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# The Importance of Being Mission-Driven

NOT-FOR-PROFIT  
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Mission-challenged nonprofit organizations face many challenges, including closing their doors. In today's economic environment, there appear to be more nonprofit organizations that are mission-challenged as opposed to mission-driven. This can be attributed to an increase in the number of nonprofit organizations while the number of donors, amount of donations and funding resources have declined. Many nonprofit managers are adding to the challenging environment by departing from the organization's mission, instead of taking steps to understand and address factors leadership can control. The aspects of a mission-driven organization are defined below:

- **Reactive vs. Proactive** – A mission-driven organization anticipates challenges, prepares for them, and even takes preventative steps.
- **In-the-Boiler-Room vs. Driving-the-Train** – In a mission-driven organization, management and the board are constantly thinking and asking how best to carry out and expand their mission. They seek input from staff, target populations, community and government leaders, funders, as well as other groups. Although day-to-day operations are carefully thought out, emphasis is placed on how these operations connect to the mission.
- **Engagement vs. Disengagement** – A mission-driven organization features regular, thoughtful interactions among its management, board, staff and community leaders.
- **Corporate vs. Entrepreneurial** – A mission-driven organization should have an entrepreneurial environment whereby individuals and groups take on ownership of the mission and organization. This is demonstrated in everything they do.
- **Low Energy vs. High Energy** – In a mission-driven organization, there is an abundance of positive energy. This is demonstrated by employees at every level being excited about what they are doing and a highly engaged leadership team and board.
- **Abundance vs. Scarcity** – A mission-driven organization sees abundance when it comes to opportunities to impact the communities in which they operate and their ability to raise funds.

If upon examination, your organization appears to be mission-challenged, do not lose heart because with commitment and thoughtful action it can become a prominent mission-driven organization.

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