

## ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

### Bricks Being Thrown at You?

*Next time your Board starts throwing bricks, gather them up and build a better foundation.*

*By Julie Iacobelli*

**D**avid Brinkley once said, “A successful man is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks others have thrown at him.” Think about your organization for a second: What bricks are being thrown at you?

Here’s one that is quite common these days: your Board of Directors has indicated they would like an outside firm to come in and do an organizational assessment. Suddenly thoughts run rampant through your head. Am I doing something wrong? Is my house in order enough to have someone come in and look around? Will we be able to implement the recommendations we receive with our current workload?

While these are all valid questions, true leaders welcome and embrace the investment in having outside input on the state of the organization. Boards of Directors that suggest this type of activity are to be commended. They are taking their leadership role of being fiscally and programmatically responsible to the donors, partners, and clients you serve very seriously.

Organizational assessments also help you understand which bricks in your foundation are missing, or where you may need a little more mortar to strengthen the connection. Think about it for a minute: Everything your organization does is built upon something else. You cannot serve clients and expand programs unless you have funding to do so. And you cannot expect funding sources and donors to support your organization if you don’t strategically employ donor-centric activities that engage, cultivate, and steward those who give to your cause.

The truth is, today’s prospects and donors are asking hard questions – and looking to see that you have your “house in order” before deciding to begin or continue their support. An organizational assessment reviews key operational and fundraising activities, and provides critical recommendations to move the organizational forward. It also shows that you are being productive and efficient with the dollars invested in you. Recommendations are not criticisms. Rather, they are opportunities to remove barriers to future success.

So, the next time someone starts throwing bricks your way, gather them up and build a foundation that you, your Board of Directors, clients, and donors are proud to invest in

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