

Business Resilience Toolkit

Stay true to your mission

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Transcript:

We are living in changing times. Does your NFP struggle to change and adapt? Change is one of the most difficult things that we face but it is unavoidable especially when funding becomes more insecure.

Hello, I'm Ellen Schuler and I'm a Business Consultant at Community Business Bureau.

Any idea or suggestion of change can create great anxiety among leaders and staff. We often hear 'this is the way we do things here'. Or we hear 'this is what we do and we have been doing this for 20 years now'.

Focussing on why your organisation exists can give you clarity and confidence on what to change and how.

Simon Sinek has identified the formula why some organisations are more successful and why some leaders are more influential, inspiring, and innovative. He has called it the Golden Circle.

Your organisation surely knows **what** you do. Potentially you understand **how** you do it - you know what unique value you offer to your customers or beneficiaries. At the core of your NFP is your **why** – what is your purpose? What is your belief and why do you exist?

Organisations who think, act and communicate from the inside to the outside tend to be more successful. Organisations who start with **why** stay true to their mission, because people access from you 'why' you do it and not 'what' you do.

When the world around us changes, we need to change. When times get difficult, we need to adapt - sometimes the 'what' and most times the 'how'.

At the centre remains the 'why' – why we do what we do. That remains at your core and that should not change. This is why your not-for-profit was founded and that is non-negotiable. This is your belief.

And this is why you always need to start from the inside. The 'why' is what you need to remind yourself and your team of every day.

Meals on Wheels SA was experiencing a high demand for meal deliveries during COVID 19 shutdowns. Meals on Wheels exists to provide vulnerable people with the meals they need.

Meals on Wheels provide nutritious meals to the doorstep, yet during COVID they had less volunteers available and more meals to deliver.

By focusing on the 'why do we exist' and 'what outcome do we need to achieve' they successfully managed to adapt.

Meals on Wheels SA teamed up with the kitchen team from the Adelaide Convention Centre. They were able to cook large numbers of meals and they had the capacity to freeze the meals.

By delivering frozen meals for the week instead of hot meals for the day, Meals on Wheels was able to deliver meals more efficiently and with less volunteers involved. Meals on Wheels exists to provide vulnerable people with the meals they need, and they quickly adapted to deliver on their purpose.

To be able to thrive and survive you need to have a clear sense of why your organisation exists and why the work you do matters. Building this core message helps you with two things. You clearly identify:

- ▶ what challenge you tackle; and
- ▶ what outcome you create for your customers.

Having this clarity will guide your not for profit for all decisions and assist your organisation to adapt. It will also help you to avoid mission creep where rash decisions during a crisis situation will move outside of your original goals.

Mission creep can use up your organisation's resources and energy for work that can distract you from reaching your original goal.

Does that mean the 'why' can never change? Absolutely not – there is a difference between mission creep and making strategic adaptations. If the challenge changes, you need to adapt.

For example, an organisation who was founded to assist children with Down's Syndrome may widen the scope to work with children with intellectual disability, as the birth rate of children with Down's Syndrome keeps on declining.

Focussing on why your organisation exists can give you clarity and confidence in what to change and how.

Related video to watch next: Theory of Change.