

How to Build Your Nonprofit's Resilience

Resource Type: Articles

Topic: Business Continuity Planning

A resilient organization has a strong foundation to weather adversity and bounce back better. With forethought and planning, all organizations can become more resilient. Here are nine ways to do it.

1. **Don't rely on one source for your organization's essentials.** Have multiple sources for your nonprofit's key supplies and services. If your nonprofit is small and parceling out its work isn't efficient, price some alternative suppliers and confirm whether they would work with an organization of your size and type. Make sure that information on the current supplier and alternative providers is available in multiple places and accessible to team members who might need to use it in the future.
2. **Build buffers into your organization's operations.** If your nonprofit uses any type of supply regularly (think gloves in a food-service environment and bandages/gauze in a health care organization), stock up on extra supplies that will be accessible should customary supply chains be cut off. Rotate the extras into your stock before they expire. Review inventory on a regular basis and order more when your back up supplies are running low.
3. **Strengthen your cybersecurity.** All nonprofits possess valuable data that presents a tempting target for hackers. [Take these simple, free or low-cost steps](#) to strengthen basic cybersecurity practices at your nonprofit, and carve out time for [these six must-do tasks](#) to ensure you'll be ready if and when a breach occurs at your organization.
4. **Explore ways to hasten decisions without downside impacts.** Over time, especially as nonprofits grow, decision-making becomes more burdensome and time-consuming than necessary. Form a small team to explore ways to increase the efficiency of decision-making without sacrificing decision quality. Commit to test, learn, and adjust as needed.
5. **Empower your team members to make more decisions.** Clearly communicate which decisions employees and managers can make, who gets input into the decisions, and who doesn't. Spell out what kinds of decisions your team can make quickly, and which ones require more deliberation.
6. **Hire and promote adaptable leaders who go beyond just reacting when a crisis or disruption occurs.** Adaptable leaders can adeptly evaluate situations to change course quickly, coach team members through the adjustment, and foster new behaviors and capabilities on the team.
7. **Invest in top talent.** Shape your budget to offer the most competitive pay and benefits possible. If you hire and retain great employees, they will help your organization adapt and innovate in challenging conditions.
8. **Regularly share how one team or employee's work fits into the full picture of the organization.** The better employees understand how their work supports an organization's ultimate mission, the more engaged they will be in the tasks and activities that bring the mission to life.
9. **Pause to reflect and learn.** If an organization constantly races from one must-do initiative to another, when crisis hits, you won't know what's working and what isn't. Organizations that periodically take time to pause and reflect on successes and failures can make quick, smart decisions about capacity, capabilities, and changes in direction.

Additional Resources

- [Steps You Can Take to Build a Resilient Organization – Center for Creative Leadership](#)
- [Building Organizational Resilience – Harvard Business Review](#)
- [Raising the Resilience of Your Organization – McKinsey](#)
- [Resilience for Sustainable, Inclusive Growth – McKinsey](#)