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# It's Budget Season Again!

AUDIT, NOT-FOR-PROFIT  
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For many not-for-profit organizations, it's that time of year ... budget season. What side do you take, are you excited for the opportunity to plan for your organization's future, or do you dread the seemingly never-ending process of cutbacks and of having to say no? Unfortunately, since 2008 most organizations have fallen into the latter category.

So what would it take to move your team and organization to the former? Imagine the following:

- *Make the data gathering process easier and more reliable*
  - **The result** – a senior leadership team able to focus on decision-making and a management team not lost in fact and formula checking.
  - **The how** – invest in systems and databases that bring the information to you, reduce the risk of error, and limit time and energy spent on producing spreadsheets.
- *Spend valuable time on idea-generating activities rather than negotiations with colleagues on how to spend finite resources*
  - **The result** – identifying new ideas and models on how to execute the organization's mission, and leverage all the organization's key drivers of success (reputation, relationships, quality, intellectual capital, financial).
  - **The how** – commit to doing things differently and invest in time to assess current processes against a desired future-state.
- *Find ways to say yes*
  - **The result** – an organizational culture that understands reality and works together toward the desired objectives.
  - **The how** – have the tough conversations, be transparent and share key indicators regularly with the team. As progress is made, the team will quickly see how achievable, the 'yes' really is, or what actions still need to happen to drive success.

While these three steps sound simple, we all recognize the challenges organizations face, especially during the budget time. Maybe this cycle can be different? Is this the year your organization tackles the dreaded budget season and turns it into something that drives growth and opportunity?

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