

## History of The Bridgespan Group

The Bridgespan Group's mission is to build a better world by strengthening the ability of nonprofit organizations and philanthropy to achieve breakthrough results in addressing society's most important challenges and opportunities.

Bridgespan was launched in January 2000, after being incubated at Bain & Company, Inc., the global, for-profit strategy consultancy. Our founding was motivated by the desire to provide nonprofits with access to the same sort of high quality, data-driven, strategic and organizational advice commonly available to for-profit organizations. We had discerned a need for this kind of capability through interviews with more than 50 leaders in the nonprofit sector, as well as from the founders' experiences consulting to nonprofits.

We knew that in order to be successful we would need to develop a deep understanding of the nonprofit sector. Our name, Bridgespan, was chosen to reflect our strong belief in the power of sharing ideas—and people—across the boundaries of the sectors. We also have come to understand that nonprofit organizations present a much greater degree of organizational and strategic complexity than comparably sized for-profits. As a result, while for-profit tools can often serve as a strong starting point for addressing the challenges nonprofits face, they invariably need to be adapted to the unique features of the sector—if not refashioned altogether.

Bridgespan's mission, strategy, and belief in the power of "bridging" the best ideas and people across the sectors have led us to build an organization with some distinctive characteristics. Bridgespan is organized as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our mission and charter enable us to focus on organizations with the greatest potential for impact and to generate knowledge that can be shared widely rather than be treated as proprietary.

At the outset, we pursued our mission by providing strategy consulting services. Over time, Bridgespan activities have expanded to include executive search; philanthropy advising; Bridgestar, an initiative dedicated to attracting, developing, and connecting leaders for the sector; and a variety of knowledge-sharing efforts. These endeavors are all shaped by values grounded in our mission: impact, respect, candor, collaboration, and passion.

### Strategy consulting and philanthropy advising

In the years since our launch, we have demonstrated the power of applying cutting-edge strategic thinking and analysis to the challenges facing nonprofits and philanthropy in a variety of settings. We have worked with more than 200 clients, and these clients report that Bridgespan is having a significant effect on their organizations' performance: strengthening their capabilities, introducing new ways of thinking, and improving their ability to maximize their social impact.

We also partner with some philanthropies to work with their grantees on developing business plans for programs and initiatives in which they invest.

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## Executive search

Even the best-conceived strategy is ultimately of little benefit unless there is a strong team in place to lead and implement it. Bridgespan executive search services help nonprofits navigate the often frustrating and time consuming process of attracting and building strong and cohesive senior leadership teams.

Bridgespan's search clients are typically nonprofits and foundations seeking to strengthen their capacity in the areas of finance, operations, strategy, evaluation, marketing and communications, and technology. An innovative model of service delivery enables organizations to choose full executive search or, as appropriate, a la carte advisory services in the areas of candidate pool development, resume screening, referencing, and more.

## Bridgestar

Bridgestar ([www.bridgestar.org](http://www.bridgestar.org)), an initiative of the Bridgespan Group launched in 2003, seeks to be a resource for increasing the flow of capable managers and leaders into and within the nonprofit sector. By building and maintaining an online job board, connecting leaders, and producing career- and recruiting-related knowledge and tools, Bridgestar hopes to help strengthen the sector overall as well as the performance of individual nonprofits.

## Knowledge sharing

Sharing knowledge is a cornerstone of Bridgespan's mission. Our knowledge initiatives represent a conscious commitment to sharing what we are learning, to prompting new thinking about nonprofit strategy and management, and to distributing our insights, frameworks, and tools through multiple means and media, including publications, working sessions, speaking engagements, symposia, and collaborations with educational institutions and others. We also look for opportunities to support the dissemination of breakthrough ideas created by others.

[Our content and multimedia presentations are available on our website, [www.bridgespan.org](http://www.bridgespan.org).]