accuracy of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2014). Credibility referred to the quality of trustworthiness or believability, as well as the confidence placed on the truth of the research findings (Anney, 2014; Sinkovics &

Alfoldi, 2012). To ensure credibility, scholars established the accuracy and trustworthiness of a study (Anney, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2014). To enhance the credibility of a study, scholars used member checking to validate data provided through the interview process (Harvey, 2015; Heale & Twycross, 2015; Noble & Smith, 2015). For data interpretation, member checking was used as a process to help ensure trustworthiness and credibility (Harvey, 2015; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I used member checking to enhance the credibility of the study, to include data interpretation, as well as to ensure I addressed the findings from the viewpoint of each SL.

Transferability was the possibility of findings or results applied to broader or different populations and concepts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2014); or the reader and future researchers deciding to transfer the details of this study to a new study (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). To establish transferability, I provided a thick description of the single-case study and participant data to allow readers the ability to understand the study, how it applied to them, and the decision to implement the 2015-2016 Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework and Criteria. Researchers noted that a thick description of qualitative research studies included the research process, data-collection methods, interview protocols, and the outcomes (Phelan & Kinsella, 2012). I understood that using a thick description was essential to ensure transferability, of which, the reader and future researchers determined the transferability of this study to another.

Confirmability was the establishing of truth, accuracy, and validity in a study (Heale & Twycross, 2015; Noble & Smith, 2015). Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted using an audit trail was a strategy to ensure confirmability in qualitative research. Instead

of using an audit trail, I confirmed the results of the study by providing supporting evidence in the form of analyses of performance outcomes (Section 3). I also used a member-checking approach to confirm information. Using a member-checking approach allowed scholars to confirm the validity of participant data (Anney, 2014; Harvey, 2015; Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012).

Data saturation was a guiding principle in qualitative research (Denzin, 2014; Fusch & Ness, 2015). To ensure data saturation, I collected rich and thick data for this qualitative single-case study. Researchers reaching data saturation have gathered enough information to reach a point at which additional data would not yield new information (Denzin, 2014; Fusch & Ness, 2015). I used interviews with three nonprofit SLs of a single organization to reach data saturation. Fusch and Ness (2015) argued that data saturation occurred when the act of obtaining data becomes counterproductive and yields nothing new. I asked probing questions during the interview process to reach data saturation, in addition to reviewing documents and analyzing performance outcome data. Researchers minimized bias by analyzing the views of study participants through understanding and interpreting participant responses from the personal lens of the researcher (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Fusch and Ness (2015) argued that bias occurred when collecting information for data saturation. I used a member-checking approach to avoid bias and to ensure my viewpoint and that of the study participants remained.

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I included the study purpose, research method and design, the role of the researcher, and data collection methods and techniques. I conducted semistructured

telephone interviews with each study participant; three SLs of a small, single nonprofit organization in Baltimore, Maryland to explore strategies some nonprofit senior leaders use to secure sustainable funding for their organization from businesses, foundations, and individual donations. Provided with organizational documents by the client leader of ABC Company, I continued to conduct interviews with each participant until I reached data saturation.

I created and secured electronic data files to organize all information collected. To collect and analyze data and develop themes, I used methodological triangulation. Gathering performance data from a variety of sources helped me to consider all aspects that influenced the organizational performance of ABC Company. After all data was gathered and analyzed, I provided the results and performance outcomes with the client leader and SLs of ABC Company as a member-checking approach to ensure validity, enhance the trustworthiness of the study, and maintain the integrity and interpretation of participant data.

In Section 3, I used the 2015-2016 Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework and embedded interview questions to answer the overarching research question and to collect data and evaluate performance outcomes. Using the Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework (2015) and its Criteria allowed me to evaluate the strengths and non-strengths of the nonprofit organization. I began Section 3 with the Organizational Profile and a detailed analysis of the following categories for ABC Company: (a) leadership, (b) strategy, (c) customers, (d) measurement, analysis, and knowledge management, (e) workforce, (f) operations, and (g) results. Section 3 also contained

findings from this study, an executive summary of key themes identified through data analyses, a summary of the project, and contributions and recommendations for future research.

Section 3: Organizational Profile

ABC Company is a single, small nonprofit organization located in Baltimore, Maryland. SLs of ABC Company offer student-centered lacrosse programming for middle and high school girls. The strategic challenge for ABC Company SLs was funding sustainability to address deteriorating or nonexistent facilities, outdated equipment, overused uniforms, and a lack of transportation. While working with local organizations, building relationships with local businesses and schools, SLs gained some suitable funding sources, but not enough to reach sustainability. The SLs of ABC Company used lacrosse to help young girls build confidence, develop their athletic skills, and provide exposure to opportunities that may benefit their futures from an academic and personal standpoint. Opportunities offered by SLs for the girls included participation in lacrosse clinics, camps, college visits, tutoring, and short- and long-term relationship building. SLs, volunteers, and parents all worked together, as the workforce, to inspire the girls to overcome daily challenges that affected their academic progress. The workforce performed duties in a nontraditional workplace environment, with flexible schedules and a virtual presence.

The workforce promoted a positive culture through the values of sportsmanship, academic excellence, empowerment, networking, integrity, teamwork, safety, support, and fun. SLs, the workforce, stakeholders, customers, and collaborators combined their efforts to decrease the dropout rate of both privileged and at-risk students by focusing on empowering, developing, and supporting each girl through lacrosse, coaching, behavioral interventions, and mentoring.

Key Factors Worksheet

Organizational Description

ABC Company is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in Baltimore, Maryland. SLs addressed the developmental needs of young girls through lacrosse, empowerment, and scholarship. SLs also provided opportunities through mentoring, leadership, and the support of athletic programming for elementary and middle school girls in the urban, public school system in Baltimore, Maryland. Using lacrosse as a holistic approach enhanced the girls' confidence and self-esteem, SLs built academic and athletic competence, while promoting positive body images and teaching a variety of life skills. The client and founder of ABC Company created the nonprofit organization to help young girls develop in academic, social, and athletic environments while learning life skills and integrating with students from other schools and lacrosse organizations. The core competency of ABC Company SL was empowering and educating girls through lacrosse.

SLs established ABC Company as an active supporter of girls' lacrosse programming in Maryland. The goal of SLs was to support the programming ABC Company to strengthen the confidence and abilities of elementary- and middle-school-aged girls through active participation, as well as to provide coaching assistance, equipment upgrades, mentoring, and opportunities to overcome social and cultural barriers. This approach to programming often translated into the classroom and in the girls' personal lives because of their increased empowerment and education gained. SLs have all benefited from the opportunities afforded from being scholar-athletes playing

lacrosse and understand how the exposure to lacrosse programming lead to academic, athletic, and financial gains.

SLs established values in culture, preparation, success, and accomplishment. ABC Company SLs embraced a commitment to education, service, and understanding of the girls' needs to provide the student-centered focus of creating an environment of lifelong learning, leadership, growth, discipline, and civil and social responsibilities. SLs valued a learning-centered standard of excellence. SLs maintained a pledge to assess and learn the knowledge and skills necessary to promote continuous improvement in the lacrosse, athletic, and academic communities.

Organizational environment.

Product offerings. SLs supported athletic lacrosse programming for elementary and middle school students throughout Baltimore city, with the goal of providing financial and transportation support for the girls attending five specific schools in Baltimore. The delivery mechanism for SLs included a hands-on approach to providing skills that translate on and off the playing field through weekly sports clinics. In addition to lacrosse, SLs provided year-round tutoring, academic guidance, behavioral interventions, and mandatory study sessions designed to give time for assignment completion and enhanced comprehension of academic course material. SLs promoted advocacy for the girls' participation in athletic camps in and outside of Baltimore, along with providing financial support and transportation.

To deliver products, SLs used student and coach relationships, the ABC Company website, social media platforms, and marketing materials given to community

partners, such as schools throughout Baltimore city, Harlem Lacrosse-Baltimore, and U.S. Lacrosse. ABC Company SLs hosted roughly ten clinics per year, once per week, at different high schools or colleges in the Baltimore area. The ABC Company workforce gave the girls opportunities to establish and maintain connections with local high school and college women's lacrosse players and coaches. The relationships gained by the girls helped to create long-term mentorship opportunities.

Mission, vision, and values.

SLs promoted the core competency of ABC Company, which was empowering and educating girls through lacrosse. The core competency directly related to and supported the mission, vision, and values (MVV) of SLs at ABC Company (Figure 1). SLs reinforced the core competency by adhering to organizational values that guided the decisions and behaviors that drove ABC Company.

I was advised that SLs paid no employees or had no organized bargaining units within ABC Company. SLs described ABC Company's workforce structure as consisting of the client leader and five to ten regular volunteers. Two of the regular volunteers served as SLs to assist the client leader. The SLs have played and coached lacrosse on some level, which was key to the foundation of the ABC Company. SLs and the workforce supported the girls in their academic, athletic, and personal goals required a commitment to excellence and open communication. The SLs and workforce defined the core competency and MVV as sportsmanship, academic excellence, empowerment, networking, integrity, teamwork, safety, support, and fun through previous participation in and athletic excellence in scholastic sports at the high school and college level.

Core Competency	Mission	Vision	Values: Guiding Principles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowering and educating girls through lacrosse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To expose middle and high school girls to lacrosse, while providing tutoring, coaching, and mentoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enhance the lives of young girls through lacrosse, while helping them to develop and achieve life goals and aspirations through athletics and academics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sportsmanship • Academic Excellence • Empowerment • Networking • Integrity • Teamwork • Safety • Support • Fun

Figure 1. Mission, vision, and values (MVV).

Workforce profile.

All SLs have earned bachelor's degrees. The client leader and one SL have also earned master's degrees, resulting in an educated workforce. Each volunteer emphasized the benefits of providing mentorship and tutoring, alongside lacrosse athletic coaching. The client leader and volunteers contributed to the MVV by (a) establishing a nontraditional workplace environment where employees, (b) interact in virtual environments, (c) enjoy flexible schedules, (d) promote a safe and supportive environment. The primary working space used by SLs is the residence of the client leader, who was responsible for creating and enforcing the terms of the decision-making process for volunteer relationships, providing flexible schedules, and open communication. The workforce completed background and criminal history record checks as part of their interaction with children, as an added security measure (Figure 2).

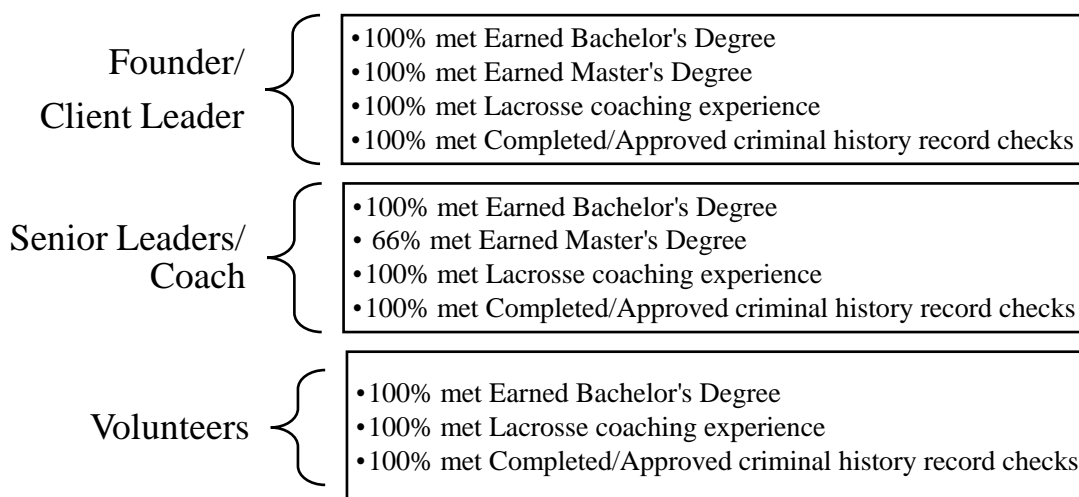


Figure 2. Workforce profile.

Assets. Assets for ABC Company included the tacit and explicit knowledge of the workforce. Although the SLs provided support for the girls and the local community, there were no facilities owned by SLs. SLs benefited from identifying services provided in the product offerings, which included the support of athletic lacrosse programming for elementary and middle school students throughout Baltimore city. SLs and coaches used equipment purchased through fundraising, donation, or loan to demonstrate lacrosse techniques, coaching, and services provided.

Regulatory requirements. In 2011, SLs of ABC Company worked with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to become licensed as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization. SLs and the workforce followed all required rules and regulations of the IRS, to include completing and filing IRS Form 990 to satisfy annual financial reporting requirements. SLs ensured the workforce followed written policies, bylaws, and values of the nonprofit organization. SLs ensured annual audits of ABC Company internal reporting complied with federal, state, and local laws.

SLs ensured the health and safety of the workforce and customers through training and monitoring. Coaches and players did not participate in any lacrosse activities without proper protection and safety equipment, such as eye protection, gloves, mouthpiece, helmets for goalkeepers, and sticks that were tested, certified, and in compliance with the U.S. Lacrosse Women's Game Director and Rules Chair Committee. Other requirements that SLs adhered to included acknowledging official signals, rule changes, concussion awareness training, as well as guidelines for proper field set up and lighting, sports hygiene, and the U.S. Lacrosse Code of Conduct.

Organizational relationships.

Organizational structure. ABC Company is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with an organizational structure and governance system in which, the client and SLs shared responsibilities with dedicated volunteers. The Board of Directors (BOD) or advisory council consisted of the client leader and two SLs. SLs guided ABC Company's MVV by providing operational assignments to each SL and volunteer. SLs provided support to Baltimore girls' lacrosse programs through ABC Company, with all funding and resources gained from the donations from the community and partners.

Customers and stakeholders. Key customers of ABC Company were Baltimore elementary and middle school girls, parents and teachers, and lacrosse coaches (Table 3). Key stakeholders shared the same requirements as customers. Both stakeholders and customers held similar beliefs and behaviors, which were exhibited by the SLs of ABC Company.

Table 3

Key Customers and Stakeholder Requirements

Key Customers	Key Requirements	Alignment
Students (grades 6-12)	To play lacrosse, enhance academic skills, and learn life skills	SLs review key customer requirements on a regular basis through reviews of activities and student participation.
Parents	For their children to train in a safe and qualified environment	
Key Stakeholders	Key Requirements	Alignment
	Collaborative development of budget and financial reporting, as well as strategic planning	
Board of directors	Ensure compliance to federal, state, and local regulations. Provide guidance and training on adherence to policies and procedures	
Workforce	Educated, supportive, safe, and flexible work environment	
Schools	Guide the client leader and stakeholders Engage with girls and partners to sustain participation Provide safe spaces for the girls to study, network, and play lacrosse	See, Baldrige performance excellence framework categories 1-6.
Partners and collaborators	Financial support and promotion Competition Peer-mentoring opportunities	
Community	Engagement Cost-efficient programming Local social advocacy	

Suppliers and partners. Suppliers and partners were beneficial components of SLs' capacity to support programs and develop emerging and innovative ways to promote ABC Company and secure sustainable donors. Key stakeholder groups included collaborators, the community, partners, students, and the workforce. The actions of suppliers and partners were also critical in understanding ways to use innovations and learned advantages in the market. SLs participated in scheduled virtual or telephonic meetings with partners, as well as volunteers to ensure business relationships remain intact and the lines of communication remain open. Key suppliers and partners for ABC Company are outlined in Table 4. SLs engaged with larger lacrosse nonprofit and for-profit organizations, as suppliers and partners, such as Harlem Lacrosse-Baltimore, Encore Brand Lacrosse, the Urban Lacrosse Alliance, and U.S. Lacrosse to maintain relationships with sustainable donors and volunteers.

Table 4

Key Suppliers, Partners, and Collaborators

Suppliers, Partners, and Collaborators		Influence on Organizational Systems	Influence on Innovation and Competitiveness
Suppliers	Partnerships with local organizations for funding, such as Legg Mason, Safeway, and Sears, Roebuck & Co.	Provide uniforms and equipment Provide transportation subsidies	Understands current trends and best practices learned from partnering with nonprofit organizations
Partners	Harlem Lacrosse-Baltimore, Encore Brand Lacrosse, parents, workforce	Mentorship and partnership opportunities	Provides insight into emerging and innovative programming and network opportunities
Collaborators	U.S. Lacrosse, Urban Lacrosse Alliance, and the local community	Funding sustainability	Provides funding for programming

Organizational Situation

Competitive environment.

Competitive position. Competitors of ABC Company SLs included large local and national youth sports-based organizations, such as Harlem Lacrosse-Baltimore, Encore Brand Lacrosse, the Urban Lacrosse Alliance, and U.S. Lacrosse. The relationships that ABC Company SLs had with partners and stakeholders helped SLs meet the needs of the customer and created innovative delivery methods for coaching, mentoring, and life skill instruction. Understanding the competitive position of partners and stakeholders also provided insight to ABC Company SLs about the cultural and social barriers that existed within the local community.

Competitiveness changes. The success of ABC Company SLs, in comparison to other nonprofit lacrosse organizations, was its availability and appeal to urban youth in Baltimore city public schools. Changes that influenced SLs' competitive advantage included fluctuations in the social and financial needs of the girls and other lacrosse-based, urban youth programs in Baltimore that offered robust advertising resources, with broad community awareness and supported efforts or internal changes to the ABC Company core competency, leadership, or governance.

Comparative data. Collecting competitive and comparative data proved difficult and was the primary challenge for SLs because of the size of the organization. Market shifts and key competitors also proved challenging for SLs in collecting data. SLs collected useful data from Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award recipients, Maryland Youth Lacrosse Association, National Girls Lacrosse League, the Youth

Program Quality Assessment, as well as from reviewing student population data.

Reviews of comparable youth organizations reflected sustained and increased participation of youth and volunteers, in addition to the workforce. Leaders of larger organizations used social media platforms and their websites to communicate with stakeholders, partners, collaborators, the workforce, and sustainable donors. Leaders of competitive organizations also posted other organizational information, such as biographical and professional information about the members of the BOD, and registration, participant, volunteer, new hire, and event information on their websites.

Strategic context. SLs used strategic advantages and challenges discovered during the lifetime of the business. SLs analyzed findings each month to evaluate the ability of SLs to learn from benefits gained through current relationships and to overcome barriers and challenges to its strategic planning process (SPP), outlined in Figure 3. The strategic challenges for SLs were the acquisition of sustainable donors, volunteer retention, and enhancing organizational culture, structure, finances, operations, and fulfilling the social and financial short- and long-term needs of the girls. The strategic advantages for SLs were partnerships, innovation, reputation and affiliation, and services provided.

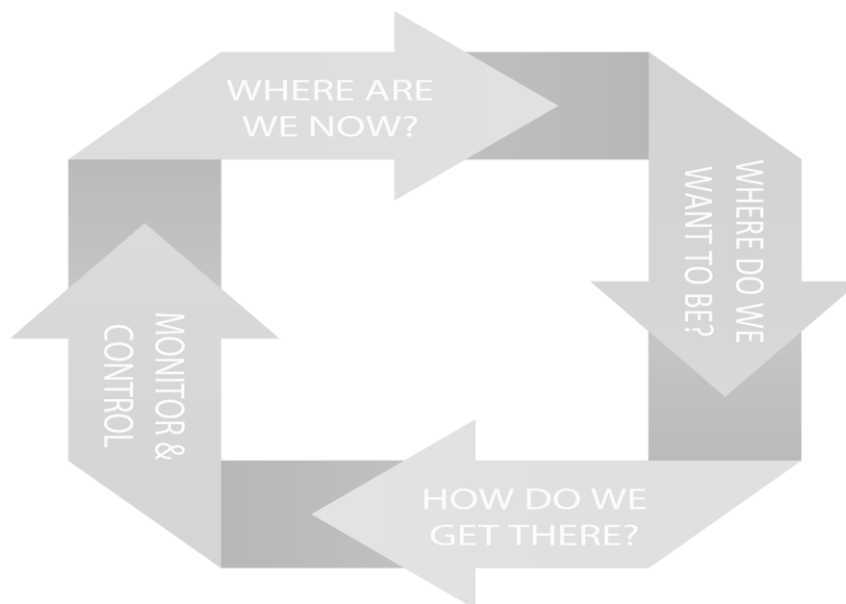


Figure 3. Strategic planning process (SPP). From “What Is a Strategic Plan and Why Does Your Business Need One?”, by Lewis Carroll, as paraphrased by George Harrison, 2017. Copyright 2017 by The Alternative Board. Reprinted with permission.

Performance improvement system. The performance improvement system used by SLs had an impact on the budget, outputs, and reputation of the nonprofit organization, which aligned with the sustainability of donor funding. The cycle of donor sustainability began with SLs identifying the need for funding, formulating a theory to determine how to meet the social and financial needs of the customers, and implementing an action plan. For example, SLs identified that using personal networks yielded positive results for short-term fundraising efforts. To meet the long-term financial needs of the girls, SLs reviewed current donor relationships to identify relationships and engaged with potential donors. SLs then examined results to test the validity of the plan for improvement or the identification of best practices. SLs used the four steps of the plan-do-check-act (PDCA) cycle of continuous improvement to monitor results and findings, as well as to implement changes (Figure 4). Understanding the four steps of the cycle of

continuous improvement helped SLs improve the donor cycle for the life cycle of the nonprofit organization.

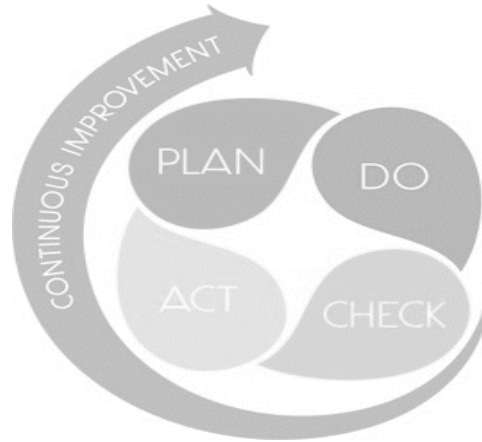


Figure 4. Cycle of continuous improvement. Figure 4 incorporates the four-step system of plan-do-check-act (PDCA). From <http://www.bradqual.co.uk/plan-do-check-act-diagram/> Reprinted with permission.

Leadership Triad: Leadership, Strategy, and Customers

Leadership

Senior leadership. The senior leadership team at ABC Company included three SLs with earned degrees, education, and lacrosse coaching experience. SLs in the leadership triad of ABC Company focused on the systematic development of a leadership management method (LMM), which was the driver for the lacrosse empowerment program (Figure 5).

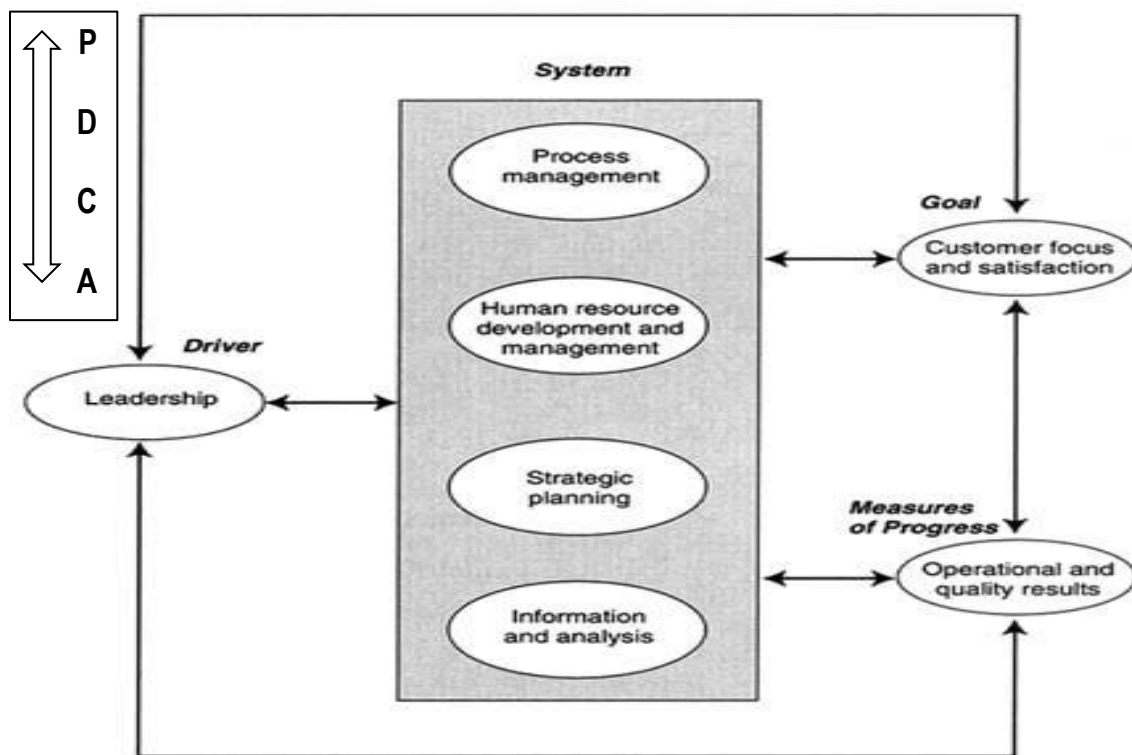


Figure 5. Leadership management method (LMM). National Research Council. (1997). *Enhancing organizational performance*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. doi:10.17226/5128. Reprinted with permission.

SLs used the MVV to provide opportunities for each girl to learn life skills and grow in academic, social, and athletic environments. Combined with the core competency of empowering and educating girls through lacrosse, SLs worked to meet the expectations of participants and stakeholders. SLs used current communication methods with key partners and collaborators, as well as prospective suppliers (Table 5).

Table 5

Communication Methods

In-Person Meetings		Conference Calls	E-mails	Newsletters
Suppliers				
Partners	X	MOAN	WMOAN	MOAN
Collaborators	X	MOAN	WMOAN	MOAN

Frequency: Weekly, Monthly, Annually, Ongoing, As Needed.

Stakeholder groups included:

Collaborators – SLs introduced collaborators to the MVV of ABC Company upon establishing communications to ensure common beliefs about the cycle time of common commitments and tasks. SLs promoted the MVV with all collaborators by communicating information through postings on the ABC Company website and social media platforms, as well as direct communications. SLs also provided information to collaborators about their successes or needs from observations conducted during previous activities, community events, or stakeholder communications.

Community – SLs introduced the community to the MVV of ABC Company through the website, social media platforms, community events, and stakeholder communications.

Partners – SLs introduced partners to the MVV of ABC Company during initial conversation and interactions. SLs reiterated the MVV in any written or verbal agreements, contracts, or memoranda of understanding (MOU) between ABC Company and partners. SLs re-examined relationships on an annual basis to ensure the fulfillment of ABC Company and partner requirements.

Students and Parents – SLs introduced students and parents to the MVV of ABC Company during initial discussions and interactions. This process reinforced open communication between SLs, students, and parents, and established a relationship of trust as the success of the girls was the top priority for all.

Workforce – SLs introduced the workforce to the MVV of ABC Company during initial discussions and interactions and upon acknowledgment of active participation in ABC Company. When SLs trained others on ABC Company's MVV, the training aided the workforce. The workforce included SLs and volunteers, who engaged with stakeholders, promoted open communication, and reinforced the leadership style and role of the founder.

SLs used the MVV as a guide for developing and enhancing the SPP. SLs worked together to shape and guide the nonprofit organization to promote lacrosse efforts, setting the MVV with every daily action. SLs often discussed the MVV on telephone calls or in staff meetings, as well as in direct communications with key stakeholders. To demonstrate a commitment to legal and ethical behavior, SLs maintained professionalism and integrity while ensuring the safety of all girls that participated in the program.

Organizational Success and Sustainability. The actions of SLs that helped build success and sustainability included continuous recruitment of students that showed athletic giftedness for lacrosse or who were at risk of dropping out of school. By focusing on the retention rate of students, SLs used the relationship with students and parents to reinforce open communication methods and student engagement. SLs communicated daily with the workforce and customers. Daily conference calls and in-person

engagement helped the SLs convey information about ABC Company and students to the workforce. SLs communicated with the customers through direct discussions, e-mail, and on social media platforms, while promoting ethical business practices, behaviors, social responsibility, and professionalism.

The founder and client leader of ABC Company has been in business for seven years, with six years as a registered nonprofit organization. SLs focused on the sustainability of ABC Company, which depended on the enhancement and execution of the SPP, which focused on organizational improvement, communication, commitment to social advocacy, and fundraising efforts. Using the leadership management system (LMS) as an opportunity for improvement had positive impacts on SLs because it helped with the planning and systematic development of programming (Figure 6). Using the LMS helped SLs ensure the sustainable success of ABC Company. SLs used the cycle of continuous improvement or PDCA to analyze and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the LMS to communicate with the workforce and stakeholders. Topics such as the MVV, organizational stability, organizational performance review, SPP, and overall leadership structure of ABC Company were discussed to determine action plans, short- and long-term goals, changes to inputs and outputs, innovation, emerging technologies, and with decision-making. SLs also gleaned information from the workforce and stakeholders through the communication channels used with the stakeholders and the LMS.

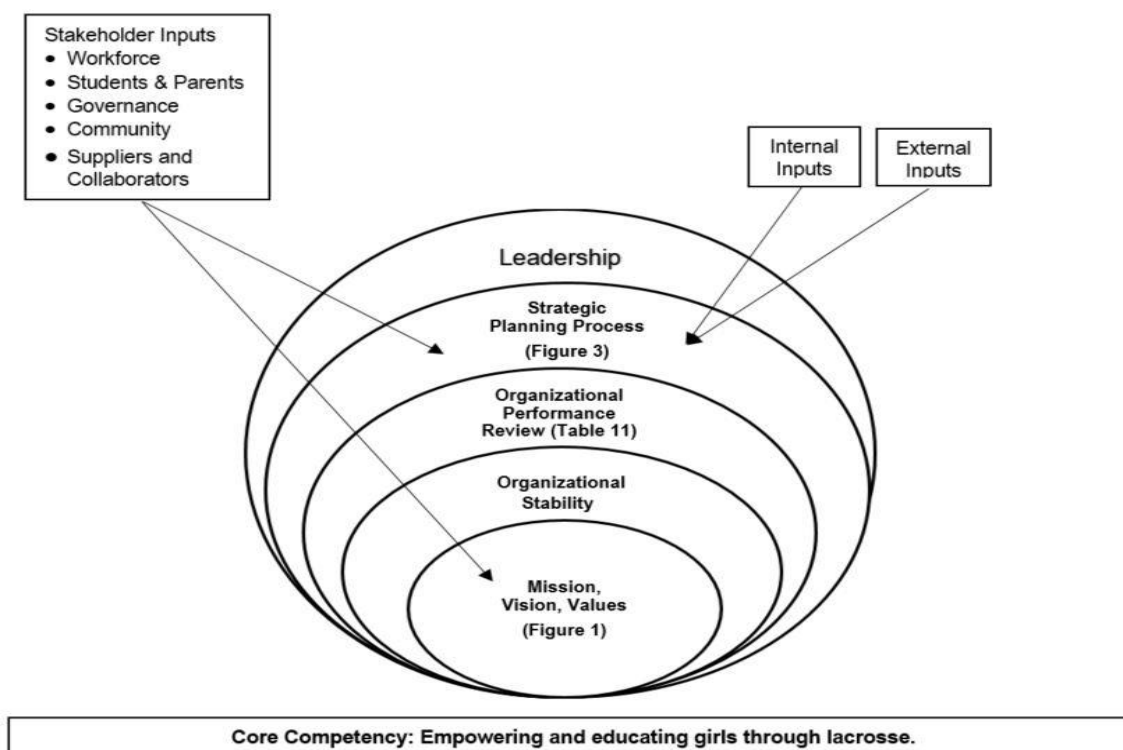


Figure 6. Leadership management system (LMS). SLs used the LMS to address and align the MVV, SPP, organizational performance and stability, along with the core competency of empowering and educating girls through lacrosse.

Communication and Organizational Performance.

Communication and engagement. SLs used Facebook and Instagram as social media platforms, as well the ABC Company website to share information and attract donors. Using social media platforms and the ABC Company website helped SLs create a focus on action by highlighting the achievements of the girls, which included their success in attending school, their abilities in playing lacrosse, and the statistics of the girls as they transitioned from middle school to high school and beyond graduation. SLs monitored, analyzed, and acted upon these data to help ensure a focus on action; empowering SLs and stakeholders to adapt and motivate as necessary to achieve success.

In addition to social media platforms, the client leader and SLs communicated with stakeholders and the community through various communication methods (Table 6). The communication methods included e-mail, newsletters, social media platforms, and other information sharing mechanisms.

SLs used the ABC Company website and social media platforms to promote the act of giving, a requirement for sustainability of the nonprofit organization. SLs used the MVV as a guideline for actions taken, which was pivotal to the success of the relationships retained by ABC Company SLs and the workforce. Furthermore, each year, the BOD ensured communications were maintained with all stakeholders and collaborators to ensure that the core competency was foremost when SLs provided communication.

Table 6

Senior Leader Communication Plan

	Stakeholders							Purpose				
	Students	Parents	Workforce	BOD	Community	Suppliers & Collaborator	Partners	Equal Exchange	Decision-Making	Motivation	Engagement	Strategic Plan
Communicate MVV	A	A	O	O	O	O	A		X	X	X	X
E-mail / newsletter	N	O	D	O	O	M	A	X		X	X	X
Staff meetings			W	W				X	X	X	X	X
In-person meetings	N	N	N	R	A	A	N	X	X	X	X	X
Website	W	W	D	M	M	M	O			X	X	
Social media platforms	N	W	N	W	MO	M	A			X	X	
Verbal/written feedback	A	A	N	A	A	A	N	X		X	X	X

Note. SLs used PDCA throughout the senior leader communication plan.

Frequency: Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Annually, Ongoing, As Needed.

Focus on action. The actions of SLs affected the community because the students' retention rate and the success of the program helped to ensure long-term, lasting effects on the community. For more than seven years, SLs have collaborated with local community businesses and lacrosse organizations to provide equipment, training, and funding for the girls. Organizations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Urban Lacrosse League have matched fundraising efforts or provided donations to ABC Company SLs. The benefits of SLs' collaborative efforts laid in the attendance of summer camps and enrollment in middle and high schools that offered lacrosse programming, reinforcing the core competency of empowering and educating girls

through lacrosse. Concerning the significance of this study, the implications for positive social change included the potential to increase the understanding of strategies nonprofit senior leaders used to secure sustainable funding and funding sustainability, and the maximization of community presence, (e.g., the ability for nonprofit senior leaders to share lessons learned about securing sustainable funding in a community of practice).

Governance and societal responsibilities.

Governance System. The governance system of ABC Company was inclusive of the SLs, of which, some served on the BOD. The BOD included individuals committed to the MVV and core competency of ABC Company. Each member of the BOD assisted in performing the legal duties of the governing body while supporting functions and granting authority on behalf of the nonprofit organization. For effectiveness, the BOD met at least once per quarter to review and measure effectiveness, engage in leadership development, and participate in decision-making efforts for responsible governance (Table 7).

Table 7

Responsible Governance

Key Aspects	BOD	Internal Audits	External Audits
Accountability of SLs' actions	X	X	X
Organizational transparency	X	X	
Accountability of strategic plans	X	X	
Financial accountability	X	X	X
Selection of BOD membership	X	X	
Organizational accountability	X	X	X
Stakeholder interests	X		
Succession planning for SLs	X		

Note. SLs used the PDCA throughout the responsible governance system.

SLs selected the BOD membership, which was responsible for ensuring the financial sustainability of the nonprofit organization and making decisions based on the interests of the stakeholders, MVV, and core competency. SLs selecting the BOD was unusual; however, with the workforce included volunteers, identifying individuals dedicated to the MVV and core competency of the organization aided in the selection process to retain dedicated members of the BOD. The BOD then evaluated the performance of SLs through their viewpoint and integration as members of the workforce and parents of the customers. Individuals seeking membership to ABC Company's BOD provided their résumé or curriculum vitae to the SLs for review before making selections. The SLs benefited from electing an Executive Committee comprised of internal parties to

review each BOD membership submission. SLs should use the Executive Committee to discuss the term limits for each term, whether 3-year, 5-year, or 7-year terms.

After making all selections, each SL voted and considered the knowledge, skills, and abilities of all applicants to complete the tasks required of the BOD. With the help of volunteers, the BOD and SLs voted on positions to staff the BOD, such as president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, and public relations. The BOD met at least once per quarter to discuss the direction of ABC Company, provided agenda items, provided reports, updates, answered questions, and communicated strategic goals. The Executive Committee also met before each BOD meeting to prepare for all agenda items. SLs used PDCA to review the short- and long-term goals of the BOD and the tasks necessary for the BOD, as well as the use of internal and external audits. SLs used PDCA to identify areas of concern or areas where change was necessary for the areas of action planning, financial and organizational accountability, stakeholder interests, and succession planning.

Performance evaluation. SLs created an internal and external auditing system to review and evaluate the performance of SLs, as well as with adherence to the MVV and core competency. SLs and the BOD collaborated with current partners for advice or recommendations on internal and external auditing procedures or for suggestions. Using an auditing system helped SLs and the BOD to identify risks associated with the performance of the workforce.

Legal and Ethical Behavior.

Legal and regulatory compliance. SLs set personal and professional standards and expectations for legal and ethical behavior at all times and with all stakeholders. The workforce of ABC Company consisted of volunteers with a stake in the successful transition of each student; therefore, their actions had a significant effect on the process. SLs monitored the completion of ethics training of each other through communication, e-mail, and recordkeeping. There was no official ethics training or employee handbook provided by SLs; however, SLs and some of the workforce and stakeholders were required to complete ethics training as a condition of employment as a teacher or coach. SLs monitored interactions with students daily as a means to measure and ensure responsible governance, as well as evaluate the effectiveness of actions through interaction and feedback provided by stakeholders.

Compliance with federal IRS requirements for 501(c)(3) organizations in Maryland included the selection of a BOD, electing officers, obtaining a federal employer identification number, holding organizational meetings, obtaining a federal tax-exemption determination, registering for charitable solicitation, completing state filings for 501(c)(3) determination and tax exemptions, and obtaining proper insurance for the organization, board members, and officers. The IRS required SLs to ensure these items remained current for 501(c)(3) organizations to continue as nonprofit organizations. Noncompliance by SLs with any IRS requirements put the nonprofit status of ABC Company in jeopardy.

Ethical behavior. SLs promoted ethical behavior through their actions and interactions. To ensure legal and ethical compliance, SLs set high standards for the legal and ethical expectations of the workforce and stakeholders. With the BOD, SLs were responsible for ensuring volunteers and stakeholders understand the ethical requirements for participating in the nonprofit organization. SLs confirmed employees received training on ethical behaviors within the requirements of their primary work positions as teachers and coaches. SLs and applicable members of the workforce promoted the completion of training and certifications. SLs used PDCA to engage the workforce and stakeholders in communicating changes to active processes used at ABC Company. In areas that could be improved, SLs identified innovation and emerging information from the workforce, BOD, partners, and students during their interactions at hire, or each year when the SLs and the BOD reviewed key ethical processes (Table 8).

Table 8

Key Ethical Processes

Stakeholder	Process	Rate
Workforce	Criminal history record check	At hire, annually or as required by background check agency
Students and parents, Workforce	Code of conduct	Annually
Workforce, BOD	Conflict of interest policy	At hire or appointment
Workforce	Employee handbook	At hire, annually
Workforce	Internal and external audit of records and operations	Annually
Governance	Internal and external auditor Interview with BOD	Annually
Partners	MOU	Annually
Workforce, suppliers, and collaborators	Nondisclosure agreement	At hire or upon initial signing of contract
Workforce	Signed code of ethics	At hire, annually
Students and parents	Zero tolerance policy	At enrollment, annually

Note. SLs engaged PDCA when reviewing key ethical processes.

Societal Responsibilities.

Societal well-being. The benefits of SLs addressing societal responsibilities included in the daily operations of ABC Company were critical for the workforce to understand and uphold. SLs promoted and ensured ethical behavior through education, active communication, engagement, and recruiting volunteers that exemplified high ethical standards. These practices helped the SLs consider societal well-being as part of its strategy and daily operations, which SLs communicated to the workforce and stakeholders.

Community support. Leading by example, the SLs incorporated an environment of trust and communication, which created an environment of success and survival of the nonprofit organization and strengthened the community. Key measures for the client leader and SLs to consider about societal well-being were their contributions to the environment, social, and economic systems. SLs focused on the benefits provided to the community and promoted the activities and successes of ABC Company through e-mail, social media platforms, and print communications. Partnering and collaborating with external organizations helped to broaden the scope of duties for SLs to follow, concerning the societal responsibilities of SLs and the workforce.

Strategy

Strategy development.

Strategy planning process. SLs conducted strategic planning during discussions and staff planning meetings. The participants in the discussions included the workforce, customers, and also include partners and collaborators, depending on the topics discussed. The strategic plan SLs used included a review of necessary action items, underlying obstacles, or the way forward that SLs intended to employ, and future action planning. SLs repeated the process each quarter, during scheduled meetings, and as needed. Using a strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat (SWOT) analysis at the start of the planning process helped SLs when reviewing data and other inputs for strategic planning.

SLs combined the needs of the girls, the workforce, and partners with the availability of resources to create action plans for each fiscal year. SLs then aligned the

action plans with strategic challenges, strategic advantages, and the organization's core competency by reviewing areas of concern and capitalizing on their competitive advantage and understanding ABC Company's role in the community, in comparison to competitors. Ensuring the strategic challenges and advantages aligned with the core competency helped SLs to confirm retention and increase the number of girls that participated in ABC Company's lacrosse programming.

Using the MVV, core competency, and values, SLs developed strategic plans for ABC Company, which benefited the workforce and stakeholders through the success and partnering efforts gained for the nonprofit organization's lacrosse programming. SLs understood that as the girls grew older and their social and financial needs changed or fluctuated, that the strategic planning of SLs required evolution. In addition, as each girl matriculated from middle to high school, their academic and athletic developmental needs changed because the requirements of the schools, level of play, and lacrosse coaching efforts also changed. Changes also emerged for the girls within the extracurricular lacrosse leagues where each girl participated. SLs conducted strategic planning by ensuring that the plans of ABC Company aligned with the MVV and core competency, as well as that of stakeholders. To respond to unexpected or abrupt organizational or external change, SLs used a performance management system that incorporated unexpected or abrupt change was essential. SLs verified that ABC Company met the expectations of the girls, workforce, stakeholders, customers, partners, and collaborators through feedback and communication, which was critical to the SPP.

Using the SPP helped SLs identify the current state of action plans, determine the future state of action plans, devise a plan of change, and furthermore, discover and implement ways to monitor and control changes to the action plans. SLs reviewed current and emerging information from the girls, the workforce, stakeholders, customers, partners, and collaborators to make changes. Reviewing the four steps in the SPP throughout the year or as necessary helped SLs ensure effective and efficient change was related to strategic challenges, objectives, and competitive changes. A review of the ABC Company website and social media platforms indicated a successful appeal of the nonprofit organization to the youth of Baltimore, Maryland. SLs used the information listed on the company website and social media platforms in the SPP to determine future decision-making and communication efforts. Combined with key processes, the feedback gained from communication methods and the knowledge sharing system (KSS), SLs used PDCA to analyze and improve the effectiveness of the SPP by reviewing the processes included in the SPP (Table 9).

Table 9

Knowledge Sharing System (KSS)

Stakeholder	KSS Method	Frequency	Participant	Integration Points
Participants, and schools	Brochure	A, AN	Schools, community	MVV, CC, SI
	Email blasts	W, M, AN	Schools, parents, participants, Community	MVV, CC, SI
	Social media blasts	W, M, AN	Schools, parents, Participants, community	MVV, CC, SI
Workforce	Workforce meetings	AN, W, M	All workforce	MVV, CC, SI
	Senior leader meetings	W, M, Q, AN, A	SLs	MVV, CC, SI
	Strategic planning meetings	M, Q, A	All workforce, SLs	SI
Other Stakeholders	Community Collaboration meetings	AN	Community, schools, SLs	MVV, CC, SI
	SL Communication plan	M, Q, AN	SLs	MVV, CC, SI
	Supplier meetings	Q, AN, A	Suppliers, SLs BOD members,	SI
	BOD meetings	M, Q, A	SLs, community, parents	MVV, CC, SI

Note. SLs engaged PDCA with stakeholders, participants and schools, the workforce, and other stakeholders throughout the KSS. *Frequency:* W= Weekly, M=Monthly, AN= As Needed, Q= Quarterly, A= Annually, CC= Core Competencies, MVV= Mission, Vision, Values, SI= Strategic Initiatives..

Innovation. SLs sought opportunities for innovation daily. The feedback gained from communication with students and parents provided valuable insight for SLs to repeat during the gathering and sharing of information with stakeholders. SLs used data and information to inform all opportunities and to take intelligent risks through active engagement. When SLs heard of opportunities or intelligent risks where the girls benefited, SLs decided on an action plan. When the girls did not benefit, the SLs took no action. With the small group of SLs, workforce, and stakeholders, the KSS used stimulated innovation from the communication process, allowing SLs to make swift decisions and take actions throughout ABC Company. Using the KSS empowered all to voice their concerns in a welcoming environment, which SLs reinforced.

Strategy considerations. SLs attempted to remain on the forefront of emerging technologies for equipment and safety. Through partnering and communicating with stakeholders, SLs learned of emerging products and technology that kept the girls safe. SLs often received information through established networks within the school systems and from associations with lacrosse organizations, and as educators and coaches.

Work system and core competency. The key work system for SLs was to bring opportunity to girls through involvement in lacrosse, while providing coaching, mentoring, and instruction of life skills to enhance academic, social, and personal growth. SLs embraced the core competency of ABC Company, which was empowering and educating girls through lacrosse. By focusing on the MVV and core competency, SLs and stakeholders remained committed to the social and financial needs of the girls. Each fiscal year, SLs concentrated on engaging and developing the girls to achieve their

academic, athletic, and personal goals. It was important that SLs aligned the MVV, core competency, and strategic intent of ABC Company with the goals of stakeholders, which helped with the formation of action plans and short- and long-term goals.

Strategy implementation.

Key strategic objective. The key strategic objective for strategy implementation for SLs was to establish sustainable funding sources to subject the girls to lacrosse clinics, camps, college visits, tutoring, and short- and long-term relationship building. SLs repeated the process of understanding the needs of stakeholders and the girls, which was essential to determine how much money was needed to sustain the nonprofit organization. To anticipate public concerns with products and operations, SLs considered the nature of the environment, combined with the demographics of the area to empower the workforce and stakeholders. The empowerment of the workforce and stakeholders to communicate with SLs aided in the decision-making responsibilities of SLs, which led to ideas for improvement, impacting the SPP.

Strategic objective considerations. Knowledge gained from the feedback provided by stakeholders promoted proactivity for SLs when considering adverse effects of decision-making and risk identification. Realizing limitations in the budget served as a strategic objective for SLs to consider, as well as what type of donors that provided sustainable funding for the future. When SLs discovered methods to ensure the budget aligned with activities enhanced the chance for SLs to provide stability for the nonprofit organization while avoiding adverse effects to the operation.

Action Plan Development and Deployment.

Action planning. SLs developed and cultivated action plans during discussions and staff meetings with the workforce and stakeholders. The discussions and staff meetings aided SLs in the development of short- and long-term action plans for future implementation by the workforce and stakeholders (Table 10). The key short-term action plans for SLs included meeting the financial, transportation, academic, and athletic needs of the girls. The key long-term action plans for SLs were to ensure financial sustainability and active engagement with the workforce and stakeholders. SLs deployed the action plans at various, scheduled times throughout each year, with the help of the workforce and stakeholders. SLs developed and refined each short- and long-term plan when updated information or enhanced technologies became available. To ensure the availability of financial and other resources, SLs engaged the workforce and stakeholders to communicate the needs of the girls and to raise funds for future use.

Action plan implementation. The key workforce plan for SLs was to support short- and long-term achievement of action plans related to stakeholder engagement, communication, and fund sustainability. The goal of SLs was to align available resources with available funding. When misalignment occurred, SLs found themselves unbalanced, which presented challenges for customers, stakeholders, collaborators, the community, and the ABC Company brand. SLs aligned PDCA with processes to analyze and improve actions to achieve goals and strategic initiatives, as well as to monitor the effectiveness of action plans for continuous improvement.

Table 10

Goals, Strategic Initiatives, and Action Plans

Strategic Initiative 1: ABC Company Funding Plan			
Goal	Action plans	Responsible party	Performance measures
Goal 1: Acquire adequate funding to support the financial, transportation, academic, and athletic needs of the girls	Establish a budget that is accurate and aligns with organizational goals	SLs (Founding/client leader, SLs)	Budget and financial performance and compliance, internal financial audits, communication plans,
	Discover emergent or alternative methods for fundraising	SLs, BOD, workforce	Review the budget against the data each quarter
Goal 2: Enhance communication systems	Increase the donor pool, to include first-time, repeat, large, and small donors	SLs	Retention and satisfaction of donors
Strategic Initiative 2: Sustainability Plan			
Goal 1: Provide opportunities to learn and grow in a variety of environments	Review feedback from the workforce, stakeholders, partners, collaborators, and complaints to develop and sustain programming	SLs, workforce, stakeholders, partners, collaborators, and the community	Satisfaction rates, knowledge sharing, and participation rates
	Provide guidance and information that empowers and educates others	SLs and volunteer workforce	
Goal 2: Create strategic partnerships for exposure and brand building	Engage and network among groups of girls in large and small organizations, (i.e., local competition, national partners, and current or former lacrosse players)	SLs and volunteer workforce	Partner and collaborator engagement, satisfaction rates
Goal 3: Promote and increase the participation rate	Work with schools that participate or promote lacrosse activities	SLs, workforce, parents	Social media platforms, customer service, stakeholder engagement, participation and retention rates
Strategic Initiative 3: Workforce Sustainability Plan			
Goal 1: Increase volunteer staff	Promote roles and responsibilities, along with alignment of organizational goals	SLs and BOD	Workforce retention, satisfaction, and engagement
	Recognize volunteers among customers and stakeholders	SLs and BOD	

Note: SLs engaged PDCA throughout the reviews of goals, strategic initiatives, and action plans.

Resource allocation. SLs strived to align funding with available resources. If funding was not available to support the programming or efforts of ABC Company, SLs either donated to ABC Company from personal funds or deployed fundraising efforts within the current network of lacrosse stakeholders, collaborators, partners, family members, or the local community. SLs balanced decision-making by following a budget to make practical choices prove sufficient, which eliminated the need to provide direct support from personal funds of the workforce.

Workforce plans. SLs used workforce plans to provide support to the short- and long-term activities planned. SLs provided details in the marketing materials distributed to potential donors and current stakeholders. SLs did not have funds available to hire a dedicated staff as the entire workforce was unpaid; however, SLs used the annual budget to meet the needs of the workforce.

Performance measures. SLs tracked and communicated performance measures with the workforce, stakeholders, and SLs. Performance measures increased as the girls matriculate from middle to high school. The BOD provided additional information on how to enhance performance measures and how to ensure that the information was tracked, according to the SLs and as the needs of the girls changed.

Performance projections. SLs often discussed the short- and long-term projections of activities in discussions or staff meetings, as well as with direct communication with the workforce and key stakeholders. SLs also conducted analyses of the SPP during staff meetings and were responsible for tracking performance; however, it was beneficial for the BOD to determine measures that created advantages for SLs.

Action Plan Modification. SLs reviewed and analyzed organizational goals quarterly, tracked performance, and adjusted as changes were learned or technologies emerged. Learned information was secured electronically by SLs and disseminated to the BOD. When implemented, SLs cataloged and memorialized the learned information for continuity of efforts and future use.

Customers

Voice of the customer.

The customer group included all stakeholders: the workforce, students and parents, the community, partner schools, and collaborators. SLs recruited customers through partnering and were attracted to customers because of their productivity in the community and affiliation with partners. Partners included other lacrosse organizations, sporting goods stores, and other youth empowerment or training programs. SLs promoted action plans through understanding the needs of the girls and those providing services to ABC Company.

Customer listening.

Current customers. SLs strived to provide lacrosse clinics, camps, college visits, tutoring, and relationship-building for the short- and long-term. SLs listened to customers to obtain actionable information by engaging with customers in-person and through the review of feedback provided on the ABC Company website and social media platforms. SLs also reviewed customer communications sent via e-mail, which helped SLs to document and digest updated information gained from customers. SLs interacted with the customer to obtain actionable information through communication and knowledge

sharing with customers. SLs learned of emerging information that benefited the workforce and customers and used the KSS to communicate to all customers to make positive change. SLs observed customers to obtain actionable information by being present at lacrosse games, attending parent-teacher-coach engagements, observing the activities of customers, reviewing and replying to social media posts, and efficiently handling all complaints. Presence and visibility for customers were vital to the success of support efforts offered by ABC Company SLs.

Potential customers. To understand and attract potential customers, SLs engaged with current customers and stakeholders to understand the desires of those in the community. SLs interacting with partners were susceptible to learn what potential customers wanted in the services provided by ABC Company. Families of current customers conveyed information necessary to understand changes to the social and financial needs of potential customers in their community. Partners also communicated similar information learned from other organizations that operated in a similar capacity compared to ABC Company. Understanding the desires of potential customers that transitioned to current customers also helped gauge the level of customer satisfaction for SLs, which helped improve the customer experience and shape strategy.

Determination of Student and Other Customer Satisfaction Engagement.

Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction, and Engagement. SLs tracked customer satisfaction through the retention rate of customers, stakeholders, and donors. Data and information gained through information and KSS during meetings, discussions, and while attending events helped SLs. SLs also monitored the ABC Company website, e-mail, and social

media platforms in attempts to receive customer feedback. Customers were encouraged to share their thoughts, opinions, and input to provide insight for SLs, which enhanced customer engagement and assisted in the alignment of short- and long-term action planning. Learned information often transposed into the strategy of SLs. This process also assisted SLs to determine customer dissatisfaction and engagement. With small communities of customers and stakeholders, it became apparent to SLs when one group declined in engagement, communication, and responsiveness.

Satisfaction relative to competitors. SLs relied on word-of-mouth advertising or the level of participation of stakeholders and the girls to gauge performance, which served as feedback mechanisms to determine customer satisfaction and satisfaction relative to competitors. The nature of lacrosse is competition, so the performance of the girls was tied to their attendance and performance on the field and in the classroom. SLs engaging in conversation with the workforce and stakeholders (partners, partner schools, and donors) proved useful in determining how satisfied the girls and stakeholders were in comparison to competitors.

Customer engagement.

Product offerings. The products offered by SLs of ABC Company included helping young girls build confidence, develop athletic skills, and provide exposure to academic and personal growth opportunities. SLs provided SLs determine the product and service offerings of ABC Company based upon analyses of the social and financial needs of the customers and stakeholders. SLs encouraged input from current and potential customers through knowledge sharing in person, e-mail, and social media

platforms. The input provided from current, and potential customers helped SLs adjust product offerings, seek out repeat and potential donors, and enhance the lives of the customers.

Customer support. To provide customer support, SLs used a multi-level marketing approach to showcase product offerings. SLs used informational marketing materials and the ABC Company website, which included detailed information on the programming and support offered by the nonprofit organization. SLs provided ways to seek information and support throughout each of the marketing tools used by ABC Company. The two-way communication offered and gained through the marketing tools allowed SLs to review the progress and impact of product offerings for the customer and stakeholders.

Customer segmentation. SLs used customer information to identify future customer groups by reviewing the goals, strategic initiative, and action plans of ABC Company. SLs upheld a commitment to excellence within the middle and high school environment to create and develop opportunities for achievement in lacrosse, academics, scholarship, and community service. Since 2010, ABC Company SLs have achieved the MVV and core competency established, which was contingent on the decisions and actions of the SLs and the BOD. Using the marketing tools available and understanding the needs and wants of customers helped SLs determine customer groups and market segmentation.

Student and Other Customer Relationships.

Relationship management. Direct communication, immediate implementation of feedback, and engagement helped SLs build and manage customer relationships. SLs built relationships through active engagement with customers, the workforce, and stakeholders through systematic and truthful interactions, which helped to promote relationship management. In implementing relationship management, the goal of SLs was to ensure and meet the social and financial needs of the customer, to include alignment with donor sustainability.

Complaint management. The systematic complaint management process (CMP) in place at ABC Company involved SLs direct communication shared verbal or through electronic communications with SLs as receivers of complaints (Figure 7). The receiver retained the electronic communication; provided the information with SLs, who logged and analyzed the data as a process improvement. If SLs received the complaint from other means, SLs memorialized the complaint electronically and followed the same process as if the complaint was received electronically. SLs managed customer complaints promptly and professionally. When issues arose, SLs took action by listening to the customer or stakeholder and pursuing the necessary steps to resolve the complaint. For complaints where individuals did not receive an immediate response, the SLs worked to obtain additional details and information to help resolve the complaint.

Through active listening and engagement, SLs remained poised to uncover emerging and innovative ways to resolve situations; using evidence gathered or analyzed to ensure organizational learning. SLs used PDCA to analyze and improve the CMP by

collecting, monitoring, and analyzing complaint data, utilizing the information, and comparing the information to key ethical processes, goals, strategic initiatives, and action plans, the KSS, and the LMS. SLs also used the systematic process to describe the process and performance improvements, based on an analysis of data gained from a review of the complaints. This information might apply to potential customers, so understanding the complaints of current customers shaped the way the SLs improved performance and, thereby, increased their ability to attract and retain current and future customers, partners, and other stakeholders.

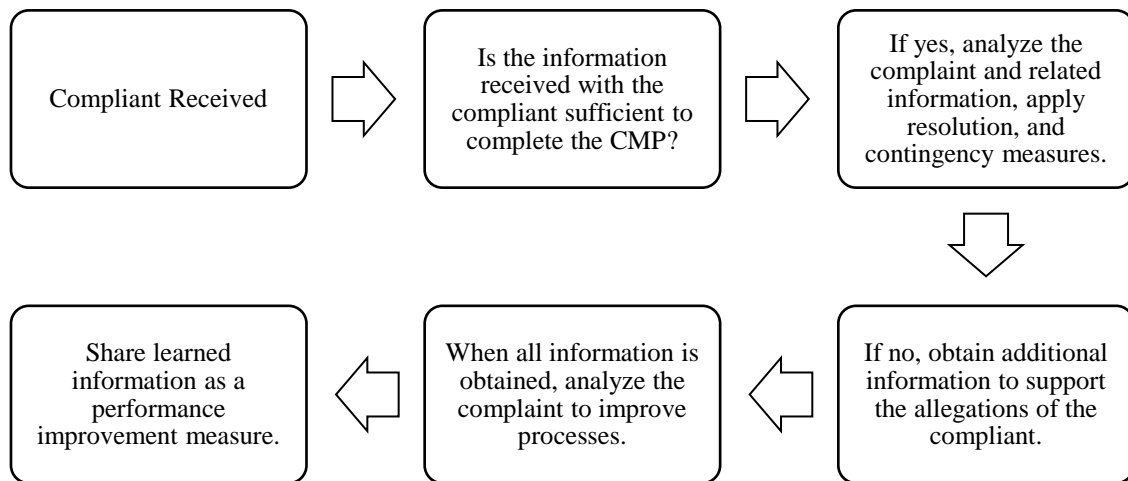


Figure 7. Complaint management system (CMP).

Results Triad: Workforce, Operations, and Results

Workforce

Workforce environment.

SLs fostered and encouraged an environment of support, flexibility, creativity, and trust for the workforce. With the BOD, SLs analyzed the workforce capability and capacity each year. The central segment of the ABC Company workforce consisted of three SLs and five to ten unpaid volunteers. SLs matched volunteers to positions based on the strength of the individual, which helped optimize the workforce. SLs used an employment development system (EDS) to recruit, select, and retain the workforce (Figure 8). SLs used the EDS to drive recruitment for the unpaid workforce. SLs used PDCA within the EDS to improve the system, incorporating information learned from each component of the EDS.

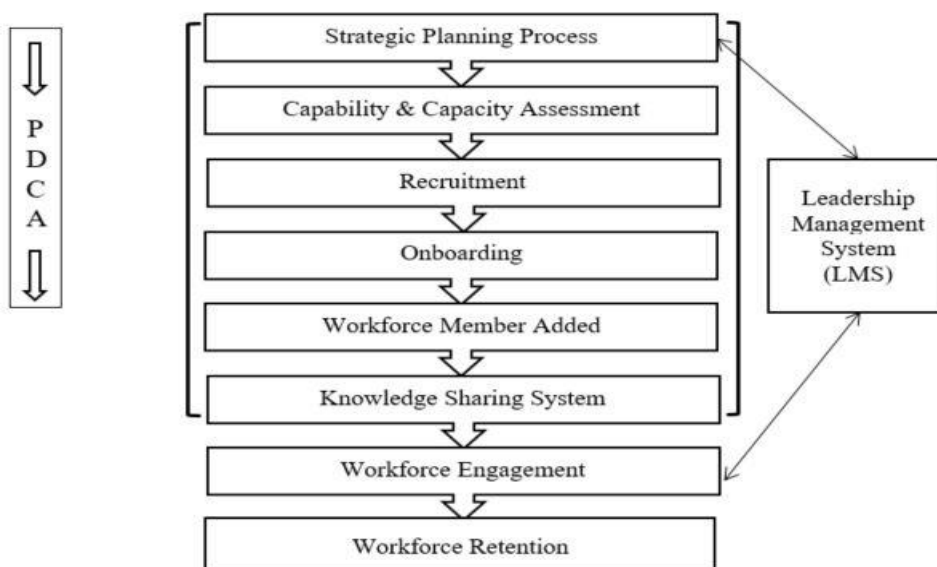


Figure 8. Employment development system (EDS).

Recruitment: SLs incorporated the SPP, capability and capacity assessment of potential additions to the workforce, MVV, and skills required for the workforce in the recruitment process. A review of internal organizational data reflected massive recruitment within the circle of influence of the SLs and among current customers.

Onboarding: SLs used the onboarding process for a résumé review, interview, and onboarding referral before making additions to the workforce (Figure 9). Prospective candidates solicited information online through the ABC Company website or social media platforms. Potential applicants were directed to submit résumés, which were screened by the SLs and BOD. Selected applicants were interviewed by the SLs to determine their experience level and the fit each potential candidate would have with ABC Company, the MVV, core competency, and values. Understanding the motives of potential candidates was important for SLs to understand how those motives transferred to the MVV, core competency, and values of ABC Company. SLs also conducted background checks on all potential employees before making an offer. SLs used the onboarding process for coaches and educators that participated in ABC Company programming, but continued to refine and improve the process, as well as identify opportunities for improvement using PDCA. SLs received and welcomed volunteers as they transitioned into the workforce. SLs conducted a résumé review for some, but not all volunteers.

Retention: The recruitment and onboarding process provided SLs the opportunity to recruit workforce members with values and ideas that aligned with those of ABC Company. SLs partnered with new employees with others and employed the KSS to

review current requirements and provide training and best practices. SLs then introduced additions to the workforce to internal strategic initiatives to encourage retention and promote the organizational culture of ABC Company.



Figure 9. Onboarding process.

SLs interacted with the workforce to continue promoting the organization's MVV, values, focused on participants, and core competency of empowering and educating girls through lacrosse. With the workforce consisting of unpaid volunteers and key stakeholders that encouraged and reinforced the connection between empowering and educating girls through lacrosse, the social responsibility involved in the MVV and strategic initiatives of ABC Company was reflected and represented well among the workforce. SLs monitored the performance of the workforce to ensure productivity aligned with the MVV, core competencies, values, and achievement of strategic initiatives. SLs also used the KSS to engage and motivate the workforce.

Workforce Climate. SLs and the BOD of ABC Company established and refined policies and procedures for ensuring the health and security of the workforce and participants. As educators hired by the school system in Baltimore, SLs followed Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Occupational Safety and Health Act rules and guidelines for workplace requirements. SLs ensured that the workforce understood the

requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and accommodations for persons with disabilities.

ABC Company SLs supported the workforce with success. SLs engaged in flexible schedules, but there was no benefits package provided to the unpaid workforce. Based on a review of ABC Company internal documents, SLs provided no medical and dental insurance, vacation time, and retirement benefits.

Workforce engagement.

SLs promoted an environment of clear communication, employee engagement, and high performance, as well as a continued focus on the MVV, core competency, and values. Using the KSS, SLs used communication with the workforce to encourage knowledge sharing to promote open discussions and engagement. SLs used the KSS to share expectations; which SLs promoted to all employees.

The workforce retention rate mirrored the workforce engagement level of ABC Company, although, based on a review of ABC Company internal documents, SLs measured employee engagement by the constant efforts of the workforce. The information added by SLs on the ABC Company website and social media platforms portrayed a motivated and engaged workforce, which reinforced the results of workforce productivity and active engagement of the customers.

The ABC Company workforce was unpaid because of financial constraints incurred by SLs. SLs used a commitment to the MVV, core competency, and values as key engagement drivers. A review of the ABC Company website and social media

platforms confirmed SLs reward the workforce for their efforts through receiving flexible work schedules and in seeing the core competency of ABC Company achieved.

Workforce and Leader Development. SLs used the EDS to demonstrate the commitment of the workforce and senior leadership team. Strategic initiatives and the capacity and capability assessments of the workforce provided guidance with the workforce-development process. The needs of the workforce were communicated and distributed through the KSS, in staff meetings, and discussions. SLs assessed the needs of the workforce through the KSS and the organizational performance review (OPR) process (Table 11). Realizing the needs of the workforce by communicating and taking action helped the SLs to identify areas of training and development, organizational challenges, and how changes made affected the MVV, core competency, and values.

An engaged workforce proved valuable to ABC Company SLs. Understanding the achievement of workforce-related goals was essential to SLs, who analyzed the activities of the workforce through the EDS and OPR process. SLs reviewed workforce engagement levels through staff meetings and discussions with the workforce. SLs focused on engagement and learned to provide alternative incentives that promoted the satisfaction of the intrinsic needs of the workforce.

Table 11

Organizational Performance Review (OPR)

Strategic Initiative	Key KSS Method	Frequency
Strategic Initiative 1: Funding plan	BOD meetings	W, AN
	SL meetings	W, M, AN, Q, A
	Workforce meetings	M, Q
	Strategic planning meetings	A, AN
Strategic Initiative 2: Sustainability plan	BOD meetings	Q, AN, A
	SL meetings	M, Q, AN, A
	Workforce meetings	M, Q
	Strategic planning meetings	M, AN, A
Strategic Initiative 3: Workforce sustainability plan	BOD meetings	Q, AN, A
	SL meetings	M, Q, AN, A
	Workforce meetings	M, Q
	Strategic planning meetings	M, AN, A

Frequency: W= Weekly, M= Monthly, AN= As Needed, Q= Quarterly, A= Annually

Operations**Work processes.**

The core competency of empowering and educating girls through lacrosse allowed SLs of ABC Company to build and develop key programs, services, and work process designs. SLs reviewed the SPP to understand key customer and stakeholder requirements, which alongside the BOD, helped align key customer and stakeholder expectations, desires, and also promoted inclusion. Furthermore, understanding and making changes to promote alignment ensured the goals, strategic initiatives, and progress of ABC Company SLs remained intact. SLs worked as a collective to ensure all changes or enhancements were distributed between key customers and stakeholders through the KSS for transparency.

SLs used the OPR to outline the structure of programs and services offered by ABC Company. The OPR indicated a clear understanding of single- and double-loop

learning, as expressed by the SLs. Argyris (1982) described single- and double-loop learning as essential to communication in any environment. SLs outlined process design and improvement in key work processes, combined with PDCA in cycles of continuous process improvement.

Process management. SLs outlined key steps in process management in the SPP. Critical information related to key customer requirements were reviewed in the SPP and analyzed each year by SLs. SLs paired key process measures and indicators with ABC Company's core competency of empowering and educating girls through lacrosse, which allowed for the workforce to address issues and challenges on behalf of the organization. Key process requirements and measures in Table 12 represent ABC Company SLs and their action.

Table 12

Key Process Requirements and Measures

Key Customer/Stakeholder Requirements and Expectations	Strategic Planning Process	Requirements	Process Measure	Results
		Strategic planning process	Increase program participation and completion rates Increase participant outcomes Increase participant enrollment, per grade level	Sustain participant retention rates
Service and product quality	Increase workforce performance and sustainability	Sustain employee engagement rates		
Workforce engagement	Increase workforce opportunities for learning and development			

SLs and the BOD created and determined the key processes of ABC Company (Table 13). With SLs tracking and monitoring the organizational progress of ABC Company through the OPR, this helped in the development of updated or enhanced

services to offer participants and customers. Data collected from customer and participant feedback helped SLs to identify best practices, necessary organizational changes, and customer satisfaction levels. With ABC Company’s key support processes of communication, human services, safety, and fiscal services, SLs monitored progress through the OPR and organize learned information into the SPP.

Table 13

Key Support Processes and Measures

Key Customer/Stakeholder Process Requirements and Expectations	Strategic Initiatives	Key Support Processes	Key Measures	Results
		Communications	Engagement through social media platforms and the ABC Company website	
	Human services	Workforce engagement and retention		Category 7
	safety	Occupational safety and health act, Title IX		
	Fiscal services	IRS compliance, budgeting, fundraising		

SLs used the process design improvement system (PDIS) to initiate and implement improvements to key processes and measures (Figure 10). SLs used the KSS to share and receive information with the workforce, stakeholders, customers, and others, while also using the OPR to enhance, adjust, or analyze data. Both single- and double-loop learning were engaged in the PDIS, which SLs used to enhance services.

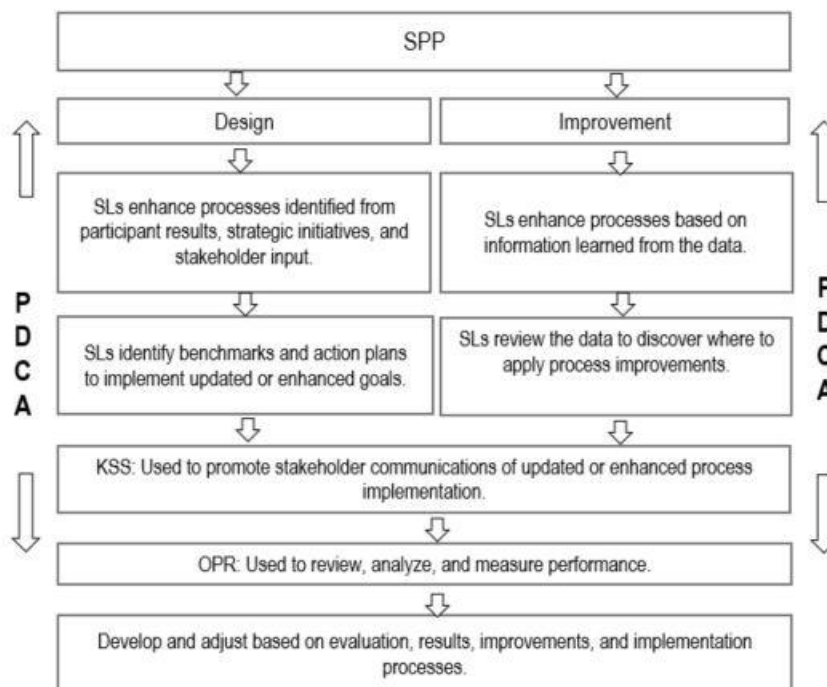


Figure 10. Process design improvement system (PDIS).

Innovation Management. SLs confirmed opportunities for improvement through the review of feedback provided by the workforce, customers, participants, stakeholder, and others. SLs collected data from the ABC Company website, social media platforms, and e-mails, which provided SLs with valuable information and feedback used to enhance services and utilize in the communications and the PDIS. After understanding and analyzing the information learned through the listening methods, SLs aligned the data with the MVV, strategic initiatives, values, and core competency of empowering and educating girls through lacrosse.

SLs used the PDIS to determine if ABC Company had the financial and workforce resources to support an added concept, idea, or opportunity. The BOD and SLs reviewed the budget and current financial levels to determine the level of funding for

planned projects and services. Based on a review of internal documents, funding decisions made by SLs were supported by the workforce and BOD.

Operational effectiveness.

Process efficiency and effectiveness. SLs reviewed financial revenue and expenses each month. A review of social media platforms and the ABC Company website provided a positive outlook on the alignment between process efficiency and effectiveness; however, internal documents for the organization yielded insufficient information. Although successful, SLs benefited from increasing the tracking of information.

Supply-chain management. SLs used organizational work systems to manage and maintain ABC Company's supply chain. SLs combined efforts with the BOD to identify qualified suppliers and vendors. SLs also vetted vendors used before contracts were signed. SLs maintained engagement with vendors with previous working relationships held with the workforce, stakeholders, and partners. Vendors participated in in-person or electronic communication methods to determine alignment with ABC Company's MVV, core competency, and values. To ensure vendors met requirements, SLs reviewed vendor relationships as necessary. SLs analyzed the outcomes of vendor relationships, for continuous improvement and information sharing, through the KSS methods and communication with vendors through scheduled or as-needed meetings.

Safety and emergency preparedness. SLs promoted a safe operating environment for all services provided by ABC Company. Key customer and workforce requirements consisted of promoting and ensuring a safe and supportive environment for all

participants, customers, and the workforce. Safe working conditions for employees were essential to SLs. The workforce received training for safe workplace conditions through their school system or athletic training employers.

Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

Measurement, analysis, and improvement of organizational performance.

Performance measurement. SLs used data and information learned from customers, partners, stakeholders, and others for ABC Company daily operations and overall organizational performance. SLs used data collected from customers' e-mails and other communication methods to measure organizational performance from the external perspective. SLs used data collected from staff meetings and interactions to measure organizational performance, track operations, and for goal-setting from the internal perspective. SLs focused on measuring the SPP and strategic initiatives as an ongoing effort. To share information with the workforce, customers, and stakeholders, SLs used a KSS. SLs used the results of the data collected from internal and external perspectives to feed the KSS, which helped SLs to establish strategic initiatives, organizational goals, and realize the efforts of workforce performance. To track and monitor ABC Company's progress toward achieving strategic initiatives, SLs employed the OPR.

SLs used benchmarking to collect information and comparative data to measure and analyze organizational performance. Benchmarks helped SLs to provide accountability for actions taken on behalf of the organization are relevant, measurable, and time-sensitive. SLs created and used benchmarks to set higher standards of achievement. SLs used the benchmark of participation levels and graduation rates of local

middle and high schools to encourage innovation and improve organizational performance. A review of ABC Company internal documents, company website, and social media platforms indicated SLs success in fulfilling the MVV of the nonprofit organization. Compared to other nonprofit organizations of a similar nature, SLs, a committed workforce, and stakeholders succeeded in performance as members of the nonprofit organization. The commitment of SLs empowering and educating girls through lacrosse served as their guide for implementing performance measures that provided improvement across the organization.

To receive market data and information, SLs engaged with key customers and stakeholders. SLs collected and used pertinent data to acknowledge the considerations, expectations, and desires of customers and stakeholders. SLs used feedback collected from the ABC Company website, social media platforms, and discussions. Reviewing data collected on social media platforms helped SLs to collect and monitor data in real-time and provide immediate responses to customer and stakeholder compliments and complaints. SLs used all feedback to improve organizational performance, enhanced the services provided, and assisted with the action plans. SLs collected data through the KSS. SLs reviewed collected data, compliments, and complaints each week, each month, each quarter, and as needed. A review of information helped SLs create and organize action plans for ABC Company. Using OPR and KSS processes helped SLs to respond to external shifts in the organizational environment, as well as highlighted areas of organizational learning from decisions and actions made. SLs worked together with the

workforce to ensure resources and priorities remain flexible to meet the needs of the customer.

Performance analysis and review. SLs used the OPR to analyze organizational performance and capabilities. Input for the SPP included data collected from the SWOT analysis. SLs used the SPP to provide information that fed into the OPR. During workforce meetings, SLs reviewed the organizational performance of ABC Company by reviewing and analyzing data. Understanding the results of the review helped SLs realize when to apply improvements to strategic initiatives and goals. The BOD also helped with reviewing and analyzing organizational performance and progress, proposed budgets, revenues, and expenditures.

The drivers for ABC Company SLs were enhancing the lacrosse skills of the girls, providing opportunities for academic achievement, and fostering advocacy and support of the girls within the local community. SLs used the LMM and LMS to engage the workforce to meet the needs of the girls within the community. I reviewed postings on the ABC Company website and social media platforms, which indicated increases in the lacrosse skills of the girls, which indicated the success of ABC Company programming and the efforts of SLs and the workforce. The girls engaged in year-long tutoring provided by SLs, combined with the active participation of the girls in lacrosse, indicated success in the academic achievement of the girls. Some girls transitioned from middle to high school, and then on to college. The transition of a girl from high school to college was documented and listed on social media platforms, where SLs used the communication methods established, along with the KSS, to share information about the

success of the girls. The information shared on the social media platforms proved favorable and consistent with SLs meeting the social and financial needs of the girls, proving the success of the advocacy and support ABC Company SLs provided to the community.

Performance improvement. SLs communicated best practices about performance improvement with stakeholders through the KSS. The KSS was reviewed, as necessary, by SLs to monitor strategic initiatives and organizational goals and for sharing action plans. SLs used the OPR to engage with the BOD to manage and ensure the economic stability of ABC Company. Internal OPR data were collected and analyzed during SLs meetings. SLs also revised the SPP as necessary, taking into consideration changes to the internal and external environment of ABC Company. The OPR was used to make adjustments to action plans, ensure key customers and stakeholders are satisfied, and review enrollment and operating results. SLs inspired progress through the promotion of the girls on social media platforms and the ABC Company website.

Strategic planning that engaged and enhanced improvement in organizational performance and innovation came from data collected from the OPR, which helped SLs with development and implementation. To communicate strategic plans to the workforce, SLs used the KSS. A review of the information gained by SLs determined communications with the workforce occur on a recurring basis, which helped to ensure alignment within the organization, customers, participants, stakeholders, and others.

Information and knowledge management.

Organizational Knowledge. Using the KSS helped SLs to manage and assess the distribution of organizational knowledge and information. Combining the OPR process and KSS provided SLs the opportunity to share information with the workforce and ABC Company stakeholders. SLs expressed information to the workforce and stakeholders during meetings each week, quarter, and year, where the MVV, values, and strategic initiatives were outlined and provided for review. SLs held discussions to generate fresh information, which SLs later shared through e-mail, in-person meetings, conference calls, as well as on ABC Company's website and social media platforms. Transferring relevant knowledge to stakeholders was demonstrated in the KSS, which the methods, results, and feedback helped to identify key inputs for the SPP. The KSS also included communication plans implemented and used by SLs to promote and achieve organizational goals, as well as recognize innovation.

Using the OPR allowed SLs to achieve the desired results of action plans, decipher organizational progress, and identify how SLs reviewed and analyzed data for organizational learning. SLs communicated necessary adjustments to the OPR through the KSS. SLs also introduced necessary adjustments into the SPP by SLs, after communicating the changes through the KSS.

Data, information, and information technology. To ensure quality assurance, integrity, reliability, and validity, as well as confidentiality and security, SLs used several methods for a systematic process. Using a systematic process allowed SLs to share information and data with key stakeholders (Table 14).

Table 14

Data and Information Quality and Security

Property	Mechanism
Quality assurance	Checks and balances Accountability
Integrity, reliability, and validity	Checks and balances Code of ethics
Confidentiality and security	Password protection for internal network security
	Firewall protection for external security
	Protection of participant information
	Network maintenance

Using information technology systems also allowed SLs to share information and deploy data (Table 15). Information technology systems used by SLs to operate ABC Company required secured and user-friendly connections. SLs used Elevation, a nonprofit website design agency, which served as a network security company. The workforce at Elevation delivered analytics, measurement, and analyses that were key for the nonprofit organization, which enhanced decision-making and attaining of strategic initiatives and goals through the online communication platform.

SLs used Elevation for information technology support, to include emergency response, software system maintenance, and data security. With security systems in place, SLs ensured the security of the ABC Company website, while serving participants, the workforce, and stakeholders with efficiency. SLs also used Facebook to promote products, which was also a password-protected social media platform.

Table 15

Information Technology Systems

Secure System	Frequency	Stakeholders
ABC Company website	Real-time	W, C, S, P, Co
Facebook	Real-time	W, C, S, P, Co

Noted: SLs engaged PDCA when reviewing each information technology system.

Stakeholders: C= Customer, W= Workforce, S= Suppliers, P= Partners, Co= Collaborators

Collection, Analysis, and Preparation of Results

Product and Process Results

Products and customer service processes. ABC Company is a small, single nonprofit organization located in Baltimore, Maryland. ABC Company SLs promoted the nonprofit organization as a student-centered, lacrosse coaching organization. SLs valued a student-centered, learning-centered standard of excellence. ABC Company maintained a commitment to a learning-centered environment to assess and learn the knowledge and skills necessary to promote continuous improvement in an athletic and academic community.

SLs have affected the lives roughly 50 girls and have operated ABC Company for more than seven years, with six as a nonprofit organization. Results were demonstrated by figures and tables, with the population of the customer as middle and high school girls participating in the sport of lacrosse. ABC Company SLs maintained an overall completion rate of 97% (Figure 11). For participants at each grade level, there has been a consistent and incremental improvement in the completion rate since the 2013/2014

school year (Figure 12). SLs captured participant and enrollment data, as recent as 2017, to include the tracking of the girls during the transition from high school to undergraduate matriculation (Figure 13). SLs interacted with the girls and the workforce during developmental activities, programming improvements, and promote opportunities that may impact their academic, social, and athletic lives.

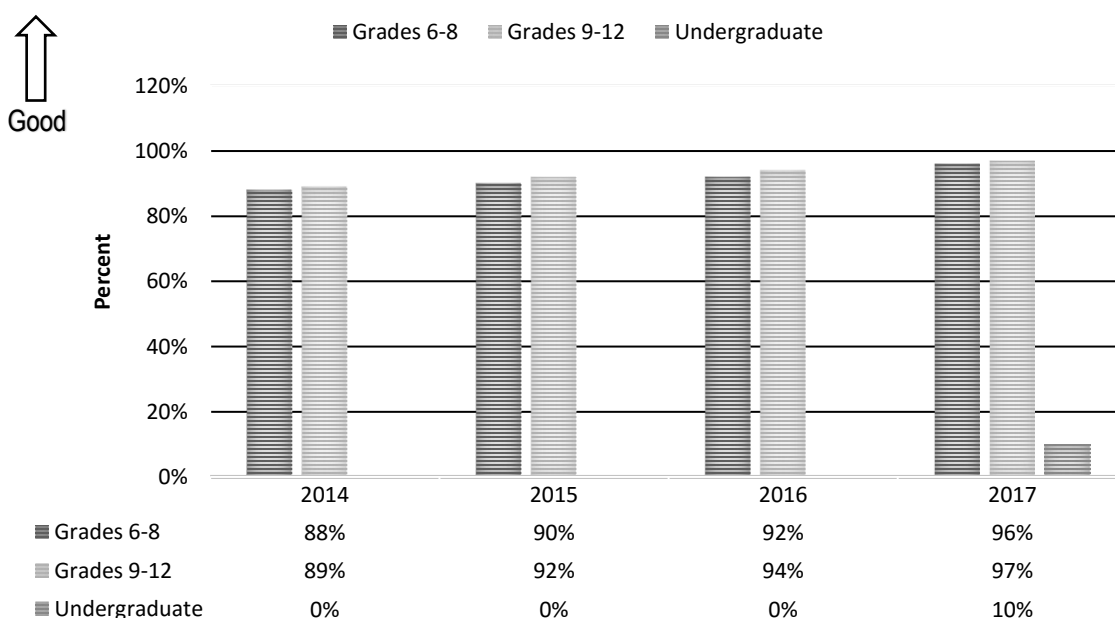


Figure 11. Customer completion by grade level and year.

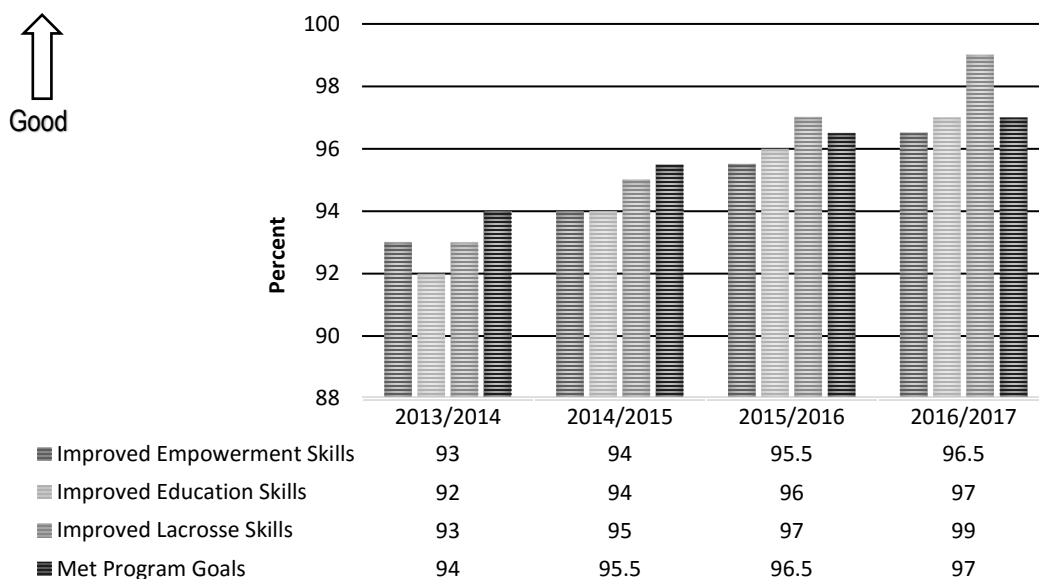


Figure 12. Participant outcomes by year.

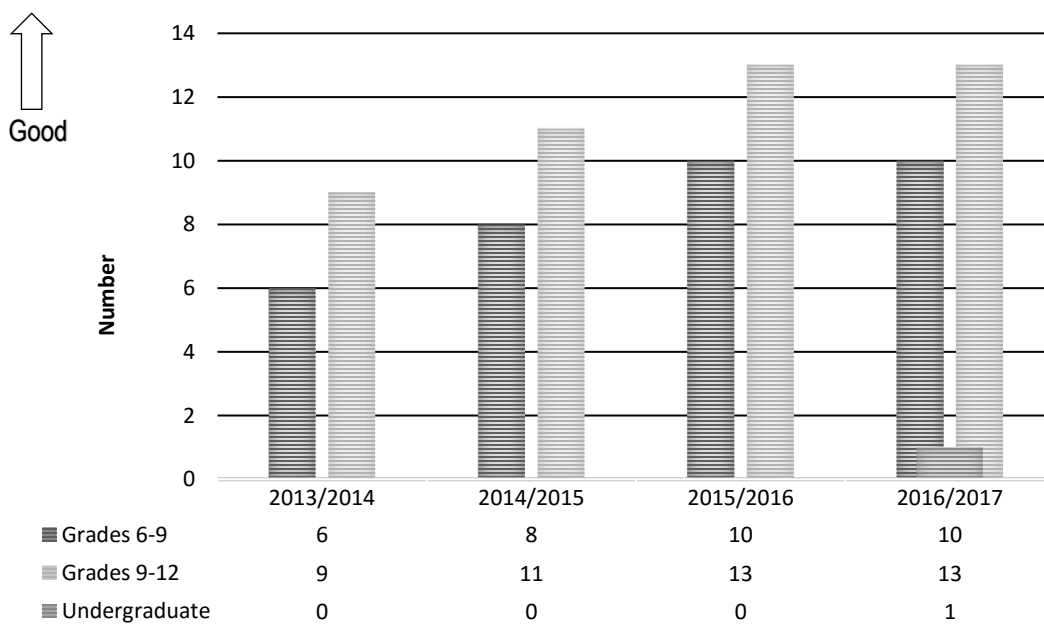


Figure 13. Cumulative enrollment by grade level and year.

The products and services provided by ABC Company SLs encompassed helping young girls build confidence, developing athletic skills, and providing exposure to academic and personal growth opportunities. SLs provided opportunities for the girls to attend lacrosse clinics, camps, college visits, as well as year-round tutoring and relationship-building for the short- and long-term. The workforce included customers; therefore, it was important for SLs to share feedback on products and services provided by ABC Company often. SLs used a CMP, which provided a mechanism for customers, stakeholders, and collaborators the opportunity to engage with SLs to determine a course of action to mediate the complaint. The CMP proved successful, providing SLs with meaningful information gained directly from the customer, stakeholder, or collaborator.

Effectiveness and efficiency. Starting in 2010, ABC Company SLs committed to supporting the social and financial needs of girls through lacrosse and academic support. SLs empowered girls by providing opportunities for empowerment, learning, mentoring, and lacrosse coaching. SLs provided mentorship and tutoring opportunities to roughly 50 girls, as well as offered opportunities for the girls to attend lacrosse camps, clinics, and sporting events. SLs found success raising money for player, goalie, and team equipment, uniforms, and transportation. To increase efficiency and effectiveness, SLs benefited from incorporating the PDIS into the KSS. Using the PDIS was recommended for SLs because it helped streamline operations for changes derived as the girls matriculated from middle to high school and as they progressed in their lacrosse skills.

ABC Company hosted roughly ten clinics per year, once per week, at different high schools or colleges in the Baltimore area. ABC Company provided transportation

and funding for each girl that attended a clinic. Through these clinics, ABC Company provided the girls with opportunities to establish and maintain connections with local high school and college women's lacrosse players and coaches. The relationships gained by the girls helped to create long-term mentorship opportunities. ABC Company SLs used the clinics to establish and maintain relationships to generate revenue for future use.

Emergency preparedness. To remain effective for emergency preparedness, SLs maintained relationships with donors and stakeholders to ensure the girls have player, goalie, and game equipment, as well as for equipment for injuries. SLs offered opportunities for the workforce to complete cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid training. SLs may benefit from developing safety and emergency preparedness training that includes pertinent information on the following topics: (a) emergency assembly, (b) active shooter, (c) emergency cardiovascular care, (d) fire extinguisher use, (e) emergency plan roles, (f) evacuation plans and routes, (g) emergency information technology plans, and (h) natural disaster plans.

Supply-chain management. ABC Company SLs work well with the BOD and vendors. SLs succeeded using a variety of local vendors and collaborators for supply-chain management, as well as fundraising initiatives. Current relationships proved positive through a review of social media platform posts searched for ABC Company and information provided by vendors and collaborators. SLs proved successful in acquiring equipment for the players, goalies, and team.

Customer Results

Customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction. ABC Company SLs gained an understanding of the voice of the customer through active engagement, listening, and communicating with the customer. Using communication methods such as e-mails, discussions, staff meetings, and online feedback presented on the ABC Company website, and social media platforms allow SLs to gain feedback and monitor satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and retention levels of customers. SLs can share the stored information with each other for future use. Furthermore, SLs using communication methods such as e-mails, telephone, in-person conversations, and online feedback mechanisms helped ensure that ABC Company SLs knew and monitored satisfaction and retention rates. A review of social media platforms and the ABC Company website proved positive for customer satisfaction, with statements issued by the girls and their parents.

Customer engagement. SLs benefited from capturing and storing information electronically that may be received from customers through a feedback mechanism. SLs can also promote the activities and successes of each girl through various communication methods distributed at their schools and on social media platforms. ABC Company SLs gained an understanding of the voice of the customer through active engagement, listening, and communicating with the customer. Listening tools such as meeting participation, phone calls, e-mails, social media platforms, and attending community events proved beneficial for ABC Company.

Furthermore, SLs use the information communicated in promotional materials to share updates on customer engagement. The direct feedback from customers proved

positive, despite the lack of an electronically stored process used by SLs. Customer engagement was measured by comparing the performance of ABC Company SLs and the local average of small, single nonprofit organizations in Baltimore, Maryland (Figure 14).

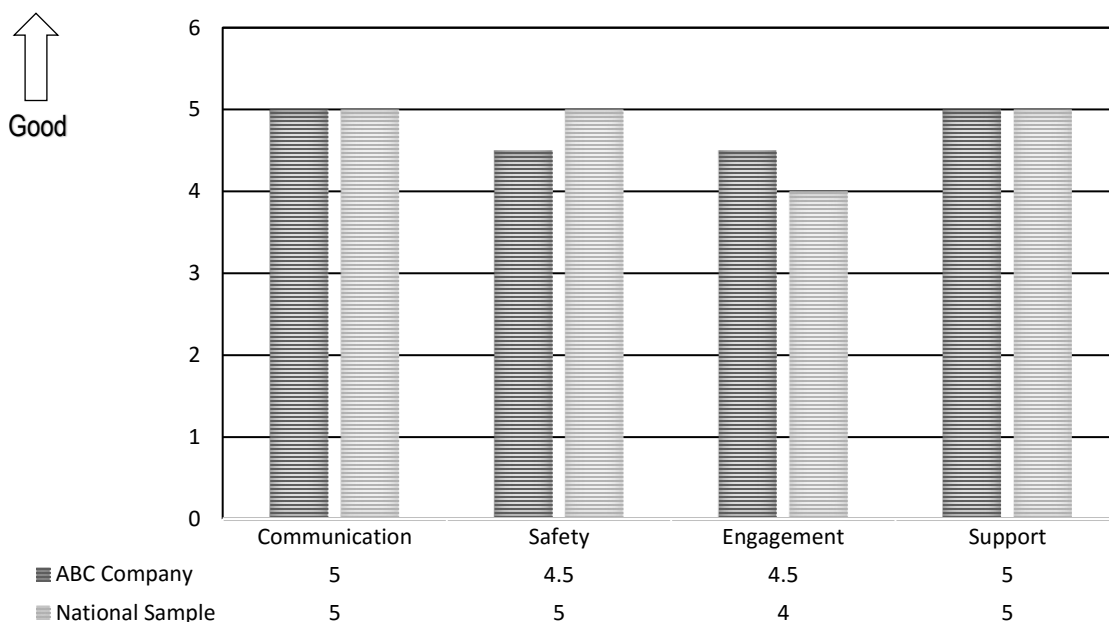


Figure 14. ABC Company data versus the local average.

Workforce Results

Workforce capability/capacity. SLs maintained a consistent workforce. Each SL had a minimum of a Bachelor's degree and had played lacrosse in middle school, high school, as well as college. SLs had also received training as lacrosse coaches. Each SL had earned a Bachelor's degree, with some earning Master's degrees and serving as educators in the Maryland public school system. SLs set the example for others to follow, which helped support and strengthen the community because it provided options for those struggling with the challenges the students that participated in ABC Company have

overcome. The preparedness and educational achievements of SLs reinforced the structure of the workforce.

Workforce climate. The workforce retention climate at ABC Company appeared consistent, positive, with the workforce including SLs, volunteers, and parents of the customers (Figure 15). The workforce was very close to the SLs, which allowed for expeditiousness in receiving and implementing feedback. With the workforce focused on the success of the girls, SLs ensured the workforce adhered to the MVV, core competency, and values of ABC Company. The climate was positive and inclusive of the guidance of SLs, as well as from the reinforcement of success and engagement customer and relationships with stakeholders and collaborators.

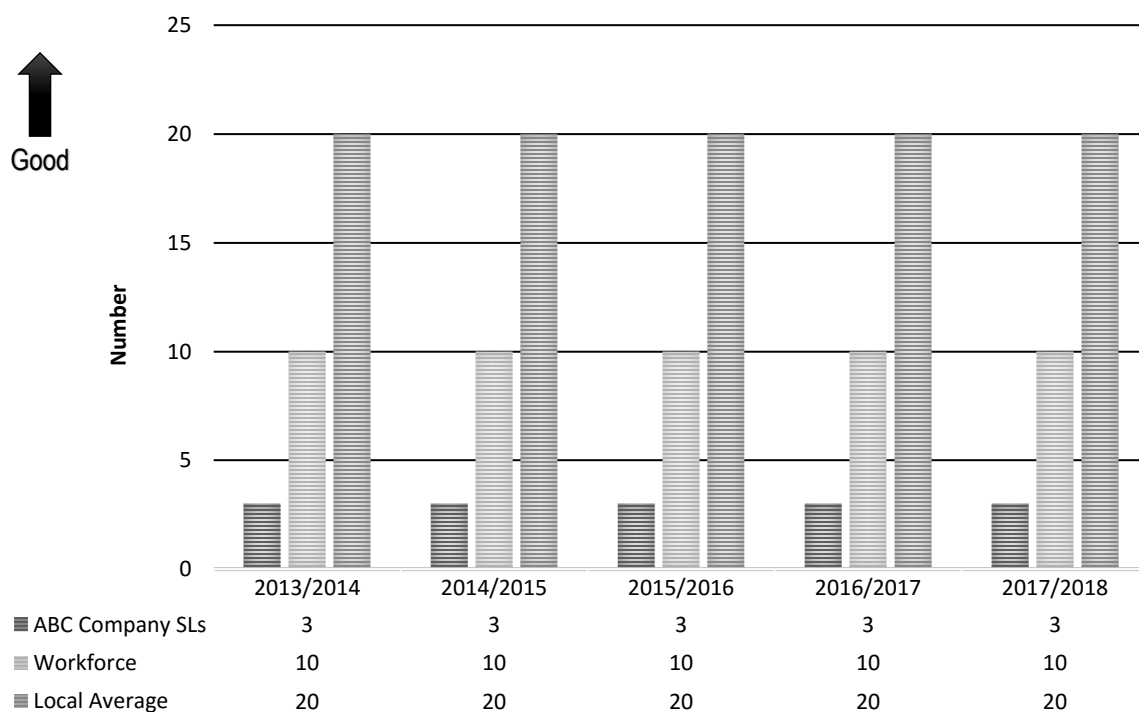


Figure 15. Workforce retention.

Workforce engagement. ABC Company had an engaged and communicative workforce, which was a large part of the success of the nonprofit organization. SLs tracked and shared performance measures of the workforce and stakeholders among each other and the BOD. SLs may benefit from reviewing and analyzing local competitor data published on the websites of competitive organizations, GuideStar, or other national sites that provide national average and trend analyses on workforce engagement.

SLs ensured that safety and coaching requirements were consistent, as trained lacrosse coaches and former players (Figure 16). Familiarity with lacrosse was a key requirement for SLs and workforce engagement. ABC Company SLs used lacrosse clinics to establish and maintain relationships with the girls to generate revenue for future use through fundraising efforts, which aid in the organizational survival of the nonprofit organization. To teach each of the ten clinics sponsored by ABC Company each year, SLs engaged the workforce to ensure requirements are met. SLs were trained coaches, which helped increase the education of the workforce through repetition and continuous engagement during the clinics, games, and coaching and practice sessions. SLs also used their relationships with the lacrosse community, local businesses, and social media platforms to generate revenue, as well as promoted and communicated the success of the nonprofit organization.

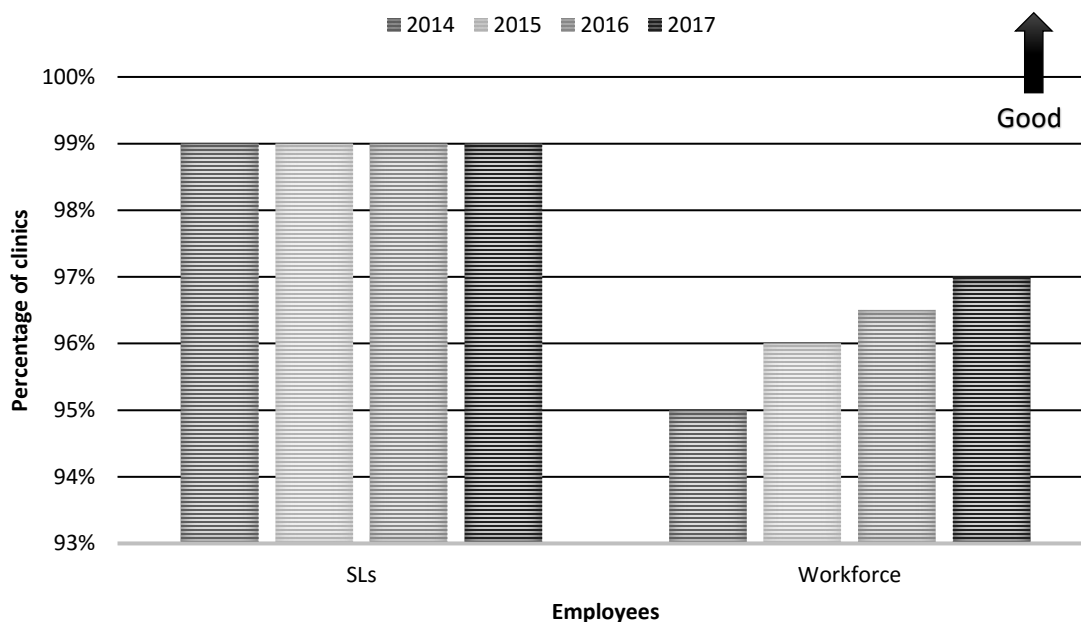


Figure 16. Percent of clinics taught.

Workforce and leader development. Professional development of the workforce and SLs was essential and a critical component of the success of ABC Company. The drive of SLs to embrace professional development was paramount, with SLs engaging with larger nonprofit organizations and groups during the off-months of the school system to volunteer and acquire learning from other organizations to implement new measures and processes at ABC Company. Furthermore, as the workforce grew in their comfort level by participating in lacrosse programming, their level of development increased, making ABC Company more valuable.

Leadership and Governance Results

Senior leader communication and engagement. SLs engaged daily with each other and often with the BOD. The success of ABC Company programming was reflective of the direction of SLs and their engagement within the community. With the

workforce inclusive of parents of the participants, the needs for constant communication with the workforce was necessary to the success of the programs. SLs were successful at acquiring information from the workforce that was useful to the short- and long-term goals established. Through active engagement and communication, SLs found success in implementing change and sharing information.

Governance accountability. SLs adhered to the governance established in ABC Company and ensured the workforce is held accountable to the standards in place. SLs created processes and procedures that aligned with the MVV, core competency, and values and ensured the workforce reinforced these areas within the organization and with stakeholders and collaborators. SLs used the KSS to share the implementation of the LMM and LMS. For governance accountability, SLs and the workforce communicated information relative to organizational performance. The BOD also engaged with SLs and the workforce to share key measures pertinent to societal responsibility, communication strategies, and donor retention.

Legal and regulatory. SLs conducted business methodically and efficiently. It is my recommendation that SLs utilize the BOD more to assist in the creation and development of processes to support the MVV, core competency, and values of ABC Company. Creating a process to document, retain, and incorporate MOUs into effect with stakeholders and collaborators will help SLs continue to engage and grow with partners. The documentation may then become part of the communication method between ABC Company SLs, the workforce, and stakeholders.

Ethical behavior. Each member of the workforce was required to conduct business consistent with the legal requirements and ethical considerations of ABC Company SLs, as well as any associated lacrosse coaching requirements of lacrosse leagues and those of the Baltimore, Maryland school system. SLs required complete adherence to ethical behavior as the organization is rooted in youth interaction. SLs demonstrated a commitment to legal and ethical behavior through maintaining professionalism and the safety of all girls participating in the program. To increase effectiveness, SLs can provide documentation and training recommendations to remind the ABC Company workforce of the MVV and ethical requirements of the nonprofit organization, with the goal of promoting and ensuring ethical behavior. SLs can also create and use an official Code of Conduct as key ethical processes for distribution to each SL, the workforce, and the BOD.

Societal responsibilities and support for key communities. SLs will benefit from providing clarity on how the incorporation of the MVV and core competency into daily actions assists in their efforts toward societal responsibility and support for key communities. Providing clarity will help ensure SLs realize the importance of every aspect of social responsibility and solidify the importance of these actions into the daily operations and behaviors of the workforce. These actions may also increase and promote the societal well-being of the ABC Company brand within the local community and among its stakeholders.

Achievement of organizational strategy and action plans. To track the achievements and effectiveness of action plans, SLs used communications with

stakeholders on social media platforms and the ABC Company website. SLs used internal communications to track achievement and effectiveness of action plans, which helped SLs remain focused on the requirements and needs of customers and stakeholders. SLs based short- and long-term action plan projections on previous performances and relationships, needs, impact, and goals of stakeholders. The accomplishments of ABC Company SLs were contingent on the action plan completion, achievements, and performance of the workforce, as well as the BOD (Figure 17).

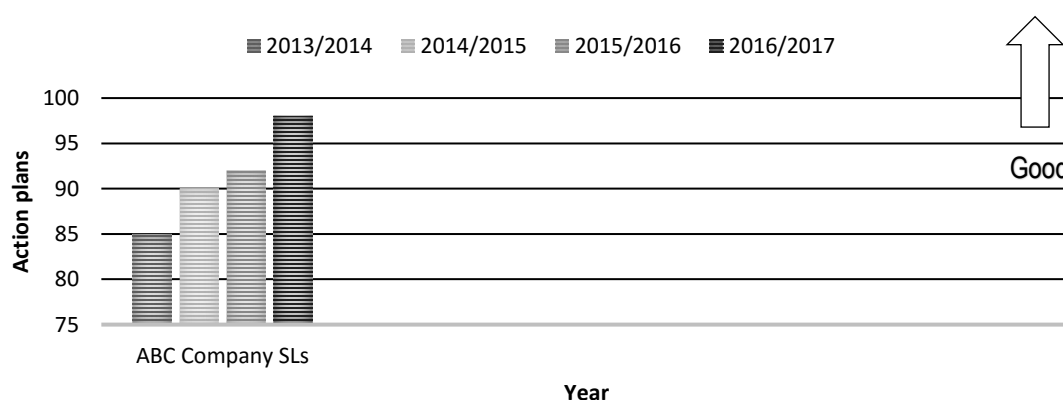


Figure 17. Action plan completion by year.

Financial and Market Results

Financial performance. The focus of the BOD was to reinforce the creation and use of a budget with SLs. The BOD or treasurer was tasked with monitoring and tracking the budget for resource allocation. SLs can review and use the OPR and processes outlined in the SPP to determine process efficiency and effectiveness for financial performance. Furthermore, based on a review of the information shared by SLs, maintaining flexibility with budget requirements and fiscal alignment was critical. SLs

can review and use the OPR and processes outlined in the SPP to determine process efficiency and effectiveness.

The goal of ABC Company SLs was to achieve funding sustainability to provide lacrosse clinics, camps, college visits, tutoring, and relationship-building for the short- and long-term for the girls. Parents of middle and high-school girls come to ABC Company for the lacrosse connections and athletic coaching services, year-round tutoring, academic guidance, mentoring, and networking opportunities. SLs raised roughly \$6,000 per year to continue providing lacrosse programming, transportation, coaching, and year-round tutoring services for the girls (Figure 18). Combining the SWOT analysis and the information prepared by the BOD may provide useful information for the SLs to implement for future action. Furthermore, based on a review of the information learned from SLs, maintaining flexibility with budget requirements and fiscal alignment was critical.



Figure 18. Funds raised by year.

Marketplace performance. Reviews of performance results for comparable youth organizations reflected sustained and increasing participation of youth and volunteers, in addition to the workforce. The comparisons of ABC Company and other similar nonprofit youth organizations provided a context for SLs about the strategic planning and decision-making process. As a nonprofit organization, based on the information collected, ABC Company SLs can increase in competitive force in its market by adopting new ways to adjust to rapid changes in the internal and external environment, embracing the SWOT analysis.

Key Themes

Process strengths. Process strengths were an essential aspect for SLs to consider and for the development of sustainable strategies for funding sources. Process strengths for ABC Company SLs included effective communication with the workforce, stakeholders, and collaborators and leveraging relationships to maintain retention. For more than seven years, SLs have sustained the organization using long-lasting relationships. The communications methods in place for SLs served as a strength as it included knowledge sharing, single- and double-loop learning, and cycles of continuous improvement.

Process opportunities. An opportunity for improvement existed for SLs to use the cycle of continuous improvement or PDCA to ensure a clear action plan for funding best practices was developed and distributed through the OPR and KSS. Utilizing KSS provided useful information to SLs in decision-making, which, if enhanced, may yield more significant results. SLs often mentioned a lack of funds as an ongoing issue;

therefore, creating budget processes along with the BOD may prove useful for input into the SPP and the short- and long-term success of ABC Company.

Results strengths. Data results in Category 7 showed that the strength of ABC Company rested in the senior leadership. The adherence to the MVV, core competency, and values reflected the decision-making and communication among SLs and participants, customers, the workforce, stakeholders, and collaborators. A review of the ABC Company website and social media platforms provided instant feedback for SLs to use and make informed decisions about changes. SLs used the cycle of continuous improvement to make informed decisions to meet the social and financial needs of the community, which also reinforced the use of single- and double-loop learning. SLs using PDCA also showed the workforce, customers, stakeholders, and collaborators that they valued the voice of the customer.

Results opportunities. Data results in Category 7 showed the benefits gained through participant engagement and communication with the workforce, stakeholders, and collaborators. It is my suggestion that SLs continue to engage with participants, the workforce, stakeholders, and collaborators to discover interests, desires, and motivations. SLs may benefit from using a survey to yield additional information to reinforce the information learned through in-person communications.

SLs identified that understanding the success of competitors was important. Conducting a review of competitor data to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses may provide SLs the ability to gain a competitive advantage. SLs may benefit from reviewing and analyzing local competitor data published on the websites of competitive

organizations, GuideStar, or other national sites that provide national average and trend analyses.

Project Summary

Nonprofit sustainability and the identification of strategies to support SLs was essential to the success of the organization. The support of sustainable donors was a necessity for nonprofit organizations (Stecker 2014). ABC Company SLs set a positive example for other nonprofit senior leaders to follow because of the help and support provided to strengthen their community. SLs presented options for middle and high-school girls struggling with academic and social challenges. Nonprofit organizations need the help of sustainable funding sources to provide products and services to local communities.

The number of nonprofit organizations in Maryland increased, despite the number of leaders of nonprofit organizations who struggled to identify sustainable funding sources to remain operable. In this study, I identified processes nonprofit senior leaders of a small, single nonprofit organization Baltimore, Maryland have used to secure sustainable funding sources. The data I compiled throughout this single-case study can be used to assist nonprofit senior leaders with securing sustainable funding sources.

Stecker (2014) confirmed that there were 1.4 million active nonprofit organizations in the United States competing for increasingly diminished funds in 2014. The relationships between the senior leaders of nonprofit organizations and donors was critical for short- and long-term sustainability (Kucher, 2012). The ability of senior leaders to obtain strategies to secure sustainable donations was necessary. Mataira et al.

(2014) promoted this idea and identified that private, public, and government funding sources were significant contributors to the sustainability of communities across the country.

Each participant in this study provided valuable information for short- and long-term strategic and business planning. The findings of this study were significant to senior leaders of nonprofit organizations, in particular, small nonprofit organizations. Identifying strategies to secure sustainable funding gives senior leaders the ability to meet the social and financial needs of the community (McDonald et al., 2014). The results of this study may benefit the understanding senior leaders of small nonprofit organizations and the ability to secure long-term donors and support. Results of the data provided the senior leaders' impression of the various aspects of the nonprofit organization's leadership, strategy, customers, measurement, analysis, and knowledge management, workforce, and operations. Senior leaders of other small nonprofit organizations may learn from this study, be better equipped to engage in strategic communication of single- and double-loop learning methods, and increase sustainable donor retention. This results of this study demonstrated the need for the introduction of organization and communication as methods for securing strategies for sustainable funding; which may provide improved business practices and donor sustainability.

Social change often serves as a driver for nonprofit senior leaders. The implications for social change in this study included the potential to provide nonprofit senior leaders with strategies to secure sustainable funding for their organization from local businesses, private and public foundations, as well as individual donations. The

products and services provided by ABC Company were based on the needs of the community and at no charge. Therefore, it is important for nonprofit senior leaders to identify sustainable funding sources to support and assist the needs of the community.

The sustainable funding strategies identified in this research can assist leaders of small nonprofit organizations in developing and implementing methods of communication and fundraising to build and reinforce strong donor relationships that may lead to repeat donors or the acquisition of new donors. The findings of this qualitative single-case study may foster positive social change and influence in communities by reducing unemployment, providing new jobs, contributing to local communities through tax payments, and promoting local philanthropy.

Contributions and Recommendations

I presented several vital elements to support the need for nonprofit senior leaders to implement strategies for sustainable funding sources. This study also provided the opportunity for ABC Company SLs to maximize community presence, share lessons learned, and prevent or reverse losses of funding to increase the ability of SLs to accomplish the mission of the organization. With an unpaid workforce, it is crucial for SLs to identify methods to achieve short- and long-term sustainability. Based on the data reported, ABC Company SLs encompassed an educated workforce and stable volunteer population. Despite the funding issues incurred, SLs were successful in ensuring and meeting the financial and social needs of the girls.

SLs promoted the effective and efficient use of social media platforms and the ABC Company website. It is my recommendation that SLs explore competitor data to

determine information that may be useful and replicable for ABC Company. With several large organizations represented in Baltimore, the ability for SLs to establish and build relationships is critical and available. SLs may benefit from building relationships with large organizations in the Baltimore, Maryland area, such as Legg Mason, T. Rowe Price, and Phillips Seafood as key stakeholders and potential donors. Other large organizations that may prove fruitful as sustainable donors included Safeway, Sears, Roebuck, and Co., and Dick's Sporting Goods. Establishing relationships with organizations such as these will allow the SLs to engage with large donors. SLs may communicate with these organizations in-person, through e-mail, or on social media platforms to build relationships required for sustainable donors. Combining the LMS and MVV into the daily actions of SLs will steer communication with key stakeholders and potential donors.

SLs proved successful in utilizing current funding with wise budget decision-making for the short- and long-term. SLs remained consistent in raising over \$6000 each year from local businesses, foundations, and individual donors, but still did not meet the social and financial needs of the customers. There were no detailed financial records available for review; therefore, I recommend that SLs enlist an external auditor for the creation of a formal financial management system and review cycle for pertinent financial and operational documents and procedures, to include the duties of the BOD. SLs understanding the additions to the SPP will also benefit the budget and may provide examples for implementation into the cycle of continuous improvement.

I reviewed internal documents, which proved it is unclear how SLs performed reviews of the BOD. SLs can also complete an annual analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of ABC Company SLs to determine how to combat known and unforeseen changes and obstacles, as well as to assist in future planning. The BOD and SLs can identify opportunities for improvement and enhancement within the local community and with stakeholders by analyzing organizational financial performance outcomes as a collective effort. The BOD can also create working documents, to include a student and parent handbook, code of conduct, ethics training, zero tolerance policy, nondisclosure agreement, conflict of interest policy, audit procedures and protocols, and draft MOUs. With an unpaid workforce, it is also unclear how SLs or the BOD implemented a systematic process for career progression.

Reviews of comparable youth organizations reflected sustained and increasing participation of youth and volunteers, in addition to the workforce. I recommend SLs explore competitor data to determine information that may be useful and replicable for ABC Company. I recommend the SLs use data collected from the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, National Girls Lacrosse League, and the Youth Program Quality Assessment to discover benchmarking information.

Qualitative researchers conducting similar studies may benefit from conducting a multiple-case study, instead of a single-case study. The findings, assumptions, and limitations from this qualitative single-case study may provide information that indicates similar conclusions gained if a researcher used a larger population. I recommend future researchers use different conceptual frameworks as a lens for qualitative and quantitative

research methods to identify strategies for sustainability. Qualitative and quantitative studies may provide insight into the strategies nonprofit senior leaders used to secure sustainable funding for their organization from businesses, foundations, and donations. The results of this study may prove useful to others when disseminated within the academic and professional community.

Section 4: Executive Summary of Key Themes

Project Summary

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to identify strategies to secure sustainable funding for nonprofit organizations from businesses, private and public foundations, and donations. As a participant in Walden University's consulting capstone, I worked with the client and senior leaders of a small, single nonprofit organization located in Baltimore, Maryland with middle and high school girls as the customer. I used the senior leaders of a nonprofit organization as the purposeful sample population for this study; the organization was a student centered and had core competency of educating and empowering girls through lacrosse.

I used semistructured interviews with the client leader and two senior leaders of the client organization, as well as a review of public and internal data, social media platforms, the website of the nonprofit, and competitor sites to gain an understanding of the social and financial needs of the customers and community served. Data collected and analyzed resulted in the identification of four themes: process strengths, process opportunities, results strengths, and results opportunities.

Recommendations were also offered to the client leader to assist in the enhancing communication, retaining donors, and securing sustainable funding. The results of this study supported the need to review various methods available for raising funds, donor retention, and strategies to secure sustainable funding for the client leader. The client leader offers products and services at no charge through the nonprofit organization; therefore, it is imperative that the client leader identify strategies to sustain funding.

Contributions and Recommendations

The results I identified in this study may contribute to business practice and social change. The contributions to business practice include the data and information learned from short- and long-term strategic and business planning, donor retention, and building the donor relationship. The contributions to social change include the client organization learning additional aspects of the social and financial needs of the community, the identification of sustainable funding sources, reductions in unemployment, the creation of new jobs, tax payments and the promotion of local philanthropy.

The recommendations I provided to the client leader may prove useful for the short- and long-term success and planning of the client leader. Engaging in the creation of new relationships with large organizations in Baltimore, Maryland may prove useful for the acquisition of stakeholders and potential donors. Companies such as Legg Mason, T. Rowe Price, Dick's Sporting Goods, Safeway, and Phillips Seafood may prove fruitful as long-term donors, based on the values of these organizations.

My recommendations for future implementation include identifying opportunities for improvement and enhancement with the local community and stakeholders, engaging with competitors to realize strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for internal analysis. Furthermore, my recommendations include enhancing the activities and duties of the board of directors, reviewing performance outcomes, and creating work documents such as a student and parent handbook, code of conduct, ethics training, a zero-tolerance policy, nondisclosure agreement, conflict of interest policy, internal and external audit procedures and protocols, and drafting an MOU.

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Appendix A: Service Order Agreements

Service Order Agreement

Project Proposal

This Project Proposal has been drafted by Jasmine Y. Hardy for [REDACTED] and is dated March 1, 2017.

This Service Order #1 aligns with the provisions of the DBA Research Agreement between Walden University and [REDACTED] dated September 8, 2016.

Scope of Work

Development and writing of the Organizational Profile (OP), as defined and estimated below.

Work Phase	Estimated Time Required
<p>Online interactions: Will gather information to create a working draft of the OP (Mission, Vision, and Values (MVV), governance structure, services, and core competencies).</p> <p>4 MAR 17 10 MAR 17 14 MAR 17 26 APR 17</p>	<p>Four 30-minute interviews with the client leader (flexible time due to summer school/camp schedules).</p>
<p>Outcomes/Deliverables: Working draft of the OP.</p>	<p>N/A.</p>
<p>Additional Services Provided if Requested: Preliminary identification of strengths, opportunities, and challenges.</p>	<p>4 hours of consultant research on strategies to improve financial stability.</p>
<p>Total</p>	<p>7 Days / 4 Hours</p>
<p>Services Summary</p> <p>Complete data-gathering research to draft Organizational Profile.</p>	<p>Length of Engagement</p> <p>1 MAR thru 30 APR 2017</p>

Terms of confidentiality and compliance:

In all reports (including drafts shared with peers and faculty members), the student is required to maintain confidentiality by removing names and key pieces of information that might disclose an Institution's/individual's identity or inappropriately divulge proprietary details. If the Institution itself wishes to publicize the findings of this project, that is the Institution's judgment call.

The student will publish the case study in ProQuest as a doctoral capstone (with site and participant identifiers withheld). The case study will be based upon interviews with non-vulnerable adults on the topic of the Institution's business operations, review of public records, and review of internal records/documents related to the Institution's operations that the Institution deems appropriate for sharing with the student.

The doctoral student will not use these data for any purpose other than the project outlined in this agreement.

Interview recordings and full transcripts will be shared with any interviewee (upon request), and the doctoral student will provide opportunities for clarifying previous statements. Transcripts with identifiers redacted may be shared with the doctoral student's university faculty, peer advisors, and site leadership (upon request).

The doctoral student is responsible for understanding and complying with all of the Institution's policies and regulatory requirements.

Ethical Conduct in this Consulting Relationship

The Code of Conduct in the Walden University 2015-2016 Student Handbook and the ethical requirements for IRB compliance described in the DBA Capstone Instructional Guide bind DBA students in the consulting capstone.

Also, DBA students are required to uphold professional principles in fulfilling their roles as consultants and coaches to client organizations. Beyond the confidentiality requirements outlined above, three principles are key to ensuring ethical conduct in consulting relationships.

Principle 1: Protect the integrity of Walden University

- Not representing conflicting or competing interests or positioning themselves such that their interest may be in conflict or may be perceived to be in conflict with the purposes and values of Walden University
- Not intentionally communicating false or misleading information that may compromise the integrity of Walden University and of the consulting capstone experience

Principle 2: Exhibit professional conduct at all times

- Respecting the climate, culture, values, and regulatory requirements of client organizations and client workforce members

Principle 3: Protect the promise of confidentiality

- Not using or adapting client organization's data and information after the capstone experience, unless the information has been publically shared by the client
- Not conducting telephone conferences with the client organization in public places where information may be overheard

This Project Proposal has been approved by [REDACTED]

SIGNATURE [REDACTED]

The terms of this Project Proposal have been agreed to by Jasmine Y. Hardy:

J. Hardy

SIGNATURE

Document date: June 2016

Service Order Agreement

Project Proposal

This Project Proposal has been drafted by Jasmine Y. Hardy for [REDACTED] and is dated May 1, 2017.

This Service Order #2 aligns with the provisions of the DBA Research Agreement between Walden University and [REDACTED] dated September 8, 2016.

Scope of Work

Development and writing of the Organizational Profile (OP), as defined and estimated below.

Work Phase	Estimated Time Required
<p>Online interactions: Will gather information to create a working draft of Categories 4, 5, and 6 of the 2015-2016 Baldrige Excellence Framework.</p> <p>9 MAY 17 12 JUN 17 14 AUG 17 27 AUG 17</p>	<p>Four 30-minute interviews with senior leaders (flexible time due to school schedules).</p>
<p>Outcomes/Deliverables: Working draft of the OP and Categories 4, 5, and 6.</p>	<p>N/A.</p>
<p>Additional Services Provided if Requested: Preliminary identification of strengths, opportunities, and challenges. Collect and analyze data that identifies the performance outcomes for workforce capability and capacity.</p>	<p>4 hours of consultant research on strategies to improve financial stability.</p>
<p>Total</p>	<p>7 Days / 4 Hours</p>
<p>Services Summary</p> <p>Complete data-gathering research to draft Categories 4, 5, and 6 (in addition to performance data and information for Category 7: Results).</p>	<p>Length of Engagement</p> <p>1 MAY thru 31 AUG 2017</p>

Terms of confidentiality and compliance:

In all reports (including drafts shared with peers and faculty members), the student is required to maintain confidentiality by removing names and key pieces of information that might disclose an Institution's/individual's identity or inappropriately divulge proprietary details. If the Institution itself wishes to publicize the findings of this project, that is the Institution's judgment call.

The student will publish the case study in ProQuest as a doctoral capstone (with site and participant identifiers withheld). The case study will be based upon interviews with non-vulnerable adults on the topic

of the Institution's business operations, review of public records, and review of internal records/documents related to the Institution's operations that the Institution deems appropriate for sharing with the student.

The doctoral student will not use these data for any purpose other than the project outlined in this agreement.

Interview recordings and full transcripts will be shared with any interviewee (upon request), and the doctoral student will provide opportunities for clarifying previous statements. Transcripts with identifiers redacted may be shared with the doctoral student's university faculty, peer advisors, and site leadership (upon request).

The doctoral student is responsible for understanding and complying with all of the Institution's policies and regulatory requirements.

Ethical Conduct in this Consulting Relationship

The Code of Conduct in the Walden University 2015-2016 Student Handbook and the ethical requirements for IRB compliance described in the DBA Capstone Instructional Guide bind DBA students in the consulting capstone.

Also, DBA students are required to uphold professional principles in fulfilling their roles as consultants and coaches to client organizations. Beyond the confidentiality requirements outlined above, three principles are key to ensuring ethical conduct in consulting relationships.

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- Not intentionally communicating false or misleading information that may compromise the integrity of Walden University and of the consulting capstone experience

Principle 2: Exhibit professional conduct at all times

- Respecting the climate, culture, values, and regulatory requirements of client organizations and client workforce members

Principle 3: Protect the promise of confidentiality

- Not using or adapting client organization's data and information after the capstone experience, unless the information has been publically shared by the client
- Not conducting telephone conferences with the client organization in public places where information may be overheard

This Project Proposal has been approved by [REDACTED]

SIGNATURE [REDACTED]

The terms of this Project Proposal have been agreed to by Jasmine Y. Hardy:

J. Hardy

SIGNATURE

Document date: June 2016

Service Order Agreement

Project Proposal

This Project Proposal has been drafted by Jasmine Y. Hardy for [REDACTED] and is dated September 1, 2017.

This Service Order #2 aligns with the provisions of the DBA Research Agreement between Walden University and [REDACTED] dated September 8, 2016.

Scope of Work

Development and writing of the Organizational Profile (OP), as defined and estimated below.

Work Phase	Estimated Time Required
<p>Online interactions: Will gather information to create a working draft of categories 4, 5, and 6 of the 2015-2016 Baldrige Excellence Framework.</p> <p>5 SEP 17 12 SEP 17 19 SEP 17 26 SEP 17 3 OCT 17 9 OCT 17</p>	<p>Six 30-minute interviews with senior leaders (flexible time due to school schedules).</p>
<p>Outcomes/Deliverables: Working draft of the OP and categories 4, 5, and 6.</p>	<p>N/A.</p>
<p>Additional Services Provided if Requested: Preliminary identification of strengths, opportunities, and challenges. Collect and analyze data that identifies the performance outcomes for workforce capability and capacity.</p>	<p>4 hours of consultant research on strategies to improve financial stability.</p>
<p>Total</p>	<p>7 Days / 4 Hours</p>
<p>Services Summary</p> <p>Complete data-gathering research to draft categories 4, 5, and 6 (in addition to performance data and information for category 7: Results).</p>	<p>Length of Engagement</p> <p>1 SEP thru 31 OCT 2017</p>

Terms of confidentiality and compliance:

In all reports (including drafts shared with peers and faculty members), the student is required to maintain confidentiality by removing names and key pieces of information that might disclose an Institution's/individual's identity or inappropriately divulge proprietary details. If the Institution itself wishes to publicize the findings of this project, that is the Institution's judgment call. The student will publish the case study in ProQuest as a doctoral capstone (with site and participant identifiers withheld). The case study will be based upon interviews with non-vulnerable adults on the topic

of the Institution's business operations, review of public records, and review of internal records/documents related to the Institution's operations that the Institution deems appropriate for sharing with the student.

The doctoral student will not use these data for any purpose other than the project outlined in this agreement.

Interview recordings and full transcripts will be shared with any interviewee (upon request), and the doctoral student will provide opportunities for clarifying previous statements. Transcripts with identifiers redacted may be shared with the doctoral student's university faculty, peer advisors, and site leadership (upon request).

The doctoral student is responsible for understanding and complying with all of the Institution's policies and regulatory requirements.

Ethical Conduct in this Consulting Relationship

The Code of Conduct in the Walden University 2015-2016 Student Handbook and the ethical requirements for IRB compliance described in the DBA Capstone Instructional Guide bind DBA students in the consulting capstone.

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- Not intentionally communicating false or misleading information that may compromise the integrity of Walden University and of the consulting capstone experience

Principle 2: Exhibit professional conduct at all times

- Respecting the climate, culture, values, and regulatory requirements of client organizations and client workforce members

Principle 3: Protect the promise of confidentiality

- Not using or adapting client organization's data and information after the capstone experience, unless the information has been publically shared by the client
- Not conducting telephone conferences with the client organization in public places where information may be overheard

This Project Proposal has been approved by [REDACTED]

SIGNATURE [REDACTED]

The terms of this Project Proposal have been agreed to by Jasmine Y. Hardy:

J. Hardy

SIGNATURE

Document date: June 2016

Appendix B: DBA Research Agreement

WALDEN UNIVERSITY

DBA RESEARCH AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT (the "Agreement") is made and entered into on this 6 day of September (the "Effective Date") by and between WALDEN UNIVERSITY, LLC, located at 100 Washington Avenue South, Suite 900, Minneapolis, MN 55401 ("Walden") and [REDACTED] located at [REDACTED] ("Institution").

RECITALS

WHEREAS, Walden offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs and seeks to partner with institutions to allow Walden doctoral students (the "Students") to receive academic credit for work on research projects ("Research").

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual promises and covenants hereinafter set forth it is understood and agreed upon by the parties hereto, as follows:

I. TERM AND TERMINATION

This Agreement shall commence on the Effective Date and shall continue for a period of three (3) years (the "Initial Term"). Upon expiration of the Initial Term of this Agreement, this Agreement and the Term shall renew for successive one (1) year periods (each a "Renewal Term"). Notwithstanding the foregoing, either party may terminate this Agreement for any reason or no reason, upon ninety (90) calendar days' prior written notice to the other party. In the event of termination or expiration of this Agreement before a participating Student(s) has completed the Research, such Student(s) shall be permitted to complete the Research subject to the applicable terms of this Agreement, which shall survive for such Research until the date of completion.

II. RESEARCH

A. Institution and Walden may, from time-to-time, agree that selected Students, if accepted by Institution, may participate in Research with Institution. Walden shall be responsible for referring Students to the Institution and will instruct Students to provide Institution with a description of the Research. Walden agrees to refer to the Institution only those Students who have completed the required prerequisite course of study as determined by Walden. The parties anticipate that all Research will be done remotely and that Students will not be present at Institution's facilities.

B. Walden and Institution will conduct their activities hereunder in compliance with their respective policies and all applicable laws and regulations. In the event that any regulatory compliance issues arise, the parties will cooperate in good faith in any review conducted by the other party.

C. Where applicable, the Institution shall provide the Student with an orientation familiarizing student with all applicable State and Federal laws and regulations that pertain to the Research with the Institution, which may include those pertaining to Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information (the "Privacy Rule") issued under the federal Health

WALDEN UNIVERSITY

Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA"), which govern the use and/or disclosure of individually identifiable health information.

D. The Institution reserves the right to dismiss at any time any Student whose health condition, conduct or performance is a detriment to the Student's ability to successfully complete the Research at the Institution or jeopardizes the health, safety or well-being of any patients, clients or employees of the Institution. The Institution shall promptly notify Walden of any problem or difficulty arising with a Student and a discussion shall be held either by telephone or in person to determine the appropriate course of action. The Institution will, however, have final responsibility and authority to dismiss any Student from Institution.

E. The Institution and Walden shall each maintain general liability insurance (or comparable coverage under a program of self-insurance) for itself and its employees with a single limit of no less than One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence and Three Million Dollars (\$3,000,000) annual aggregate. Each party shall provide the other party with proof of coverage upon request.

III. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The Student shall agree to abide by the rules, regulations, policies and procedures of the Institution as provided to Student by the Institution during their orientation at the Institution and shall abide by the requirements of all applicable laws.

B. If applicable, the Student shall agree to comply with the Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information (the "Privacy Rule") issued under the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA"), which govern the use and/or disclosure of individually identifiable health information.

C. The Student shall arrange for and provide to Institution any information requested by Institution including, but not limited to, criminal background checks, health information, verification of certification and/or licensure, insurance information and information relating to participation in federally funded insurance programs.

IV. MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

A. FERPA. For purposes of this Agreement, pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 ("FERPA"), the parties acknowledge and agree that the Institution has an educational interest in the educational records of the Student participating in the Program and to the extent that access to Student's records are required by the Institution in order to carry out the Research. Institution and Walden shall only disclose such educational records in compliance with FERPA.

B. HIPAA. The parties agree that, if the Institution is a covered entity under HIPAA:

(1) Where a Student is participating in Research that will require access to Protected Health Information:

WALDEN UNIVERSITY

(a) Student shall be considered part of Institution's workforce for HIPAA compliance purposes in accordance with 45 CFR §160.103, but shall not otherwise be construed to be employees of Institution;

(b) Student shall receive training by the Institution on, and subject to compliance with, all of Institution's privacy policies adopted pursuant to HIPAA; and

(c) Student shall not disclose any Protected Health Information, as that term is defined by 45 CFR §164.105, to which a Student has access through program participation that has not first been de-identified as provided in 45 CFR §164.514(a);

(2) Walden will never access or request to access any Protected Health Information held or collected by or on behalf of the Institution that has not first been de-identified as provided in 45 CFR §164.514(a); and

(3) No services are being provided to the Institution by Walden pursuant to this Agreement and therefore this Agreement does not create a "business associate" relationship as that term is defined in 45 CFR §160.103.

C. Publications. Students and Walden are free to publish, present, or use any results arising out of the Research for their own academic, instructional, research, or publication purposes. Students shall submit a draft of any proposed publication to Institution at least ten (10) business days prior to submission for publication, presentation, or use. To the extent Institution requires that Students enter into nondisclosure or confidentiality agreements, such agreements shall be subject to this Section allowing publication of Research results.

D. Institution and Walden will promote a coordinated effort by evaluating the Research at mutually agreeable times, planning for its continuous improvement, making such changes as are deemed advisable and discussing problems as they arise concerning this affiliation.

E. The parties agree that Students are at all times acting as independent contractors and that Students are not and will not be considered employees of the Institution or any of its subsidiaries or affiliates by virtue of a Student's participation in the Research and shall not as a result of Student's participation in the Research, be entitled to compensation, remuneration or benefits of any kind.

F. Institution and Walden agree that Student will have equal access to their respective programs and facilities without regard for gender identity, race, color, sex, age, religion or creed, marital status, disability, national or ethnic origin, socioeconomic status, veteran status, sexual orientation or other legally protected status. Institution and Walden will comply with all applicable non-discrimination laws in providing services hereunder.

G. The terms and conditions of this Agreement may only be amended by written instrument executed by both parties.

WALDEN UNIVERSITY

H. This Agreement is nonexclusive. The Institution and Walden reserve the right to enter into similar agreements with other institutions.

I. This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Minnesota.

J. Any notice required hereunder shall be sent by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested and shall be deemed given upon deposit thereof in the U.S. mail (postage prepaid). Notices to Walden shall be sent to Jenny Sherer, Office of Research Ethics and Compliance; 100 Washington Avenue South, Suite 900; Minneapolis MN 55401 with a copy to: Walden University, LLC; Attention: Assistant Divisional Counsel; 650 South Exeter Street; Baltimore, MD 21202.

K. Each party agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the other from all losses or liabilities resulting from the negligent acts or omissions of the indemnifying party and/or its employees or agents arising out of the performance or the terms and conditions of this Agreement, except to the extent such losses or liabilities are caused by the indemnified party's negligence or willful misconduct.

L. This Agreement sets forth the entire understanding of the parties hereto and supersedes any and all prior agreements, arrangements and understandings, oral or written, of any nature whatsoever, between the parties with respect to the subject matter hereof. This Agreement and any amendments hereto may be executed in counterparts and all such counterparts taken together shall be deemed to constitute one and the same instrument. The parties agree that delivery of an executed counterpart signature hereof by facsimile transmission, or in "portable document format" (".pdf") form, or by any other electronic means intended to preserve the original graphic and pictorial appearance of a document, will have the same effect as physical delivery of the paper document bearing the original signature.

SIGNATURE PAGE FOLLOWS

WALDEN UNIVERSITY

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have duly executed this Agreement, effective the date first above written:

WALDEN UNIVERSITY, LLC

INSTITUTION

By: *L. Ward Ulmer*
(signature)

By: [REDACTED]
(signature)

Name: L. Ward Ulmer
(Print name)

Name: [REDACTED]
(Print name)

Title: Vice President

Title: [REDACTED]

Date: 9/13/2016

Date: 9/8/16

Appendix C: 40 Week Project Timeline

Suggested 40-Week Project Timeline for DBA Specialization in Consulting			
Organizational Profile			
Week No.	Activity	Deliverable(s)	Key Performance Indicators/Measures
Wk 1	<p>Contact client</p> <p>Identify and agree upon scope of project and deliverables</p> <p>Create, submit, and receive client's signature on Service Order (SO)</p> <p>Client provides orientation to org's culture, policies and protocols, and regulatory compliance requirements</p> <p>Complete Form A to receive the IRB approval number for this case study</p>	Signed SO that aligns with DBA Research Agreement	<p>List of client's needs, expectations, and requirements, including understanding of client's organizational culture, policies, and regulatory compliance requirements</p> <p>Affirmation of/agreement upon project scope, deliverables, and timeline</p> <p>Signed SO</p>
Wk 2	Begin data- and information-gathering interviews and research (e.g., client's website, foundational documents)	Construct template for working draft of client's Organizational Profile (OP) and outline of key factors (KFs)	Template for documentation of evidence supporting students' identification of key factors that are of strategic importance to the organization
Wk 3	Continue gathering data/information through interviews with client's key leaders, managers, and stakeholders	Complete relevant sections of template	Draft of client's product offerings and services, business proposition, mission, vision, values (MVV), and core competencies, governance structure, relationship to parent organization
Wk 4	Gather data/information about client's workforce and customers	Complete relevant sections of template	Draft of client's workforce profile, including volunteers; table of relevant workforce demographics, requirements, and engagement factors

Wk 5	Gather data/information about client's key suppliers, partners, and collaborators	Complete relevant sections of template	Draft of client's key suppliers, partners, and collaborators, including key mechanisms for communication and key supply-chain requirements
Wk 6	Gather data/information about client's assets, regulatory requirements, and key competitive changes	Complete relevant sections of template	Draft of client's assets (facilities, technologies, equipment), regulatory requirements, including occupational health and safety regulations, accreditation, certification, industry standards, and/or product regulations
Wk 7	Gather data/information about client's strategic advantages and challenges, and performance improvement system	Complete relevant sections of template	Draft of client's key strategic challenges and advantages in areas of business, operations, societal responsibilities, and workforce; key elements of client's performance improvement system
Wk 8	Draft OP	Completed OP template	Working draft of OP
Process Chapters: Leadership Triad Component of Client Case Study (Leadership, Strategy, Customers)			
Week No.	Activity	Deliverable(s)	Key Performance Indicators/Measures
Wk 9	Leadership 1.1: Gather evidence to describe and evaluate: How do senior leaders lead?	How do senior leaders set MVV? How do leaders demonstrate commitment to legal and ethical behavior? How do leader' actions build organizational success/sustainability? How do leaders communicate and engage workforce and customers? How do leaders create a focus on action?	Working draft of Leadership 1.1

Wk 10	Leadership 1.2: Gather evidence to describe and evaluate: How do leaders govern?	- How does client organization ensure responsible governance?	Working draft of Leadership 1.2
		<p>- How does client organization evaluate senior leaders?</p> <p>How does client organization anticipate public concerns with its products and operations?</p> <p>How does client organization promote and ensure ethical behavior?</p> <p>How does client organization consider societal well-being as part of its strategy and daily operations?</p> <p>How does client organization actively support and strengthen its key communities?</p>	
Wk 11	Strategy 2.1: Gather evidence to describe and evaluate: How does client organization develop strategy?	<p>How does client organization conduct strategic planning?</p> <p>How does strategic planning process stimulate innovation?</p> <p>How does client organization collect/analyze relevant data to support strategic planning?</p> <p>What are client organization's key work systems?</p> <p>What are client organization's vital few strategic objectives and timetable for achieving them?</p> <p>How do strategic objectives achieve balance among varying/competing organizational needs?</p>	Working draft of Strategy 2.1

Wk 13	Strategy 2.2: Gather evidence to describe and evaluate: How does client organization implement strategy?	<p>What are key short- and longer-term action plans? How does client organization deploy action plans?</p>	Working draft of Strategy 2.2
		<p>How does client organization ensure availability of financial and other resources (including HR) to achieve action plans? What are key workforce plans to support short- and longer-term achievement of action plans? What KPIs does client organization use to track achievement/effectiveness of action plans? What are performance projections?</p>	
Wk 14	Customers 3.1: How does client organization obtain information from customers?	<p>How does client organization listen to, interact with, and observe customers to obtain actionable information? How does client organization listen to potential customers? How does client organization determine customer satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and engagement? How does client organization obtain information on customers' satisfaction relative to other organizations?</p>	Working draft of Customers 3.1

Wk 15	Customers 3.2: How does client organization engage customers through service and building relationships?	How does client organization determine product and service offerings? How does client organization enable customers to seek information and support? How does client organization determine customer groups and market segments? How does client organization build and manage customer relationships? - How does client organization manage customer complaints?	Working draft of Customers 3.2
Wk 16	Analyze/Evaluate information for Leadership triad (Leadership, Strategy, Customers)	Organize, analyze, validate, and confirm data and information for Leadership, Strategy, Customers	Working draft of Leadership Triad chapters of Client Case Study, including evidence-based feedback on client's strengths and opportunities for improvement (OFIs) Milestone 1
Process Chapters: Initial Results Triad (Workforce, Operations) and Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management Components of Client Case Study			
Week No.	Activity	Deliverable(s)	Key Performance Indicators/Measures

Wk 17	Workforce 5.1: How does client organization build an effective, supportive workforce environment?	<p>How does client organization assess workforce capability and capacity?</p> <p>How does client organization recruit, hire, place, and retain new workforce members?</p> <p>How does client organization manage its workforce?</p> <p>How does client organization prepare its workforce for changing capability/capacity needs?</p> <p>How does client organization ensure workplace health, security, and accessibility for its workforce?</p> <p>How does client organization support its workforce via benefits and policies?</p>	Working draft of Workforce 5.1
Wk 18	Workforce 5.2: How does client organization engage its workforce to achieve a high-performance work environment?	- How does client organization foster a culture characterized by open communication?	Working draft of Workforce 5.2

		<p>How does client organization determine key drivers of workforce engagement?</p> <p>How does client organization assess workforce engagement?</p> <p>How does client organization's workforce performance management system support high performance/engagement?</p> <p>How does client organization evaluate effectiveness/efficiency of its learning/development system?</p> <p>How does client organization manage career progression?</p>	
Wk 19	<p>Operations 6.1: How does client organization design, manage, and improve its key products and work processes?</p>	<p>How does client organization determine key product and work process requirements?</p> <p>How does client organization design its products/processes to meet requirements?</p> <p>How does day-to-day operation of work processes ensure that they meet process requirements?</p> <p>How does client organization improve its work processes to improve products and performance, enhance core competencies, and reduce variability?</p> <p>How does client organization manage for innovation?</p>	<p>Working draft of Operations 6.1</p>

Wk 20	Operations 6.2: How does client organization ensure effective management of operations?	<p>How does client organization control overall costs?</p> <p>How does client organization manage its supply chain?</p> <p>How does client organization provide a safe operating environment?</p> <p>How does client organization ensure that it is prepared for disasters/emergencies?</p>	Working draft of Operations 6.2
Wk 21	Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management 4.1: How does client organization measure, analyze, and then improve organizational performance?	<p>How does client organization use data/information to track daily operations and overall performance?</p> <p>How does client organization select and effectively use comparative data/information?</p> <p>How does client organization use voice-of-the-customer and market data/information?</p> <p>How does client organization ensure that its performance measurement system can respond to rapid/unexpected change?</p> <p>How does client organization review its performance and capabilities?</p> <p>How does client organization share best practices?</p> <p>How does client organization project its future performance?</p> <p>How does client organization use findings from performance reviews to develop priorities for improvement and innovation?</p>	Working draft of Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management 4.1

Wk 22	Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management 4.2: How does client organization manage its organizational knowledge assets, information, and information technology infrastructure?	How does client organization manage organizational knowledge? How does client organization use knowledge and resources to embed learning in operations? How does client organization verify and ensure the quality of organizational data/information? How does client organization ensure the availability of organizational data/information? How does client organization ensure that hardware/software are reliable, secure, and user-friendly? How does client organization ensure that hardware/software systems and data/information are available and secure to serve customers and business needs in the event of an emergency?	Working draft of Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management 4.2
Wk 23	Analyze/Evaluate information for Initial Results triad (Workforce, Operations) and Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management	Organize, analyze, validate, and confirm data and information for Workforce; Operations; and Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management	Working draft of Initial Results Triad chapters of Client Case Study, including evidence-based feedback on client's strengths and OFIs
Wk 24	Align and integrate data/information in OP, Leadership Triad, and Initial Results Triad chapters	Compile draft document of OP and all process chapters in Leadership and Initial Results Triad	Complete working draft of process chapters of Client Case Study, including evidence-based feedback on client's strengths and OFIs Milestone 2

Results Chapter: Collection, Analysis, and Preparation of Results			
Week No.	Activity	Deliverable(s)	Key Performance Indicators/Measures
Wk 25	Results 7.1: What are client organization's product performance and process effectiveness results?	What are client's results for products and customer service processes? What are client's process effectiveness/efficiency results?	Working draft of analysis of results reported in 7.1
		What are client's emergency preparedness results? What are client's supply-chain management results?	
Wk 26	Results 7.2: What are client organization's customer-focused results?	What are client's customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction results? What are client's customer engagement results?	Working draft of analysis of results reported in 7.2
Wk 27	Results 7.3: What are client organization's workforce-focused results?	What are client's workforce capability/capacity results? What are client's workforce climate results? What are client's workforce engagement results? What are client's workforce and leader development results?	Working draft of analysis of results reported in 7.3
Wk 28	Results 7.4: What are client organization's leadership and governance results?	What are client's results for sr ldrs' communication/engagement w/workforce and customers? What are client's results for governance accountability? What are client's legal/regulatory results? What are client's results for ethical behavior? What are client's results for societal responsibilities and support of key communities? What are client's results for achievement of organizational strategy and action plans?	Working draft of analysis of results reported in 7.4

Wk 29	Results 7.5: What are client organization's financial and marketplace performance results?	What are client's financial performance results? What are client's marketplace performance results?	Working draft of analysis of results reported in 7.5
Wk 30	Compile and verify results for each Results section	Verify analysis of results levels, trends, and comparisons	Assemble and format Results chapter Milestone 3
Wk 31			
Wk 32	Assemble full draft of Client Case Study	Align and integrate data/information in all chapters of Client Case Study	Full working draft of Client Case Study
Preparation and Review of Client Case Study			
Week No.	Activity	Deliverable(s)	Key Performance Indicators/Measures
Wk 33 Wk 34	Review full draft of Client Case Study with mentor	Revise and refine full draft of Client Case Study	Full draft of Client Case Study to serve as checking copy for client's review
Wk 35 Wk 36	Schedule client meetings to present full draft of Client Case Study	Revise and refine full draft of Client Case Study to reflect client's input about errors in fact and suggested edits	Full draft of Client Case Study that has been reviewed by client (and key stakeholders, if appropriate)
Wk 37 Wk 38	Final review of penultimate draft of Client Case Study with mentor	Revise, refine, format, and prepare presentation copy of Client Case Study	Presentation copy of Client Case Study for delivery to client
Wk 39	Prepare "scrubbed" edition of Client Case Study that is suitable for public presentation/publication	Remove/replace all proper nouns and other identifiers, remove all proprietary and confidential information from Client Case Study Students must submit this final, publishable version of the case study to clients for review and approval at least 10 days prior to submission to Walden University for publication, presentation, or use. Students must receive written approval from the client prior to submitting this version of the case study for publication. This is the ONLY version of the	Client's signed consent to publish redacted version of the case study Public copy of Client Case Study for presentation/publication

Wk 40		case study that may be submitted for publication.	
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Appendix D: Glossary of Abbreviations and Acronyms

A

ABC Company
Client organization (Pseudonym)

B

BOD
Board of Directors

C

CMP
Compliant Management Process

D

DBA
Doctorate of Business Administration

E

EDS
Employment Development System

G

GST
General Systems Theory

I

IRB
Institutional Review Board

IRS
Internal Revenue Service

K

KSS
Knowledge Sharing System

L

LMM
Leadership management method

LMS
Leadership Management System

M

MOU
Memoranda of understanding

MVV
Mission, vision, and values

O

OPR
Organizational performance review

P

PDCA
Plan-do-check-act

PDIS
Process design improvement system

S

SL
Senior Leader (Pseudonym)

SPP
Strategic planning process

SWOT
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats