

What is a Cause-Driven Organization?

A Cause-Driven Organization is one that centers its focus outside the organization to the larger cause being addressed. The Cause is often a core belief that is shared by several organizations, providing the basis for collective impact through coordination, cooperation, and collaboration.

Is that different than a Purpose-Driven Organization?

Many Purpose-Driven Organizations look outside the organization to a purpose greater than themselves (e.g., feeding hungry people). The Purpose drives the organization internally, and they do good work. However, they often don't use that as a basis for long-term, meaningful connections with other organizations that leverage greater impact. Cause-Driven Organizations work with other organizations as a matter of standard practice.

Cause-Driven Organizations are Game-Changers

Often, an organization does good work that is supported by funders (donors and foundations), approved by the board, and lauded by the community. And yet, while the work is *good enough* to meet immediate needs, it doesn't address the greater issue of decreasing the need. The game stays the same. The needle doesn't move.

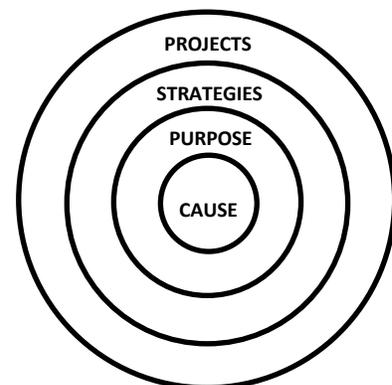
Good is the enemy to great.
And that is one of the key
reasons why we have so little
that becomes great. *Jim Collins*

A Cause-Driven Organization breaks through the *Good Enough Ceiling* to the great work of changing the game. This is only possible (with rare exceptions) by working with other organizations. Based upon a shared core belief, organizations communicate often and explore naturally occurring opportunities to coordinate, cooperate and collaborate in their work. This greater capacity brings greater effectiveness to meeting immediate, acute needs and provides the additional capacity to address the issues related to decreasing the need.

Breaking through the *Good Enough Ceiling*

Cause-Driven Organizations break through the Good-Enough Ceiling by implementing **projects** that employ **strategies** that fulfill a **purpose** that addresses a **cause**, moving the organization forward by changing the game.

When many good organizations implement projects, they opt for a "do it all in-house" mode of operation that strains capacity by adding tasks on top of already full plates. Cause-Driven Organizations implement projects that increase capacity, as they work with other organizations to increase both efficiency and effectiveness.



(con't)

Many good organizations draft strategies that guide the organization in reasonable ways: maximize fundraising, strive for excellence, customer-centered. A Cause-Driven Organization challenges the organization to deepen their collective roots by employing strategies that focus its activities toward fulfilling a compelling purpose (e.g., facilitate collaborative connections; address the whole person).

The mission or purpose of a good organization often provides a strong, driving force that defines meaningful work from all involved (e.g., feeding hungry people). The organization may be aware of a larger cause (e.g., belief that all residents should be food secure), but the cause only serves to reinforce the mission. The operational focus remains internal, and it keeps the organization limited to the good, acceptable – even laudable – work of meeting needs.

The purpose of a Cause-Driven Organization also provides for strong, meaningful, internal alignment, but it does not drive the organization. The Cause compels the staff, board and others to do their work in alignment with other organizations.

Further, in a Cause-Driven Organization, no program or service or effort is too important to stop doing if that is what's required to do great work. Indeed, the organization itself would be willing to shut its doors if necessary. Of course, the paradox is this: the more you focus on what's best for the community, the better is it for your organization.

The real question is, once you know the right thing, do you have the discipline to do the right thing, and equally important, to stop doing the wrong things? *Jim Collins*

Breaking through the *Good Enough Ceiling*

<i>Activities that...</i>	<i>Are good enough</i>	<i>Shatter good enough ceiling</i>
Implement projects that...	Strain capacity	Increase capacity
Employ strategies that...	Guide the organization	Challenge the organization
Fulfill a purpose that...	Drives org internally	Focuses the org & message
Addresses a cause to...	Reinforces mission	Drives org internally & builds connections externally
Move the org forward by...	Doing good work	Changing the game

In Summary

A Cause-Driven Organization unites the organization around something larger than itself. Knowing how the organization fits within the context of a larger cause, the Cause-Driven Organizations puts a sharp point on its message, encourages volunteer and board recruitment, and energizes fundraising efforts. Cause-Driven Organizations view coordination, cooperation, and collaboration with other organizations as standard operating procedure, because they know that the needle will never move and the game will never change as long as organizations work in isolation.