

CAREER TRANSITION



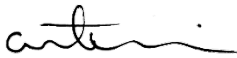
From the private sector to philanthropy

PREFACE

On a regular basis, countless people want to change the direction of their careers. Many from the private sector feel the call of NPOs and philanthropic organizations to make their work more meaningful. In fact, it is the vast majority of these transitions that have shaped the philanthropic sector as we know it today.

It is in response to these numerous requests for a coffee, for a meeting or exchange about career change that this career transition guide has been created. Over the next few pages, you will gain a better grasp of the reality of the sector and its associated professions, to clearly define your added value, and to equip you for the next stage on your career path.

I hope you'll find this guide useful, and that it will provide you with food for thought.



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About the Author

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[Learn more about the author](#)

INTRODUCTION

Philanthropy is undeniably an essential pillar of our society, providing support and resources to causes and communities that need them most. Non-profit organizations (NPOs) and registered charities play a central role in promoting philanthropy by implementing initiatives, programs and projects to generate a positive impact within our society. So, it's only natural that, at some point in our careers, we should want to get involved in this sector. Some will do so voluntarily, financially or professionally. As you'll see in this guide, one certainly doesn't preclude the other. But here we'll concentrate on the professional aspect of the process.

The Importance of Philanthropy

Philanthropy is no longer just a hobby. It has become increasingly professional in recent years, and now contributes 8.3% of the national gross domestic product (GDP). According to Imagine Canada, this translates into 2.4 million people employed in Canada by NPOs¹.

It's a sector brimming with opportunities, and with an impressive number of options for a possible career transition.

Motivations for a Career Change

There are many reasons for making a career change from the private to the philanthropic sector. Some common motivations include:



¹ Imagine Canada. <https://www.imaginecanada.ca/en/About-the-sector>

Impact and Meaning

Many professionals are looking for work that has a real and meaningful impact on the world. Working in an NPO offers them the opportunity to contribute to causes they feel are important, and to make a positive difference in society.

Alignment of Values

Some professionals want to work in a field that matches their personal values. NPOs often emphasize values such as equity, social justice, sustainability and empowerment, attracting individuals who share similar beliefs.

Personal Fulfillment

For some, job satisfaction is measured not just in salary or status, but in doing meaningful work that fuels their passion and personal growth. Working in the NPO sector can offer such gratification, enabling individuals to give deeper meaning to their careers.

New Challenges and Growth Opportunities

The transition to the NPO sector can represent a stimulating challenge for professionals wishing to develop new skills and acquire sector-specific knowledge.

UNDERSTANDING THE CHARITABLE SECTOR

What is an NPO?

A not-for-profit organization (NPO) is an organization that pursues a social, educational, cultural or philanthropic mission without seeking to make financial profit for its members or shareholders. NPOs are also known as "non-profit organizations".

NPOs differ from private-sector companies in that their purpose is to serve the public interest rather than to generate profits for shareholders. They are often financed by donations, government grants, membership fees, foundations and other non-profit funding sources.

NPO, Charity or Foundation?

The term NPO is definitely the broadest, encompassing the entire sector. NPOs include community organizations, associations and professional bodies.

However, one category of NPO is called a registered charity. This latter status, granted at the federal level, enables organizations to issue an official donation receipt. This enables them to obtain additional funding from a variety of sources, including private foundations, companies and/or individuals. Registered charities must focus on one or more areas identified by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA): the fight against poverty, the advancement of education, the advancement of religion or other purposes that benefit the community.



	Non-Profit Organization (NPO)	Registered Charitable Organization
CRA registration required		✓
Can issue tax receipts		✓
Requirement to use funds (charitable/donor)		✓
Annual declaration	✓	✓
Setting up a board of directors	✓	✓
Tax exemption	✓	✓

Registered charities are sometimes referred to as Charitable Organizations, a term that is tending to disappear. The latter is generally associated with the concept of "Christian charity".

The term foundation, on the other hand, can lead to a little more confusion, as it is used for different types of organization. These include:



Private Foundation



Public Foundation



Community Foundation

Private Foundation: A private foundation is generally established with significant assets to support charitable organizations in the development of their services. As such, it does not directly address a community, but rather the organizations it supports. Examples include private family foundations.

Public Foundation: A public foundation is created to raise funds for a specific cause. Hospital foundations, for example, raise money for hospital projects.

Community Foundation: Community foundations are public foundations that manage endowment funds² to support charitable organizations. For example, a wealthy donor, rather than setting up a foundation, could deposit his or her assets with a community foundation, which will manage the funds and ensure that the donor's philanthropic aspirations are realized.

² Endowment funds are substantial investments of which a predetermined percentage is paid annually to organizations.

VISUALIZE YOUR IDEAL PHILANTHROPIC JOB

Working for an NPO offers a variety of opportunities to contribute. Here are some key roles and responsibilities that can be found within these organizations:

Philanthropic Development Manager

This role involves developing and managing relationships with donors and philanthropic partners. It includes sourcing funding, writing funding proposals, managing fundraising campaigns, donor recognition and donor loyalty.

Events Manager

This role involves organizing fundraising events, charity galas, awareness campaigns and other activities to engage donors and increase commitment to the organization.

Program and Grants Manager

This role involves managing the organization's programs and seeking grants from governments, foundations and other funding bodies. It requires experience in strategic planning, budget management and program impact reporting.

Communications and Marketing Manager

This role focuses on communicating the organization's mission, raising public awareness, managing social media, writing content, creating marketing campaigns and promoting fundraising activities.

Volunteer Relations Manager

This role involves coordinating and training volunteers and volunteer programs, and creating a rewarding experience for those who wish to contribute their time and skills.

Data and Impact Manager

This role focuses on the collection, analysis and presentation of data to evaluate program effectiveness, measure the impact of philanthropic initiatives and provide strategic information for the organization.

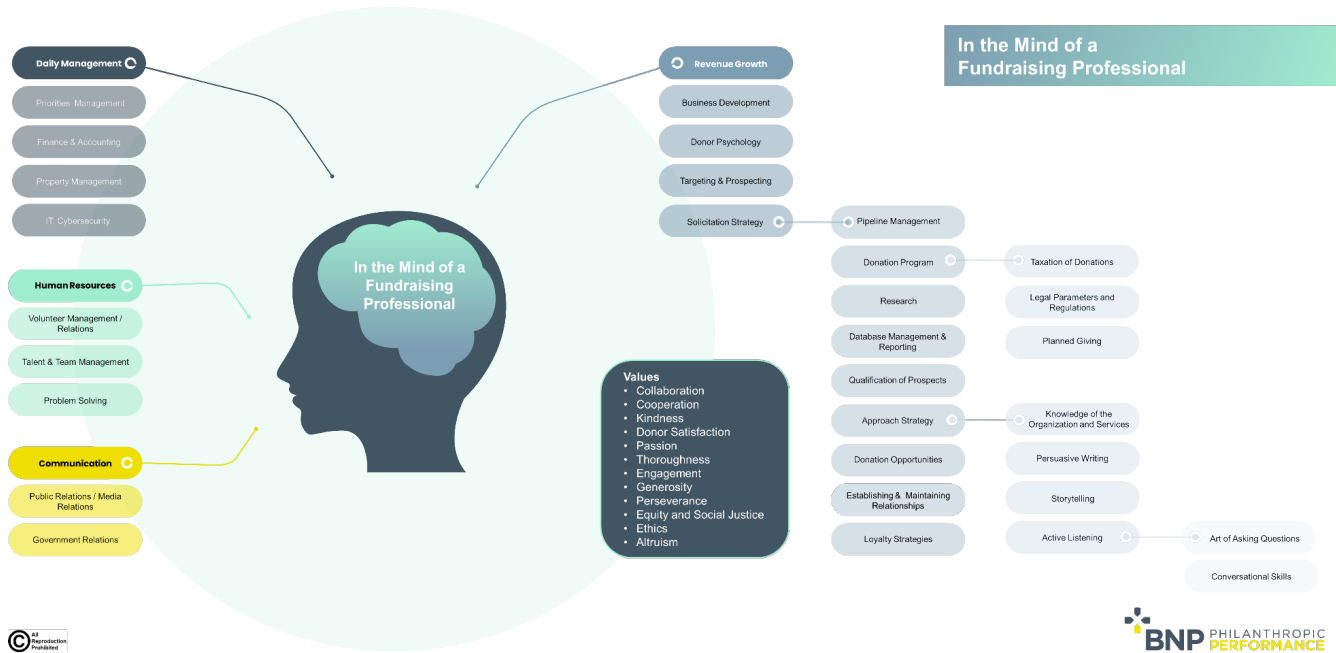
Executive Director or General Manager

This management position is responsible for the overall management of the organization, supervising teams, developing strategies, representing the organization to partners and stakeholders, and ensuring that the NPO's objectives and values are respected. It is the link between governance (Board of Directors) and permanence (employees).

It should be noted that roles and responsibilities may vary depending on the size of the organization, its specific mission and internal structure. NPOs offer a diverse range of professional opportunities for those wishing to make a difference in society and work towards a positive social impact.

Inside the Head of a Fundraising Professional

The few roles mentioned above are just a sample of what fundraising professionals can do. We've mapped out a series of tasks that you might be called upon to perform in what amounts to "In the Mind of a Fundraising Professional". You'll also find a version in the appendix.



ASSESS YOUR SKILLS AND MOTIVATIONS

To make a successful career transition to the philanthropic sector, it's essential to assess your skills and motivations. Here are some key aspects to consider.



Analyze Your Strengths and Transferable Skills

Start by analyzing your strengths and skills acquired throughout your career. Identify transferable skills that can be useful in the NPO sector. For example, project management, communication, fundraising, strategic planning, problem-solving, leadership and interpersonal skills can be valuable in this field.

Think about relevant work experience, achievements and projects that you can highlight to demonstrate your added value to potential employers in the philanthropic sector. Also identify areas where you may need to develop new skills related to the sector.

Strengths and Skills in Philanthropy	Your Strengths and Transferable Skills
Philanthropic development (solicitation) with individuals, companies and foundations	
Financial resources management	
Talent management (employees and volunteers)	
Ability to build relationships quickly	
Accountability to donors and funders	
Database management	
Ability to evolve in a changing environment, under financial pressure	

Identifying Your Passion for Philanthropy

Passion for philanthropy is an essential driving force in this sector. Think about what attracts you to philanthropy and the causes that are close to your heart. Identify the personal experiences or events that have sparked your interest through social impact, as well as the elements that define your willingness to make a meaningful contribution.

Questions	Answers
Why do you want to work in the philanthropic sector?	
What aspects of philanthropy inspire you most?	
What social issues motivate you to take action?	
Do you have any "favorite" organizations?	

Define Your Values to Choose the Right Organization for You

The alignment of values between yourself and the organization you choose is crucial to a successful career transition. Find out about the missions, values and objectives of the different NPOs that interest you. Carefully consider whether your own personal values are in harmony with those of the organization.

Think about how the organization addresses ethical issues, social justice, sustainability and positive impact. Make sure the organization shares your beliefs and that you feel comfortable working in line with these values.

Thoroughly researching your chosen organization will help you assess whether it's the right environment for your career transition, and whether you can thrive by contributing to its mission.

By assessing your skills, identifying your passion for philanthropy and seeking an alignment of values, you can better target your career goals and find opportunities that allow you to make a real difference in the philanthropic sector.

Philanthropic Values and Principles	Matching Your Personal Values
Social justice / equal opportunities	
Integrity and ethics	
Community involvement / social responsibility	
Accountability and responsibility	
Collaboration / mutual aid	
Empathy / benevolence	
Adaptability	
Transparency	
Passion	
Rigor / perseverance	
Generosity	
Humanitarianism	

PREPARING FOR THE TRANSITION

Before embarking on a career transition to the philanthropic sector, it's important to prepare yourself properly and explore the opportunities.

Acquire Specific Knowledge of Philanthropy

To stand out in the philanthropic sector, it's important to acquire specific knowledge. Explore available resources such as books, articles, research reports and online courses that deal with philanthropy, fundraising, NPO management and best practices in the sector.

Some degree programs also offer diplomas or certificates in philanthropy management or NPO administration. These programs can help you deepen your knowledge and develop additional skills. For example, you could train at university in one of the following programs:

- [Master of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership](#) (Carleton University)
- [Fundraising Management Certificate](#) (Toronto Metropolitan University)
- [Fundraising Management associate certificate](#) (British Columbia Institute of Technology)
- [Non-Profit Management Certificate](#) (Simon Fraser University)
- [Microprogramme de 1er cycle en financement des organismes à but non lucratif](#) (Université de Montréal) – *Offered in French*

In addition, consider participating in trainings, workshops or webinars organized by philanthropy professionals to enhance your understanding of best practices in fundraising, donor management, strategic planning and impact evaluation. You can find many interesting resources on [BNP Philanthropic Performance's Institute for Philanthropy](#), or take part in the Fundamentals of Fundraising course given by your [local AFP Chapter](#).

Pre-transition preparation will enable you to enter the philanthropic sector with confidence and peace of mind.

Getting Involved in Volunteer Work

Volunteering can also be a great way to learn about the philanthropic sector. Look for volunteer opportunities with organizations that interest you. This will enable you to develop specific skills, expand your professional network and gain a better understanding of how NPOs work. What's more, volunteering demonstrates your commitment to philanthropy and can be a real asset on your résumé.

Volunteering can take many forms: in the field, through skills or on a board of directors. [The Directors College](#) regularly publishes calls for candidates for various boards of directors.

By preparing thoroughly before your transition, you'll be able to show potential employers your commitment to philanthropy, your transferable skills and your knowledge of the sector. This will increase your chances of a successful career transition and integration into the philanthropic sector.

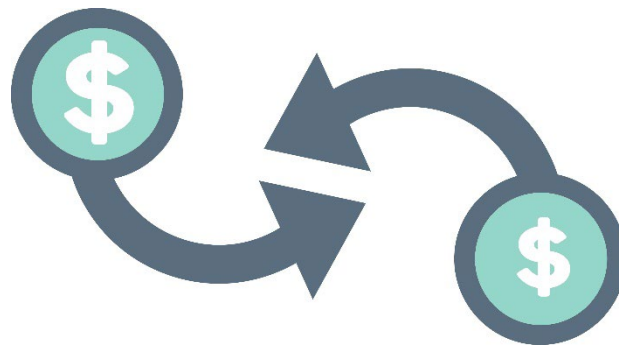
PLAN YOUR FINANCIAL NEEDS

When considering a career transition to the philanthropic sector, it's important to consider the financial implications of this decision. Here are some key points to consider in your financial planning:

Consider the Financial Implications of the Transition

A career transition can have an impact on your income and expenses. Before making the leap to the NPO sector, assess your current financial situation and consider how this transition could affect your finances in the short and long term.

Take into account factors such as average compensation in the NPO sector, benefits offered, career development opportunities and any salary differences from your current or previous career in the private sector. Be realistic about your financial expectations, and be prepared for possible reductions in income.



To get a clear picture of the situation, we suggest you consult your [local AFP Chapter](#) job postings, which all include a salary scale. It's also possible to see the salary brackets for the highest-paid positions on the [Canada Revenue Agency website](#).

You should also be aware that bonuses directly related to fund-raising are prohibited in the sector by numerous codes of ethics. Some organizations offer performance bonuses, but these are few and far between.

[Download the *Remuneration in the philanthropic sector: guide and checklists*](#)

Establish a Transition Budget

A solid budget is essential to effectively managing your finances during career transition. Review your income, current expenses, debts and financial obligations to establish a realistic budget. Identify categories where you could reduce expenses to prepare for potential financial adjustments.

Take into account additional expenses related to your transition, such as training costs, travel to job interviews, professional association memberships and job search fees. Include these expenses in your transition budget, so that you have a clear picture of your financial needs throughout this period.

Search for Funding and Grant Opportunities

There are funding and scholarship opportunities specific to the NPO sector of philanthropy. Find out about scholarship programs, training grants and mentoring programs. These opportunities can help you finance your career transition and acquire the skills you need to succeed in the NPO sector. For example, you may qualify for one of the following scholarship programs:

- [Jean Robert Nolet Scholarship - BNP Philanthropic Performance](#)
- Your [local AFP Chapter](#) Scholarship Program

Thorough financial planning will help you prepare for the financial implications of transitioning to the philanthropic sector. By establishing a realistic transition budget and researching funding or grant opportunities, you'll be better equipped to manage your finances during this period of professional change.

REORIENTING YOUR RESUME AND COVER LETTER

When making a career transition to the philanthropic sector, it's essential to update your CV and cover letter to highlight your transferable skills, tailor your experience to the NPO sector and emphasize your motivation and commitment to philanthropy. Here's how:

Highlight Your Transferable Skills

Identify the skills you've acquired throughout your career that are transferable to the NPO sector.



In your CV, create a skills section where you can highlight these transferable skills. Use concrete examples to demonstrate how you've used them in your previous experience and how they can be applied in the philanthropic sector. Use industry-specific terms to describe your achievements.

Adapt Your Experience to the NPO Sector

Rewrite your professional experience, focusing on aspects relevant to the philanthropic sector. Identify projects, responsibilities or achievements that demonstrate your ability to work in a mission-driven environment, collaborate with diverse stakeholders and achieve financial/philanthropic goals.

Emphasize Your Motivation and Commitment to Philanthropy

In your cover letter, clearly explain your motivation for entering the philanthropic sector. Talk about your passion for the cause, your desire to make a positive difference in society and your commitment to the values of philanthropy.

Link your current or previous work experience to your motivation, highlighting how your skills and experience have prepared you to work in the philanthropic sector. Highlight the projects or initiatives you have led that demonstrate your commitment to the common good and your ability to generate social impact.

Don't forget to personalize your cover letter for each position you apply for, highlighting the links between your experience, skills and the specific needs of the non-profit organization.

By reorienting your CV and cover letter, you'll be able to present your experience, skills and motivation in a way that's tailored to the NPO sector. This will increase your chances of convincing employers of your added value and your suitability for the position and the organization. Here are a few additional tips for reorienting your CV and cover letter.

Add relevant projects

If you've carried out volunteer or philanthropic projects outside your professional career, include them in your CV to highlight your commitment to philanthropy. Describe these projects concisely, highlighting your responsibilities, the results achieved and the skills you developed.

Personalize your cover letter

Conduct in-depth research on your target organization to understand its mission, values and projects. Use this information to demonstrate your major interest in the organization and to explain how your skills and motivation will translate into a significant contribution.

Link your current or previous experience to philanthropy

Highlight aspects of your current or previous professional experience that demonstrate your suitability to work in the philanthropic sector. For example, if you have managed projects focused on sustainable development, education or corporate social responsibility, highlight these achievements and explain how they are transferable to your new area of interest.

The philanthropic sector is also facing a labor shortage.

The pool of candidates in the private sector is becoming attractive, but it's not "automatic". NPOs often have fewer resources and need a qualified workforce that will need to be up and running as soon as it arrives. Emphasize your adaptability and ability to hit the ground running.

Example of an adapted résumé

Jane Doe

An expert in business development, interpersonal relations and social justice.

An expert with over 10 years' experience in business development and customer relationship management, I currently manage a portfolio of 100 customers, totaling \$45 million in contracts. Director since 2017 for the Children's Foundation and member of the fundraising committee for the Foundation for the Planet (growing revenues of \$3 million).

Professional experience

2013 - Present

Director, Business Development Entreprise Planète et enfants Inc.

- Portfolio of 100 customers and management of \$45 million in contracts with 20% annual growth.
- Responsible for canvassing new customers, solicitation, recognition and retention.
- Performance award obtained in 2021 for sustained and growing results despite the pandemic.

Volunteer experience

2017 - Present

Administrator

Children's Foundation

- Organization contributing to the health, education and development of children created in 2017.
- Member of the Governance and Development Committee.
- Responsible for organizing our annual signature event that has generated net profits of \$400,000 since its inception.

2020 - Today

Director

Foundation for the Planet

- Organization contributing to the planet and climate change
- Chair of the Fundraising Committee since 2020
- Responsible for identifying and qualifying major donors (individuals, corporations and foundations)
- Annual solicitations in the order of \$1 million

Education and continuing education

2023

Fundamentals of Fundraising, Association of Fundraising Professionals

2002

Bachelor of Marketing, University of Marketing

A few tips

1. Put forward figures and business benefits.
2. Include the organization's values in your CV and tie it in with the organization's reality (e.g. signature event).
3. Highlight relevant volunteer or continuing education experience.

Sample cover letter

Jane Doe

An expert in business development, interpersonal relations and social justice

Montreal, August 1, 2023

John Dan, Executive Director
Justice for All Foundation
533 Ontario Street East, Suite 204
Montreal, Quebec H2L 1N8

Mr. Dan,

Social justice has been at the heart of my values and my volunteer work for many years, and I'm keen to contribute to the mission of your organization, which directly helps the most vulnerable members of our society. It is for this reason that I am enthusiastically applying for the position of Philanthropic Development Director.

As you will see from my curriculum vitae, my professional and volunteer experience are a perfect match for the skills required for this position. Combining business development (which can easily be transposed to philanthropic development) with my ability to establish contacts and human relations, my career in the private sector will undoubtedly benefit the Justice for All Foundation.

Having served on two charity boards, I'm well placed to understand the distinctions between my background and your expectations. However, it's precisely through my volunteer work that I've been able to grasp the nuances and develop my approach to solicitation, which has brought us significant financial spin-offs.

I would be happy to discuss this further with you and your recruitment committee, to answer any questions you may have, to demonstrate my ability to hit the ground running, and to outline my philanthropic vision for the future of the Justice for All Foundation.

Yours sincerely

Jane Doe

A few tips

1. Make life easier for the recruiter by emphasizing the transferability of your skills.
2. Demonstrate that you've done your homework and that you're familiar with the organization's mission.
3. Use keywords related to philanthropic development.
4. Personalize each cover letter.

NETWORKING TO IDENTIFY PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

When considering a career transition into the philanthropic sector, networking plays a crucial role in connecting you with professionals in the field and finding professional opportunities. Here are some tips for leveraging networking and online platforms to find opportunities in the NPO sector:



Participate in Networking Events

Networking events are ideal opportunities to meet professionals in the philanthropic sector and make valuable contacts. Look for events such as philanthropy-focused conferences, symposiums, seminars or webinars. Be sure to attend and engage in meaningful conversations with other participants.

Prepare in advance by identifying the people you'd like to meet and finding out more about their organizations, profiles or projects. Be open and ready to share your motivations, skills and career goals. Don't forget to exchange contact details and follow up with thank-you e-mails after your meetings.

For example, your local AFP Chapter might regularly organizes educational sessions and networking cocktails. What's more, AFP members can occasionally invite a non-member to networking events free of charge.

Get Involved in Professional Philanthropy Associations

Professional philanthropy associations are valuable resources for expanding your network and accessing professional opportunities. Look for local, regional or national associations dedicated to philanthropy and consider becoming a member if you qualify (some associations may require you to already be in the field). Attend their events, participate in working groups and get involved in the association's activities.

Using Online Platforms to Find Job Opportunities

Online platforms such as specialized NPO job boards are powerful tools for finding job opportunities in the sector.

Actively search for positions with NPOs and regularly consult the job offers posted. For example, you can regularly visit [local AFP Chapter](#) Job Offers section, or the [BNP Philanthropic Performance Career section](#), which accepts your CV for its bank of applications. Don't hesitate to apply for positions that match your skills and interests.

At the same time, be active and engage authentically to strengthen your online presence and increase your networking opportunities and visibility.

Using these online platforms, you can also follow the pages and profiles of philanthropic organizations that interest you. Stay on the lookout for recruitment announcements and updates on these organizations' initiatives and events. Interact with their content by leaving relevant comments and sharing useful information, which can attract the attention of recruiters and industry professionals.

Making Yourself Known to Recruiters

An essential aspect of your transition to the philanthropic sector is to make yourself known to recruiters and professionals in the field. This can greatly increase your chances of being spotted for job opportunities and of benefiting from recommendations or referrals. Here's why it's important to make yourself known to recruiters in the sector:

Privileged access to opportunities

By making yourself known to recruiters, you can be informed of job opportunities before they are made public. Recruiters often have an extensive network and are in direct contact with philanthropic organizations looking for talent. By forging links with these professionals, you increase your chances of being considered for interesting positions.

Recommendations and referrals

Once you are known to recruiters, they may recommend or refer you to philanthropic organizations. Internal recommendations often play a crucial role in the recruitment process. Recruiters can attest to your skills, motivation and commitment, which can strengthen your candidacy and set you apart from other candidates.

Advice and guidance

Recruiters are industry experts and can offer valuable advice and guidance for your career transition. They can guide you on in-demand skills, job market trends and the best strategies for a successful application process. By building relationships with recruiters, you can benefit from their knowledge and expertise to better position yourself in the job market.

To make yourself known to recruiters in the industry, use the networking opportunities we discussed earlier. Actively participate in networking events, get involved in professional associations and use online platforms to interact with recruiters and industry professionals. Create a strong professional profile and engage in relevant conversations to get their attention.

PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS

When you're invited to interview for a position in the philanthropic sector, careful preparation is essential to stand out and convince recruiters of your added value. Here are a few tips to help you prepare:

Familiarize Yourself with Common Interview Questions

Learn about common interview questions in the philanthropic sector. These questions may relate to your experience, skills, motivation and commitment to the philanthropic cause. Prepare clear, concise answers to these questions so that you can express yourself convincingly during the interview.

Examples of Common Interview Questions

Questions	Answers
Tell me about your previous professional experience and how it translates into the philanthropic sector.	
Why do you want to work in the NPO sector and philanthropy in particular??	
How do you intend to use your transferable skills in the philanthropic context?	
How do you make sure you stay abreast of current trends and challenges in philanthropy?	
Can you describe a past situation that might lead us to believe that you could succeed in mobilizing donors or achieving fundraising goals?	
Our organization is constantly on the lookout for funding to make ends meet. How can you help us reach our funding goals quickly?	

Being Informed

Organizations in the philanthropic sector are generally transparent in many respects. You should be able to quickly find information about the organization's mission, programs, leadership, board of directors, budget and funding sources online. Don't forget to consult annual reports, if available online. Good preparation will demonstrate the seriousness of your application.

In addition, you should always consult the T3010³ declaration available at <https://apps.cra-arc.gc.ca/ebci/hacc/srch/pub/dsplyBscSrch?>, which will give you an overall picture of the company's financial situation in recent years.

You can also find out who the members of the Board of Directors are, depending on the position. These are usually posted on the organization's website. If not, consult the Enterprise Register or Business Registry of your province or territory.

Preparing Convincing Answers About Your Career Transition

It's important to be able to explain your career transition from the private to the philanthropic sector clearly and convincingly. Highlight your passion for the philanthropic cause, your commitment to the common good and the personal satisfaction you feel in contributing to a positive impact within society.

Explain how your skills, experience and motivation have prepared you for this career change. Focus on the transferable skills you have developed and how they can be applied within the organization. Use concrete examples from previous projects or experiences to illustrate your ability to generate results in the philanthropic context.

Showing Passion and Commitment at Interviews

During interviews, it's essential to show your passion and commitment to philanthropy. Express your interest in the organization's mission and your desire to actively contribute to its social impact. Highlight your intrinsic motivation for working in the NPO sector, emphasizing the importance of philanthropy and the satisfaction you derive from creating positive change.

Be positive, open-minded and genuinely enthusiastic during the interview. Be ready to share personal stories or experiences that illustrate your passion for philanthropy. Make connections between your previous career and the values of the organization you are applying to. Demonstrate your willingness to invest yourself fully in philanthropic work and your determination to make a significant contribution to the organization's mission.

In addition, be prepared to ask relevant questions about the organization, its impact, projects and philanthropic strategies. This will demonstrate your genuine interest and willingness to learn more about the organization and its environment.

By preparing thoroughly for interviews, developing convincing answers about your career transition and demonstrating passion and commitment, you'll increase your chances of success at interviews in the philanthropic sector. Be authentic, express your motivation clearly and demonstrate your fit with the organization's mission and values.

³ The T3010 is the *Registered Charity Information Return*. It must be filed annually by registered charities, and the data is then made public.

MANAGING CHANGE AND ADAPTING

When you make a career transition to the philanthropic sector, it's essential to be able to adapt to the culture and structure of the organizations that make it up. Here are a few tips to help you manage change and adapt successfully:

Adapting to the Culture and Structure of NPOs

Not-for-profit organizations often have a different culture and structure to the private sector. They are focused on the realization of a social mission, have participative decision-making processes, and may place great emphasis on values and social impact. To adapt to this culture:

Familiarize yourself with the organization's mission and values

Understand why the organization exists and what it stands for. Identify the aspects of the mission that motivate you, and make sure you share these values. This will make it easier for you to align yourself with the organization's culture.

Observe and learn

Pay attention to how employees interact, communicate and collaborate. Try to understand the norms and expectations of professional behavior. Don't hesitate to ask questions and seek clarification where necessary.

Be flexible and open-minded

Be prepared to question your working methods and adapt to the organization's specific practices and processes. Be open to new ideas and perspectives, and be prepared to collaborate with different stakeholders.

Remember that NPOs often have limited resources and focus their efforts on community service rather than internal administrative processes. So, for example, the performance cycle may not be the same as in the private sector.

Establishing New Professional Contacts

As you make the transition to the NPO sector, it's important to build your professional network. Here are a few tips to help you do just that:

Get involved in the community

Participate in philanthropy-related events, conferences and activities. This will enable you to meet other professionals in the sector, establish contacts and familiarize yourself with key players.

Be proactive in internal networking

Get involved in the organization's internal initiatives. Join working groups, committees or cross-functional projects. This will enable you to connect with other employees and build relationships.

Seek out mentors

Identify experienced professionals in the philanthropic sector who can serve as mentors. They can guide you, advise you and help you adapt to the sector.

Managing Potential Challenges and Obstacles

The transition to the philanthropic sector can present challenges and obstacles. Here's how to manage them effectively:

Be Ready to Learn

It's normal to face a learning curve when entering a new sector. Be open to ongoing training and be prepared to acquire new skills and knowledge specific to philanthropy.

Be Resilient

The philanthropic sector can be complex and present unique challenges. Be resilient in the face of obstacles and potential setbacks. Be prepared to adapt, find creative solutions and persevere on your career path.

Develop Your Support Network

Surround yourself with people who support and understand your career transition. Collaborate with colleagues, mentors or other industry professionals to share experiences, get advice and find mutual support. For example, BNP Philanthropic Performance has set up [The Leaders Circle](#) to provide a safe space for exchange and learning for people in the role of Executive Director.

Stay Committed and Motivated

Constantly remind yourself of your passion for philanthropy and your desire to make a positive difference in society. Keep your motivation high by remembering your initial goal and your potential impact.

By effectively managing change, building new professional relationships and overcoming potential challenges, you'll be able to make a successful transition to the philanthropic sector. Remain open, flexible and committed throughout this process, and use these challenges as opportunities to grow and develop professionally.

CONTINUOUS CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Once you've made a successful transition to the philanthropic sector, it's essential to continue your ongoing development and professional growth. Here are a few tips to help you advance your career:

Participate in Philanthropy Training Courses

Philanthropy is a constantly evolving field, and it's important to keep up to date with best practices, effective strategies and new trends. Participating in philanthropy training courses will help you deepen your knowledge and develop your professional skills. Look for training programs, workshops or conferences offered by specialized organizations, universities or professional philanthropy associations. These can cover topics such as fundraising, donor management, developing philanthropic campaigns and NPO governance. By continuing your education, you'll be better equipped to meet the challenges and opportunities on your career path.

Join Committees and Working Groups

An excellent way to deepen your involvement in the philanthropic sector is to join committees or working groups. These structures offer you the opportunity to collaborate with other professionals in the sector, exchange ideas, share knowledge and contribute to collective initiatives. Look for opportunities within your organization, professional associations or philanthropic bodies to get involved in relevant committees or working groups. This will enable you to develop leadership skills, strengthen your professional network and make a wider impact in the sector.

Keeping Abreast of Industry Trends and Developments

To stay at the forefront of the NPO philanthropy sector, it's important to keep abreast of trends and developments in the field. Stay abreast of recent developments, new strategies and innovative initiatives in philanthropy. Read specialized publications, sector reports and case studies to keep abreast of best practices. Follow the news, participate in webinars and virtual conferences, and engage in online discussions on professional platforms. By keeping abreast of industry trends and developments, you'll be able to anticipate change, adapt your skills and approach, and position yourself as an expert in your field.

In short, ongoing professional development is essential to success in the philanthropic sector. Participating in philanthropy training, joining committees and working groups, and keeping up with industry trends will allow you to enhance your skills, deepen your knowledge and stay current in a constantly evolving field. Invest in your professional development to advance your career and make a significant impact in the philanthropic sector. By engaging in ongoing development, you'll be able to meet emerging challenges, innovate your practices and respond to society's changing needs.

Remember that professional development isn't just about the technical aspects of your job. It also includes strengthening your leadership, communication, time management and problem-solving skills. Look for training and mentoring opportunities that can help you develop these transferable skills, as they are invaluable in the philanthropic sector.

CONCLUSION

In this guide, we've explored the key steps to a successful transition from the private to the philanthropic sector. We hope it will contribute to a deeper reflection on your career change and give you some keys to ease your transition.

Making the transition to the philanthropic sector can be a rewarding decision for people who wish to put their expertise in the service of a social cause. By following the key steps we've explored in this guide, you'll be better prepared to make a successful transition and pursue your passion for philanthropy.

Remember to understand the NPO sector, assess your skills and motivations, prepare adequately, plan financially, refocus your CV and cover letter, seize networking opportunities, prepare for interviews, manage change and adaptation, and continue to develop your professional skills.

Stay committed, persevere and maintain your passion for philanthropy. Your contribution in the NPO sector can have a significant impact on the communities and causes you will serve. May your career transition bring you satisfaction, fulfillment and the opportunity to make a positive difference in the world of philanthropy.

CONTINUE YOUR REFLECTION

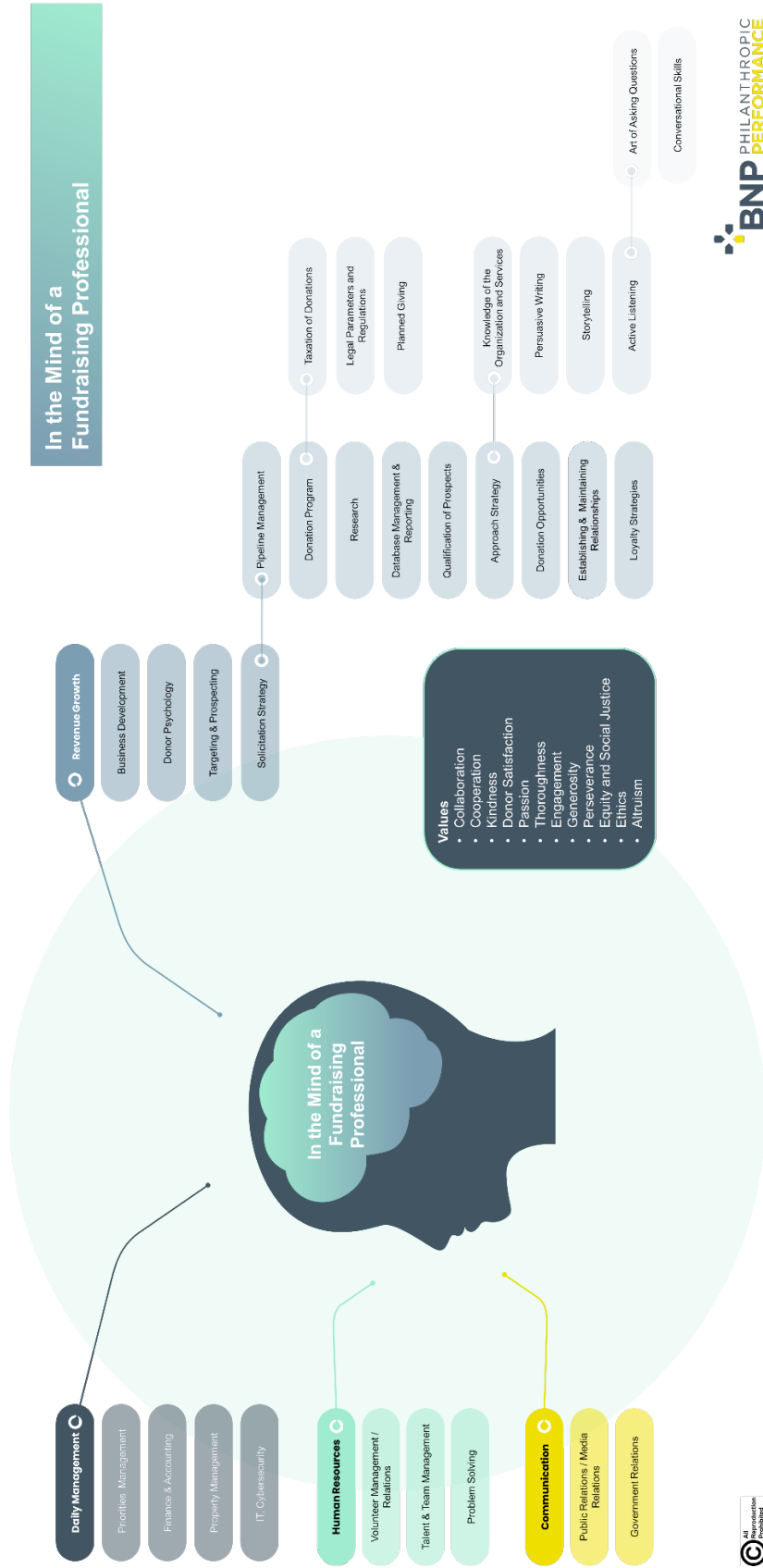
Are you interested in a career in the philanthropic sector and would like to think about it further? BNP Philanthropic Performance provides you with the following talent and governance tools, free of charge.



Philanthropic Index is the podcast dedicated to the management of charities. Too often devalued, these organizations are the pillars of what we call philanthropy. Whether it's delivering food baskets, supporting our elders and children, promoting education or helping minorities, every mission is important in giving every person the chance to achieve in life. So, Philanthropic Index wants to do its part by giving to these organizations. How do we do this? By bringing together experts on subjects that will help them in their day-to-day management to do even more for the community!

[Access to episodes](#)

APPENDIX - INSIDE THE MIND OF A FUNDRAISING PROFESSIONAL



BNP PHILANTHROPIC PERFORMANCE: MORE THAN 20 YEARS SUPPORTING PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATIONS!

What sets us apart:

- A rigorous methodology tailored to each project
- Proven results based on effective philanthropic and organizational strategies
- Active listening for a human-centered collaboration
- Developing the skills of the clients we counsel, to enhance their autonomy and strategic vision
- Canada-wide expertise to professionalize philanthropy on a national scale



Vision

Being the partner of choice for philanthropy and CSR in Canada



Mission

BNP Philanthropic Performance helps organizations that dream of making a positive impact on society.



Values

Ethics - Innovation - Performance - Audacity - Commitment - Proximity



Objectives

BNP aims to help organizations bring their missions for social impact to life, while meeting their challenges and realizing their projects through high-performance philanthropic and CSR strategies that generate real results.



BNP Performance philanthropique is the first Canada-wide philanthropic consulting firm to hold B Corp certification!



850+ ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTED
Together, we can boost community wellbeing!