Future-Proofing Your Leadership: Technology Skills for Tomorrow’s Nonprofit Leaders
I'm a nonprofit leader and technology strategist who loves helping people solve problems—from making their work easier and more enjoyable, to enabling their organization to more effectively achieve its mission. I am a frequent writer and speaker on technology leadership, software selection, user adoption, innovation, and strategic IT alignment.

Pronouns: She/Her
Agenda

1. Why technology leadership matters
2. Six technology leadership skills
3. How to develop technology leadership
What did you come here to learn?
What are the biggest challenges for your nonprofit organization in 2024?

- Higher demand for programs
- Cost of programs increasing
- Leadership transitions
- Staffing shortages
- Economic uncertainty
- Competition for funding

Ingredients for Technology Success

- Stable, secure, productive IT infrastructure
- Robust data tools
- Budgeting and planning
- Support and training
- Governance and culture
- Funding
- Talent
What happens when the executive director is clueless about technology?
Tech decisions are more strategic, connected to mission and goals
All decisions are informed by data alongside intuition
Staff know they are accountable for learning and using tech tools
The organization can more easily spot opportunities for innovation
What does a nonprofit leader actually need to know (or decide, or do) about technology?
Six essential technology skills for nonprofit leaders

1. Data literacy
2. Change management
3. Technology risk
4. Evaluating technology ROI
5. Hiring and supervising tech talent
6. Knowledge management
Data literacy

Difference between correlation and causation

How big a sample you need to confidently draw conclusions

When to disaggregate the data (and what disaggregate means)

Image: https://www.tylervigen.com/
Change management

Analyzing whom a change will affect and how

Understanding motivations and attitudes toward technology

Reasonable expectations about timelines, user adoption

Leveraging champions and early adopters

Communication

Technology Risk

Regulatory compliance
Policies
Cybersecurity
Privacy
Business Continuity
Evaluating technology

ROI

How to measure the value of technology
Cost of ownership
Risk and opportunity cost
Capital vs operating costs
Due diligence on software contracts
Making the case to funders

A slow laptop that costs 10 minutes per day...
X 5 days per week
X 48 weeks per year
= 2400 minutes :: 40 hours
40 hours X $50/hour = $2,000

New laptop = $1,200

Savings = ???
Hiring and supervising tech talent

Where to look for consultants

How to assess qualifications

How to evaluate highly technical work

Working knowledge of high-level best practices
## Knowledge management

"When one person learns something, the entire organization gets smarter."

Assign responsibilities around knowledge and learning

Ensure information is organized and accessible

Model using the toolset

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Create</th>
<th>With Strong Knowledge Management</th>
<th>With Weak Knowledge Management</th>
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<td>We have a process for creating, naming, and storing new knowledge that makes it easier to find later on and allows people both internally and externally to collaborate and co-create easily.</td>
<td>People create documents in multiple places with no naming conventions making it harder to find later on. When someone leaves the organization, their knowledge goes with them.</td>
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| Search | It’s easy to find assets, guidelines, templates, and examples, including knowledge from past employees. | Individuals waste time searching for and learning things the organization already knows. |

| Explore | We can discover relatively easily what we know and do across departments and offices, finding best practices, learning from each other, and applying that knowledge to guide decisions and practices. | We don’t benefit from each other’s learning. |

| Collect Information | Everything has a place, and we capture new learning from each project as well as external sources. | Information is disorganized or not captured at all. |

| Connect People | It’s easy to find people and communities with knowledge to share, and we’re aware of what’s happening throughout the organization. | Experts are invisible, mentorship is stifled, learning curves are steeper, and people are not helping each other succeed. |
How might you develop these skills?
A few ways to learn and discover

Training
● TechSoup
● NTEN
● Tech Impact
● Software vendors
● LinkedIn Learning
● Your favorites?

Reading
● Stanford Social Innovation Review
● Wired
● Karen’s enews
● Authors on Wiley: e.g. Kanter & Fine, Neff & Moss, Sample Ward & Bruce
● Your favorites?
Tinker with tech

Don’t be afraid to break stuff!
Click on all the menus and find out what’s possible.
AI to the rescue?

Generative AI tools can provide a good overview of technical topics. (But beware, they aren’t always accurate.)
Let’s answer your questions!
Thank you

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