From Data to Results: Can Current and Future Nonprofit Governance Research be Successfully Translated into Managerial Action in Nonprofit Organizations?

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Abstract

The past twenty years have seen the steady growth of training programs, consulting practices, academic research, and guidebooks aimed at improving the performance of nonprofit boards. This development reflects both hopes and doubts about the nonprofit board. On the one hand, boards are touted as a decisive force for ensuring the accountability of nonprofit organizations. On the other hand, the board is widely regarded as a problematic institution.” It was this quote from a Nonprofit Quarterly article by Ryan, Chait, and Taylor (2013) that prompted us to examine this issue for our own organization (United Way for the Lower Eastern Shore). It soon became apparent that what we were looking at had much broader applicability. Here, we offer our observations and suggestions, not as a scholarly paper but more as a call to dialog.