

## Moving within the Nonprofit Sector

### A Bridgestar Success Story

Over the course of 30 years, Nancy Lewis had built a successful career in the Massachusetts nonprofit performing arts arena. But in December 2008, severe financial pressures forced the theater where she served as general manager to lay off virtually its entire staff, including her.

As Lewis began considering her career options, she quickly discovered that senior positions at arts organizations in Greater Boston were scarce. There were senior roles at arts groups in other parts of the country, but she did not want to relocate. “Performing arts is an extremely difficult environment right now financially,” she said. “My job search became about looking for other opportunities.”

The key was how to take her extensive experience in senior management roles at performing arts groups and translate that into a senior role in a different part of the nonprofit sector. Over the course of her career, Lewis had developed a strong background in finance as well as operations. She had served as the executive operations manager at the [School of Music in Boston University’s College of Fine Arts](#), as director of business affairs and institutional planning/chief financial officer (CFO) at [Boston Ballet](#), and in her most recent role, as general manager of [North Shore Music Theater](#).

Using a variety of online resources, she began researching positions in other parts of the nonprofit sector that fit her skills and talents before she zeroed in on specific organizations to target. She read articles that helped her refocus her resume to highlight her managerial and finance skills, rather than her arts experience.

About two months into her job search, Lewis discovered a job posting for a CFO position at the [Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts](#). The job description was a great fit for her skills, and she was intrigued by the organization. “The Girl Scouts really interested me because it bridges the gap between a social service agency and the performing arts,” she said. “It provides a recreational experience, but with the goal of empowering girls.”

Lewis became the CFO of the Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts in April 2009. Her advice to other nonprofit senior managers considering a move to a different part of the sector is this: “Really think about the organization and why you want to be there. Go into the interview process with that fully formed in your mind and then convince the organization that you have the skills needed...It’s so important, especially in the current market, for people to believe that you’re going to bring energy and passion to your job.”

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Resources on Bridgestar's website and other nonprofit websites figured prominently in Nancy Lewis's job search. Here are some of the Bridgestar resources she used:

[The Bridgestar job board](#)

(Lewis first saw the posting for the CFO position at Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts on the Bridgestar job board)

[Sample CFO Job Descriptions](#)

[The Nonprofit Chief Financial Officer Learning Center](#)

**Bridgestar** ([www.bridgestar.org](http://www.bridgestar.org)), an initiative of the Bridgespan Group, provides a nonprofit management job board, content, and tools designed to help nonprofit organizations build strong leadership teams and individuals pursue career paths as nonprofit leaders.