



***A **Difference Maker** understands they are a steward of tradition, heritage, and the future—serving their fair board or ag society with an irrational passion.***

***They know that progress demands change, and today, change happens through trusting relationships—first with each other, then with their volunteers, and finally with the community they serve.***

***They think in systems because systems are force multipliers—the key to doing more with less. They act as catalysts and connectors, aligning people to purpose and marshaling the time, talent, and treasure of others to make a significant impact.***

***They take responsibility for their corner of the world, knowing their actions leave a mark on eternity—and they commit themselves to leaving their community better than they found it.***

***You don't need to be  
sick to get better!***

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***Every couple hundred years in western history society rearranges itself. The society that the grandparents knew is completely different from the society the grandchildren know! This is called a time of transformation. We are in one of those times!***

**How have things changed?**

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- User Driven Society
- Experiential Society
- Obligatory civic responsibility/volunteerism versus "prove it to me" volunteerism
- The competition for people's time talent and treasure is more intense than it's ever been
- Expert/ Authority vs Authentic/Trust

The context matters...

Are the approaches and systems we are using what the times require?

***"Progress and change are  
indelibly intertwined there can  
be no progress without  
change"***

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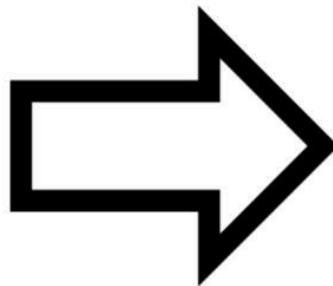
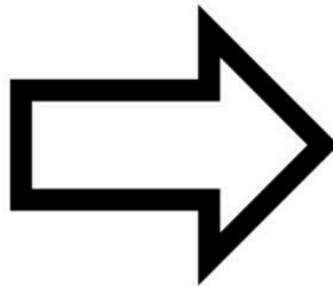




**It all boils down to our ability to take a bunch of different people (inside and outside the four walls of your organization), from a bunch of different backgrounds, with a bunch of different talents, experiences and interests, marshaling their human capital toward a common goal!**

**In a word, it is called Leadership!**

## **Power of alignment**



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## ***The Challenge***

We have a finite amount of time, energy and resources available to us. To be highly effective and make a significant difference we must have some way to be able to manage all that is expected of us and all we want to do.

## ***The Solution...Systems!***

Simply put, a system is an organized collection of parts that are highly integrated to accomplish an overall goal.

***By definition then, the system is systemic, meaning relating to, or affecting, the entire system. (This is not to be confused with systematic, which can mean merely that something is methodological. Thus, methodological thinking -- systematic thinking -- does not necessarily mean systems thinking.)***

- Think fulcrum and lever, compound pulley - Force Multipliers!
- Systems are intentionally developed or organically grow up and take hold
- Are the systems you and your board are using, what the times require?

***If you always do what you've always done,  
You'll always get what you've always got***

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***If we want more of people's time, talent and treasure today,  
We must position ourselves and what we do as a community asset,  
bringing significant value to the whole community!***

***"So What"***

### **Core Principle**

People and businesses invest their time, talent and treasure in organizations that add value to the community. Clearly communicating why your organization matters helps attract sustained support of all kinds and at all levels.

### **Key Takeaways**

✓ Define Your Unique Value: What makes your organization essential to the community? Articulate it in a way that inspires action.

### **4 Communication filters - Fact, Emotion, Values, Beliefs**

✓ Align with People's Interests: Tailor messaging to show how supporting your organization aligns with a donor's or sponsor's values.

✓ Showcase Impact: Use data, testimonials, and success stories to demonstrate how contributions create tangible change.

📌 Action Step: Develop a simple, clear mission statement that communicates your 'So What' in a way that compels your community members to invest their time, talent and treasure with you!

💡 Reflection Question: How can you better communicate your organization's impact to the community we serve?

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## ***Connect People to Purpose!***

### **Volunteer Recruitment and Retention in a User-Driven, Experiential Society**

In the U.S., the landscape of volunteerism at county and regional fairs is rapidly evolving. Once deeply rooted in a sense of communal obligation—where volunteering was a given for keeping fairs and exhibitions thriving—today’s volunteers demand more. They seek purpose, alignment with their values, and tangible evidence that their efforts matter.

This shift presents both a challenge and an opportunity for fair leaders. Volunteers no longer commit out of habit or tradition alone. Younger generations, including Millennials and Gen Z, prioritize meaningful experiences that align with their passions and offer measurable impact. To maintain and grow a dedicated volunteer base, fair leaders must demonstrate that their organization is worthy of an individual’s time, talent, and treasure.

***The message is clear: Organizations that fail to adapt to these changing expectations risk losing the volunteers they depend on. Thriving in this new landscape requires leaders to create impactful experiences, communicate those impacts effectively, and prove that each person’s involvement makes a real difference.***

## ***The Volunteer Continuum System***

- ❖ **Identify your volunteer needs**
  - **Ideal**
  - **Perferred,**
  - **Get the Job Done**
- ❖ **Recruit, Cast a Vision**
  - **Grasstops and Grassroots**
- ❖ **Provide User Driven Process and multiple points of entry**
- ❖ **Survey**
  - **Ask them what they want and their expectations**
- ❖ **Onboarding**
  - **"Why Video" and Vocational Job Description, Outcome Based Training**
- ❖ **Delegate Effectively**
  - **Delegation Matrix**
- ❖ **Coach Poor Performance - Three Reasons Volunteers Don't Perform**
- ❖ **Celebrate and Recognize - Year Round Connection**

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## Theme 1: Volunteers Want to Make a Difference

**Core Principle:** Volunteers don't just want to give their time—they want to see tangible outcomes from their efforts. They are drawn to opportunities where their work creates measurable, meaningful change.

### Key Takeaways

- **Show Impact:** Clearly communicate how volunteer contributions sustain the mission of your fair. Use stories, data, and visuals to demonstrate their influence on community traditions, youth development, and cultural preservation.
- **Celebrate Contributions:** Regularly recognize volunteers through thank-you messages, public acknowledgments at events, or recognition ceremonies.
- **Build Emotional Connections:** Highlight how their roles directly support fair operations or impact youth, such as 4-H projects or agricultural exhibitions.

**Reflection Question:** How can you show the tangible impact of your volunteers' efforts in your recruitment and retention strategies?

## Theme 2: Recruitment in a User-Driven Society

**Core Principle:** Recruitment today requires adapting to a society where individuals want personalized, flexible opportunities that match their goals, skills, and passions.

### Key Takeaways

- **Personalize Recruitment:** Highlight specific opportunities tailored to potential volunteers' skills and interests, such as helping with livestock shows, judging contests, or event setup. Avoid generic appeals.
- **Emphasize Flexibility:** Offer short-term roles, remote opportunities (like social media management), or task-specific volunteer jobs that accommodate diverse schedules.
- **Use Targeted Messaging:** Tailor your approach for different demographics. For instance:
- **Parents:** Emphasize family involvement and bonding.
- **Retirees:** Focus on their expertise and community contribution.
- **Teens/Young Adults:** Highlight skill-building and leadership opportunities.
- **Leverage Digital Platforms:** Promote volunteer opportunities on social media, email campaigns, and local community boards. Use engaging visuals that showcase the excitement of your fair.

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**Action Step:** Create an outreach plan to identify key community groups, digital platforms, and messaging strategies to attract new volunteers.

**Reflection Question:** *What unique opportunities does your fair offer that could attract volunteers from diverse backgrounds?*

### Theme 3: Retention in an Experiential Society

**Core Principle:** Retaining volunteers requires creating fulfilling and rewarding experiences. People are more likely to stay involved if they feel engaged, appreciated, and part of a meaningful community.

#### Key Takeaways

- Provide Memorable Experiences: Incorporate teamwork, creativity, and personal growth into volunteer roles. Make volunteering fun by pairing tasks with enjoyable social events.
- Foster a Sense of Community: Encourage connections among volunteers through group projects, shared success stories, and frequent communication.
- Recognize Efforts: Celebrate milestones publicly and frequently. For example, highlight volunteer achievements during fair events or in newsletters.

**Action Step:** Develop a “Volunteer Experience Plan” outlining how your fair will create engaging and fulfilling roles for volunteers throughout the event.

**Reflection Question:** *How can you make volunteering with your fair more rewarding and enjoyable?*

#### Practical Steps for Recruitment and Retention

1. Identify Volunteer Needs: Clearly outline the roles, skills, and time commitments your fair requires.
2. Create Clear Roles: Develop position descriptions that specify expectations, benefits, and opportunities for growth.
3. Streamline Onboarding: Ensure new volunteers feel welcomed and prepared through training, orientation, and mentorship programs.
4. Build a Recognition Plan: Regularly celebrate contributions through awards, shout-outs, or personalized thank-you notes.
5. Invest in Communication: Maintain regular contact with volunteers through updates, newsletters, and personal check-ins.

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6. Implement Feedback Loops: Gather and act on feedback to improve volunteer experiences.
7. Focus on Impact: Regularly show how volunteer work contributes to the success of your fair, fostering pride and commitment.

### **Key Quote**

***“Volunteers don’t just give their time; they preserve traditions, inspire youth, and strengthen communities.” Recruitment and retention efforts must focus on helping them see and feel their impact at every step.***

### **Final Reflection**

Recruitment and retention are two sides of the same coin. To recruit effectively, fair leaders must present opportunities as fulfilling, impactful, and flexible. To retain volunteers, fairs must create an environment where they feel valued, connected, and engaged. By focusing on these principles, county and regional fairs can build a strong, sustainable volunteer base to support their long-term success.

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## **FUNDRAISING AND DEVELOPMENT: BUILDING TRUST, NOT JUST ASKING FOR MONEY**

### **Core Message**

Fundraising is not just about securing money—it's about building trust and relationships that lead to long-term support. Donors don't give to projects; they give to people and a compelling why, not just a how.

By shifting from transactional to relational fundraising, fair boards and ag societies can unlock sustainable revenue streams that strengthen their communities.

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### **Theme 1: Fundraising is Relationship-Building**

#### **Core Principle**

People support causes they trust and feel connected to, not just those that need funding. Successful fundraising is about building authentic relationships and making donors feel like investors in a shared mission.

#### **Key Takeaways**

- ✓ Shift from Asking to Engaging – Approach fundraising as an opportunity to inspire and involve people, rather than just requesting money.
- ✓ Tell a Compelling Story – A strong why makes your organization stand out. Donors need to see, hear, and feel the impact of their support.
- ✓ Build Long-Term Trust – Consistent engagement, transparency, and follow-ups foster deeper donor commitment.

💡 Reflection Question: How can your organization strengthen its donor relationships beyond financial transactions?

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## Theme 2: The Five Revenue Streams for Financial Success


### Core Principle

A well-rounded fundraising approach taps into multiple revenue sources, ensuring financial sustainability rather than reliance on a single stream.

### Key Takeaways

- ✓ Individual Donors: Create personal connections, engage through storytelling, and implement donor appreciation programs.
- ✓ Business Donors & Sponsors: Develop mutually beneficial partnerships beyond logo placements—focus on shared values and visibility.
- ✓ Government Entities: Research public funding opportunities and align projects with government priorities to secure grants.
- ✓ Foundations: Build relationships with grant officers and track measurable outcomes to strengthen future funding opportunities.
- ✓ Revenue-Generating Activities: Host events, raffles, and programs that align with your mission and engage the community.

 **Action Step:** Identify which revenue stream has the most untapped potential for your organization and develop a plan to strengthen it.

 **Reflection Question:** Which revenue streams are you currently using, and where is the greatest opportunity for growth?

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## Practical Strategies for Fundraising Success

- ✓ Map Out a Fundraising Plan: Create a distinct approach for each revenue stream, rather than relying on one-off efforts.
  - ✓ Leverage Digital Engagement: Use social media, newsletters, and virtual events to expand your fundraising reach.
  - ✓ Make Sponsorships a Partnership: Move beyond traditional sponsorships by offering businesses meaningful collaboration opportunities.
  - ✓ Engage and Retain Donors: Keep donors involved with updates, exclusive experiences, and appreciation efforts.
  - ✓ Stay Grant-Ready: Maintain updated impact reports and financial documentation to streamline grant applications.
- 📌 Final Action Step: Set three specific fundraising goals for the next 6 months that will improve donor engagement and diversify your revenue streams.
- 💡 Final Reflection: Fundraising is about building trust, not just asking for money. A clear why, strong relationships, and a strategic approach create long-term sustainability.
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## Key Quote

**“People don’t give to projects; they give to people and a compelling ‘why,’ not just a ‘how.’”**

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## **BUILDING TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS AND EXPANDING YOUR ORGAZATIONS SPHERE OF INFLUENCE**

### **BACKGROUND**

In today's day and age to penetrate the volume of media images, information and "white noise" that people are inundated with on a daily basis, we must have a message and conduit to deliver that message that is relevant, impactful and simple. We also know that people are looking for things of meaning, purpose and value when discussing where to invest their "time, talent and treasure". This approach works off of those two truisms to reach the goal of affecting positive change. This is a compelling and authentic way that will engage people of influence where they are at, helping them to see the tangible value you and your organization or effort have to offer.

### **The following are the suggested action steps to execute this strategy:**

1. Make a list of 3 people of influence (not prominence) that you need to move your agenda forward.
  - a. Color code them based on their interest
    - i. Red-against
    - ii. Yellow-indifferent
    - iii. Green-interested but non-committal
  - b. Think about the communication style of each and the best way to approach them
    - i. When is the best time to talk with them?
    - ii. Where is the best place to talk with them?
    - iii. How is the best way to talk with them?
2. The goal is to move each of the 3 people one "notch" over a 60 day period
  - a. Based on 1B (above) do the following:
    - i. Approach each of the 3 people
    - ii. Set an appointment to chat with them
  - b. Use the "CHAT" to work to build trust  
In the ideal chat we will
    - Talk 20%, listen 80%
    - Know your communication style and the style of others
      - o Fact based
      - o Emotion based
      - o Values based
      - o Belief based

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- When we do talk it will be to
  1. Ask questions that help me understand wants, needs, desires and problems
  2. Paraphrase back to check for UNDERSTANDING

*In the **chat** we explore, ask questions, and get feedback. We make no attempt to “sell” anything until the following 4 things have been accomplished*

1. They tell us their needs, wants, problems, or objectives they want filled, satisfied, or solved.
2. Then and only then do we discuss our needs, wants, desires, hopes and aspirations!
3. Point out where there is alignment between 1 and 2
4. Talk about how you and your effort can help them

c. Relate what value you have to bring

1. Be authentic
2. Be sincere
  - a. Be outcome based and impact focused
  - b. Tell specific stories, instances and situations where the value of what you want to do lies
  - c. Remember the most powerful form of marketing is the personal testimonial

***In this very simple, authentic and personal approach to recruitment building of partnerships and most of all the growing of your sphere of influence...you will not only convey the essence of the value of the what you are doing in real and meaningful terms, you will also do it in a way that inherently builds the trusting relationships***

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## The Difference Maker's 5 Most Urgent Questions

To contact Scott and Fairs.com



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