

Nonprofit Staff Recruitment — We Asked an Expert

Thurlow/Associates recently sat down with Matt Kamin, partner, Envision Consulting, to discuss effective staff recruitment and retention strategies. Here's what we learned:

Firstly, tell us a little about Envision Consulting's recruitment and retention services. What's different about your approach?

We've served as leaders of nonprofit organizations ourselves, and we integrate our experience into our work. We also approach recruitment and staff planning as an integral part of the client organization's broader plan, or planning process. We take the time to really determine what staffing an organization needs to realize its short- and long-term goals, rather than seeing our work as simply filling an empty position.

What are the greatest incentives — and challenges — when it comes to investing in sound staff recruitment and retention?

Staff turnover is inevitable, but investing in solid recruitment up front will save a lot of money and heartache overall.

A scenario we see every day is that the old job description has been pulled out and a candidate has been quickly hired — without reassessing what the organization really needed. Staff turnover has then continued. At some point, the organization will hopefully take time to sit down and reassess — but why not do that upfront?

Additionally, most organizations simply post a job and review the candidates who have applied. A full recruitment process should also involve sourcing well-qualified candidates from a vetted network of professionals in the field.

Unfortunately, most organizations simply don't have the internal capacity to dedicate the needed time or resources to such a robust and strategic search. To give some idea, our team spends 150 hours, on average, on a search process. We can help when time and/or appropriate expertise aren't available in house.

The field of fund development is known for high turnover rates. What can an organization do to prevent this?

It's well known that the average tenure of a development staff member is only about two years. While this is due to several factors, the most frequent cause of development staff turnover is a lack of clear expectations regarding what the development professional will — or can — do.

In addition to achieving clear expectations, it's important to invest in your existing, qualified staff and provide them with opportunities for real growth. By doing this, you reduce their need to move elsewhere to develop professionally and to advance their careers.

What are your top tips for job seekers trying to stand out from the crowd?

A few things come to mind first:

- In your résumé, be clear about what you achieved at each job. I don't care what you *did*, but what you *created or produced*.
- Who you know counts. Network. Be known.
- Update your LinkedIn profile and ensure it represents you, your impact, and your relationships.

We invite you to contact Thurlow/Associates for more information about our strategic fund development and organization development services, including:

- *Interim fund development leadership and staffing.*
- *Development staff training and mentorship.*
- *Executive coaching for development team members.*
- *Development planning.*

Call (310) 675-6497 or email us at hello@thurlowassociates.com for a no-cost consultation.