

achieving a number that I said I would achieve early on," she recalls, "and I thought, 'Oh my goodness!' But no one even noticed."

Catherine Meloy, who was a senior executive at Clear Channel Communications before taking over the Washington, D.C., region of Goodwill Industries, found

that even bringing what she felt were basic budget practices to Goodwill involved true culture shock. "I said, 'Let's benchmark.' It became a joke. People said: 'Does she have to question everything? Doesn't she trust what we're doing?'"

Crossing Over

How do you make a successful transition from the business world to nonprofits? Here's advice from six executives who have done just that.

LEAD BY INSPIRATION

"You will have little opportunity to lead by making decisions. You'll have the power of the budget to some extent, but if you have a vision or you want to make any changes, you're going to do it by leadership and by inspiration and not by direction. You've got to be a Pied Piper."

—Harold Williams, former CEO and chairman of the business conglomerate Norton Simon, and former CEO of the J. Paul Getty Trust

GAIN NONPROFIT EXPERIENCE FIRST

"Unless that person is really unusual or unique, I think it would be a mistake for somebody to jump in and run CARE or run AARP without any not-for-profit or public sector experience. If I were [on] a board I would never choose such a person. ... It would be very difficult for somebody to walk in out of a corporate setting and just take over a not-for-profit. ... We don't teach humility in business school, do we?"

—William D. Novelli, CEO of AARP, and founder and former president of the public relations firm Porter Novelli

BELIEVE IN THE MISSION

"Have a passion for that organization's mission. Otherwise, the frustrations just wouldn't be worth it. Recognize that everything is consensus building. Know that you have the affirmative responsibility to project in every setting the critical importance of what the organization does – to funders, to media, to potential volunteers, to all the constituents."

—Philip Lader, chairman of the communications services firm WPP Group, and former university president and White House deputy chief of staff

REALIZE HOW HARD IT WILL BE

"Don't assume that the senior staff has the same business training and business background that you're accustomed to and that you may take as second nature. Be prepared to teach and be helpful in that respect. Finally, don't think that it's less of a real job. One of the chuckles I got when I came here was from many of my friends in Southern California, who to this day don't believe I really had a real job. 'How hard can it be, Dick, just writing these checks?' Don't underestimate the degree of difficulty of working in a complex nonprofit organization."

—Richard Schlosberg, former president of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and former publisher and CEO of the Los Angeles Times

ANTICIPATE PASSIVE OPPOSITION

"The nature of passive resistance within a nonprofit setting is at levels that could teach Gandhi lessons."

—Reynold Levy, president of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and former president of International Rescue Committee

BE YOURSELF

"What people should do is stop and try to objectively assess what they're best at and what those skills are. Then bring those to the not-for-profit. I think people arrive and they actually hide. [Instead,] people should be exercising those skills and leading with those skills. Some of the most outspoken people in the for-profit world arrive at a not-for-profit board and become the least vocal."

—Robert Higgins, founder of the venture capital firm Highland Capital Partners, and former executive director of the John A. Hartford Foundation