

Leveraging Transparency and Engagement to Achieve Organizational Success: A Profile of Philabundance's Glenn Bergman

Bernadette Stanko 23 March 2017

Glenn Bergman has been the executive director of Philabundance since June 1, 2015. Before he was at Philabundance, he spent 11 years as the general manager of Weavers Way Co-Operative Market. Glenn oversees a number of Philabundance programs, which serve nine counties throughout the Delaware Valley. He also works directly with the 16 board members and the organization's 150 staff.

The best word to describe Glenn as an executive director and as an organization's leader is active. On the way to and from the conference room, for instance, Glenn stopped to talk to multiple people about various upcoming Philabundance events and current issues the organization was facing. All the conversations were quick but it shows how engaged Glenn is with everything that happens at Philabundance. The holidays are Philabundance's busy season with the office buzzing with activity, and Glenn is very much a part of it.

Glenn is not only an active leader because he is busy, but also because of the detailed information he knows about Philabundance. Glenn is able to give in-depth answers to questions about individual programs, the organization's financial data, and certain hunger statistics. Also, he could easily recall individual success stories from the Philabundance community. This specific knowledge about the organization shows that he is very much a part of the "day-to-day" running of Philabundance. However, it is important to point out that Glenn is not a micro-manager and does not know or manage every little detail. He was not able to answer certain questions about hiring practices and needed to be corrected by his PR Associate on certain staff numbers. Glenn allows his staff to step up to handle issues that they are better equipped to fix while he oversees the running of the organization.

The second-best word to describe Glenn as a leader is aware. Obviously Glenn is aware of the organization's operations but he is also aware of Philabundance's perception in the community. Glenn talked about making the organization as transparent as possible, about keeping financial information on the website, and about turning away certain donations that would be wasteful. This transparency and cognizance of waste and financial accountability helps keep the organization honest. An honest organization is easier to trust and when an organization is trusted it can help more people.

Philabundance is definitely a trusted organization within

the community and sponsors and donors are aware of this fact. It is beneficial to both Philabundance and corporate sponsors when they team up together. Corporate sponsors get great PR from working with the nonprofit organization and Philabundance can help feed more people with sponsors' generous donations. One of the best examples of this is 93.3 WMMR's Preston & Steve Camp Out for Hunger. This is the largest single location food drive in the country. The PR for both Philabundance and WMMR is enormous and together they are able to help feed the people of Philadelphia and the surrounding area. Glenn is aware that the best thing he can do to get more donors and more sponsors is stay honest and transparent; if he does, Philabundance will continue to work with companies and the great PR will continue to bring in donations.

When asked to define what success is for himself and for Philabundance, Glenn responded with the word efficiency. The mission and absolute goal is to eliminate hunger, but the everyday goal is to be as efficient as possible. A lack of resources is the biggest struggle for Philabundance so getting the most from a dollar and avoiding waste is what defines the day-to-day success.

For Philabundance to achieve the bigger success of eliminating hunger and the smaller success of being efficient and eliminating waste, the organization needs to work with its many different parts. Glenn needs to balance the staff abilities, with the board's vision, with the

community's needs. By being an active leader who is aware of perception and the organization's operations, Glenn can help Philabundance achieve its goals.