

The Bridgespan Group's Nonprofit Development Program: Designing Strategy

Overview

Grounded in Bridgespan's experience working with hundreds of nonprofits, Designing Strategy is an online program to help your executive team get clear on what you do best, which communities to prioritize, and what activities will lead to the greatest impact.

How it works

Participant teams meet for a kickoff and five workshops over three months. Before the workshop, team members prepare by completing online pre-work. Bridgespan coaches are there to help each team along the way.

The program includes:

- **Team workshops.** The team comes together as a group for two hours every two weeks to discuss key issues.
- **Individual online lessons.** All team members gain access to our online platform and complete assignments before meeting as a team.
- **Coaching support.** Bridgespan coaches check in with the participant team leads and CEO on a one-on-one basis and through project lead workshops, office hours, and cohort-wide events.

How your team benefits

In team workshops for two hours every two weeks over three months, you and your leadership team will develop:

- A working draft clarifying which communities you aim to work with and the impact you wish to have
- A document that specifies how your organisation will achieve its impact
- Clarity on the capabilities and approaches that make your organisation uniquely impactful

Why do this work as an executive team?

We believe it's important to do this work as an executive team for several reasons. First, having alignment on strategy as a team ensures team members are all moving towards the same impact goals when making decisions and setting priorities. Second, these conversations can help build connections and strengthen dynamics within an executive team. Finally, having the full team aligned ensures that the strategic vision does not just lie with the CEO or any one member of the leadership team.

Frequently asked questions

How can I be confident this content will be relevant for my organisation?

Over the last two decades, Bridgespan has helped hundreds of nonprofit organisations effectively address key leadership and strategic issues. We have developed our programs in collaboration with a diverse set of global organisations, nonprofit leaders, and sector experts.

Our time-tested tools and innovative learning approaches have helped clients get clear on their strategies, accelerate their impact, improve their decision-making confidence, and empower their teams to prioritize the work that matters most.

We have designed the module to ensure it is impactful, actionable, and sustainable.

What commitment will I need to make?

Team members should be prepared to:

- Spend between two and three hours per week, for three months (depending on the program and your team's pace), doing self-study and pre-work.
- Come together as a team every other week for about two hours to discuss key issues.
- In addition, one of your team members will be designated as the Project Lead. Their time commitment will be an extra 12-15 hours over the course of the full program. (See below: "What is the Project Lead's role?")

Will my team and I have access to Bridgespan support?

We have carefully designed this program such that your Project Lead can help your team navigate the content, make critical decisions, and advance through the process without intensive direct support from Bridgespan. However, teams have access to Bridgespan support along the way. Project Leads can access 1-on-1 coaching on behalf of their teams and attend workshops to help them throughout the duration of the program. In addition, Bridgespan provides ongoing email support and is available for additional coaching as necessary.

What is the Project Lead's role?

The Project Lead serves as the glue that holds this learning experience together. The Project Lead's time commitment will be an extra 12-15 hours over the full program. Responsibilities include:

- **Owning the process.** The Project Lead manages the work plan and meeting schedule for the project.
- **Facilitating the conversation.** During team meetings, the Project Lead will help to facilitate conversation, ensuring that all voices are heard and helping the group move towards decisions (drawing upon our unique video-facilitated Team Summit process).
- **Delivering results.** After team meetings, the Project Lead works closely with the ED/CEO/Co founder to translate decisions into action.