

Compiled Reflection Blogs, 2017 - 2019

Reflection on Community and Its Future (9/1/2017)

Ambassadors,

I'm asking for your help. We need your insights on our collective work with the Leap Ambassadors Community. Fully respecting how busy your lives are, the challenges you face, and the great demands on your time, I ask you read this long letter (2 ½ pages) and set aside some time (30-45 minutes) to reflect on and respond to the 14 points in the Community Reflection Questionnaire (link provided below).

This past July marked the fourth anniversary of the founding of the Leap Ambassadors Community. I'm delighted by the community's formation and what we're doing together—and grateful to the many who contribute their time, intellect, and spirit in big and small ways. It's been a wonderful experience to help nurture and support the community through this formative phase.

In July I turned a young (!) 74, and I'm enthusiastic about continuing to support and participate as a member of the community for at least a few more years. Just as you reflect and set a course for what lies ahead in your own life, I (and your fellow ambassadors) need your insights and constructive feedback about the community. Your input will help shed light on fundamental questions on the community's performance, your role as an ambassador, and strategic and future considerations. It will also help us assess where our efforts in the community are on track, where they warrant course correction, and where they need improvement to benefit you—the ambassadors—and the social sector we all deeply care about.

We're eager for your guidance on these key questions:

- Does the community have sufficient value to attract, engage, and benefit busy, talented ambassadors like you?
- Are the base expectations for ambassadors still valid, or are we expecting too much (real or perceived)?
- Does the rigor we've used to nominate and then invite people to become ambassadors work against achieving greater community engagement?
- How can we improve the processes for onboarding and engaging ambassadors?
- How can we most effectively collect “constituent feedback” to inform our understanding of how ambassadors are getting value from the community and that we are advancing our community's purpose?
- Are there enough ambassadors interested in focusing on the strategic and future considerations to help determine the community's long-term evolution?

A few important caveats: We recognize that a number of you are new ambassadors still getting acclimated to the community. We also recognize that we have a ways to go before we reach the “critical mass” an online community needs in “numbers” of members for the network effect of collective IQ to kick in.

A Brief History of the Community

In the summer of 2013, I began to work with 13 individuals who eventually became founding ambassadors for our community. Since the publication of *Leap of Reason* in May 2011, it was clear there was growing interest in the social sector in improving organizational performance and finding ways for leaders to learn and improve. While others took on this broad challenge via a range of models, nobody explicitly requested using an online community to advance this work. I stubbornly (right or wrong) moved forward because I believe in the power of collective IQ, which an online community can harness for collaborative development, problem solving, peer learning, creating a sense of community, and other forms of mutual benefit. More pragmatically, this approach was the only realistic path I could take given the available resources and the national and international dispersion of like-minded individuals.

Thanks to the founding ambassadors and another 39 ambassadors who joined by the end of 2013, the community morphed from experiment to reality. At the December 2013 “After the Leap: Building a Performance Management Culture” conference, we heard “I found my tribe” over and over from participants and witnessed the potential of like-minded people coming together. While the conference’s 400+ attendees confirmed a strong interest in performance, it also underscored how far the field would have to evolve to see our “performance matters” belief go mainstream. A highlight of the conference was a dinner we hosted for 36 ambassadors, which I can only describe as “magical” because of the connections among those who truly believed that “performance matters.” We knew then that the community was alive.

We went into 2014 with a vision, purpose, and core premises:

- Our **vision**: to trigger a vital core of the social sector to accept that mission and performance are inextricably linked.
- Our **purpose**: to inspire, motivate, and support nonprofit and public sector leaders (and their stakeholders) to build great organizations for greater societal impact and to increase the expectation and adoption of high performance as the path to this end.
- Our **core premises**:
 - Empower a group of ambassadors to advance and advocate for the message that “performance matters.”
 - Leverage (Morino Ventures’) limited resources via a virtual organization in support of an online community as the primary place and channel to engage and support ambassadors.
 - Demonstrate the potential of “online community” for shared learning, peer assistance, and “collective IQ.”

Even with this carefully crafted language vetted by the community, we still had many questions about whether this effort would gain traction.

We’ve Come a Long Way ... With a Longer Way To Go

Thanks to you and your fellow ambassadors, the community continues to grow. Together we’ve produced high-quality, relevant products; demonstrated that the collaborative-development process works; scaled our distribution capacity to more broadly share the community’s message

and works; carefully nurtured an online exchange to be a resource and safe harbor for ambassadors to share and learn; and created the foundation for a genuine sense of community. A quick review of the community timeline provides a snapshot of significant milestones we've achieved together. And while we are four years old, the majority of these achievements have taken place in the last 30 months, with our most important initiatives (e.g., Building the Case for Funders, Advancing Use of PI/PIOSA) just now really starting to get some steam. While we should all feel good about where we find ourselves, we know there's more to do before we can declare victory on our mission—that is, when together we can say that we have inspired many nonprofits to improve their performance for the people and causes they serve, helped funders embrace high performance as a pathway for greater social gain, and helped move the needle from loyalty-based giving to merit-based giving.

Where We Are Now

I'm gratified, pleasantly surprised, and hopeful with where we are with our community. And, while I've invested the lion's share of my time and provided support via the Leap Ambassadors support team, I realize and respect that our collective work goes far, far beyond my individual and our team's contributions. I've steadfastly maintained that the community's vibrancy must come from you, the ambassadors—for YOU are the community.

I feel an urgency to work with you to figure out how we might sustain the work we are doing into the future. I've funded the community to date and, as I shared earlier, I'm fine with doing so for the foreseeable future. But at some point, my support will have to end. As you know only too well, another meaningful funder is unlikely to want to be a primary funder of something they didn't create, no matter how interesting or worthwhile. And, I certainly don't want to raise capital out of the scarce funding available and risk going after a piece of the funding pie so many of you need and may already be chasing. Coming from the school "there's always a way," I need your innovative thoughts and ideas about how to move forward. I'm hoping your response to the questionnaire will confirm if there are enough of you really interested in continuing this work to advance the community. Then I'd like to work with a subset of the community to determine how to best evaluate and act on those ideas, especially with regard to strategic value and sustainability.

Community Reflection Questionnaire

I hope you'll join with me and others to grapple with these questions. After all, we must hold ourselves accountable to the community's definition of high performance—that is, that we (the community) deliver—over a prolonged period of time—meaningful, measurable and financially sustainable results for the cause (encouraging higher performance in the social sector) that we're in existence to serve.

We look forward to your responses and suggest you allow 30-45 minutes to complete the "Community Reflection Questionnaire." There are six core questions with a total of 14 points requiring your response. For each of the questions, you'll see background material that will require some reading and reflection. Four of the explanations are relatively brief, but these two questions require more in-depth explanations:

- Are the base expectations for ambassadors still valid, or are we expecting too much (real or perceived)?

- Are there enough ambassadors interested in focusing on the strategic and future considerations to help determine the community's long-term evolution?

You can click **here** to begin (or review); a short reminder email with the questionnaire link will follow within the next few days. We are asking you and your fellow ambassadors to please respond by September 29, 2017, to allow us to digest your feedback and share what we learn in late October.

Thanks for all you to do, for being an ambassador, and for responding to my request.

As always, my very best wishes,
Mario

From Panic to Smiles (10/11/2017)

Two weeks after sending out the Community Reflection letter and questionnaire, we were anxious—only 27 responses logged. As of today, 118 of you have weighed in for a whopping 74.2%, one of the highest response rates yet.

THANK YOU!

The good news? You gave feedback filled with insightful views, suggestions, and legitimate concerns that we're already busy synthesizing. The even better news? Instead of giving you one big, overwhelming report, we're going to share it in digestible chunks! But first, some initial actions:

NEXT CLASS DEFERRED. We just don't have the heart to send another (!) survey next week asking you to vet 59 ambassador candidates. Instead, we're deferring the next class of ambassadors until the start of 2018, so we can focus on everything right in front of us. Thanks to all of you who helped vet candidates, we'll be ready to continue building the Leap Community in January.

AMBASSADOR EXPECTATIONS FINAL. Thanks to your highly confirming feedback, we're proud to present our updated ambassador expectations and criteria (*see attached*). We hope the revised document more clearly explains what it means to be in the community.

BIG 2017 CLOSE. To help you keep track, here's how the community will finish off the year:

- "Performance-Based Contracting: Rules for the Road" is out the door and initial response is good.
- The "Small, but Mighty" kickstarter is already a hit within the community, and there's a lot of excitement about sharing it more broadly.
- Our partnership with The Forbes Funds kicked off with an October session introducing the PI and PIOSA to 60 nonprofit leaders from the Pittsburgh region—more to come on this work!
- The Blgrave Trust funder story, the third in the series, will launch early next week.

- PI V2.0 is in vetting with the PI Editorial micro-community and we expect to share for vetting with the full community late November / early December.
- PIOSA’s repositioning and repackaging is in process and will be vetted with the PIOSA micro-community this month.

Got questions or concerns? You know how to reach us, any time at all.

Gratefully,

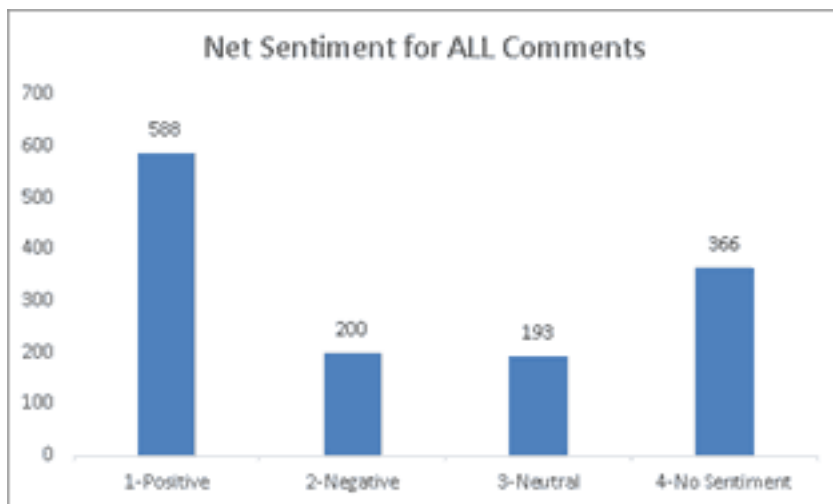
Katie, Cheryl, and the Leap Ambassadors support team

Thinking Hard About Your Community Reflection Feedback (11/3/2017)

Thank you for the ratings and **1,346 comments that 117 of you** provided via the community reflection survey! By any community metric, this is an impressive response—even more remarkable considering the competing demands on your time.

I’m happy to report we’ve made significant progress in organizing and analyzing your input. We’re trying hard to practice what we preach in the Performance Imperative: being “humble enough to seek and act on feedback on their own performance [because] they know they haven’t figured it all out and ... still have a lot of work to do.”

On the plus side, we’re heartened by the positive and constructive tone of your feedback.



Yet as we’ve started looking beneath the surface of this positive outer layer, we’re finding a patchwork of unaligned expectations, contradictions, and disconnects. **The team and I take full responsibility for any confusion.**

Most important are these questions: **Are the community's efforts to encourage and inspire nonprofits and funders to embrace high performance making a difference? And, is the concept of community feasible, relevant, and sustainable at this moment in time?**

Our challenge now is to do justice to the depth and breadth of what you shared, what you meant, implied, and didn't say. This requires thoughtful reflection that will need time. We're committed to focusing on the right things and finding workable options to bring back to you.

In the weeks and months ahead, we'll share a summary compilation of the feedback and respond to your most prominent questions, concerns, and suggestions. We'll also explain the community's theory of change, make changes in how we communicate via email, propose a different approach to finding and vetting ambassadors, and implement a short annual survey of 3-5 questions that allows an ambassador to opt out of the community (e.g., the graceful exit that was strongly endorsed). We'll do our best to convey these in digestible chunks to avoid overwhelming you with a deluge of data.

Next week, we'll also start reaching out individually to approximately 30+ ambassadors to explore comments we didn't fully understand or would benefit from more explanation.

The granular analysis we plan will help us focus on the key themes and overarching takeaways (e.g., scaling back the number and pace of projects underway to alleviate the "overwhelmed" feeling—"I love all you're doing, but I can't keep up!").

As it should, the most difficult part will be fessing up to what's not working and why; where assumptions have failed, including where my own leadership fell short; and then making hard calls to fix and/or stop certain aspects of what the community does. And, considering the breadth of what you've shared, we will ask if the Leap team has the requisite capacity and skills to support what the community needs.

One ambassador summed it up well: "I think this is the most serious bend in the road we've come to, to create and help run realistic programs and so as to influence the outcomes of the social sector."

We asked for your help and you responded. You've presented us with a daunting task and the ball is in our court. Stay tuned for updates every few weeks and a proposed series of changes that will attempt to address several needs your feedback raised.

With gratitude and best wishes,
Mario on behalf of the Leap Ambassadors support team

Setting a Positive Context (11/14/2017)

“Regardless of what the future holds for the Leap Ambassadors Community, it has been an extremely worthwhile journey of learning, contributing, and growth.”

Response to my November 3 post, “Thinking Hard About Your Community Reflection Feedback”

No matter the future, we all should take pride in and feel good about what we’ve done together. In the community reflection feedback, this positive view of the community comes through in scores of comments about the community and your contributions. Here are a few representative quotations:

- “I’ve met wonderful, inspiring people and expanded my horizons on what’s possible. That has had a profound influence on, among other things, how I teach.”
- “Being connected to a community of thought leaders committed to mission and high performance who share generously and freely their experiences and expertise. I feel more equipped to do my work and have greater credibility in my sphere of influence.”
- “I think this is a best-on-class model – I’ve suggested it to other networks. It’s very thorough and effective.”
- “We’ve built about as strong, intentional, quality community of people as any I’ve seen in quite a while.”

Thanks to YOU, the community has made important progress and achievements.

- It produced the Performance Imperative (PI) and gave the field the first definition of a high-performance organization and what it takes to become one.
- It demonstrated the power of the community’s collective knowledge in the collaborative development of the PI, PIOSA, Ambassador Insights, and most recently, the “Small, But Mighty” Kickstarter for small nonprofits.
- The online community has become a place for you and fellow ambassadors to connect, learn, gain support, and grow.
- It has developed and grown a distribution channel to broadly and publicly share community products and learnings, illustrated by how the campaign to influence funders that launched this year is gaining momentum and showing early results.

Perhaps the most important accomplishments are the relationships that have formed or grown within the community. For me, and I know I also speak on for all of the Leap support team, you are truly a wonderfully talented group of leaders. I am grateful every day of the privilege to know and engage with you.

It’s important to recognize the positive aspects of the community as a backdrop as we face the reality of where we find ourselves and take on the numerous challenges your feedback identified and/or confirmed.

Next up? Later this week, you’ll see a summary of your feedback (Thursday) followed by a list of insights and issues you raised (Friday.)

Best wishes,

Mario and Leap team

Summary of Feedback Compilation (11/16/2017)

Although we plan to send short posts (what we termed “digestible chunks” in an earlier post), this one and the next aren’t (mea culpa!).

The [Community Reflection Feedback Summary](#) (20 pages) provides an introduction and compilation of your responses for each of the 18 questions in the Community Reflection Questionnaire. The summary contains minimal filtering or interpretation.

The next post, [Sharing Selective Excerpts of Feedback](#), will provide lists of questions, concerns, suggestions for improvement, and noteworthy quotations extracted from the analysis of almost 1,400 comments.

For those with “need-to-know” tendencies, we’re happy to share the 1,346 comments that have been redacted for anonymity.

Today’s and tomorrow’s posts provide a full reporting of the feedback and a baseline and context for the explanations, near-term actions, and proposed changes we’ll be sharing in the coming months.

There’s still a lot of your feedback to synthesize, better understand, and learn from. We’ll share what we’re learning, our responses, and proposed actions in a series of ongoing, short communications—and continue to focus on “doing” while learning so we don’t fall prey to “paralysis by analysis.”

Best wishes,

Mario and Leap team

High-Performance Train Keeps Running (11/22/2017)

As we share near-term changes in the coming weeks and months, we promise you the team is still busy advancing the community's positive activity. Yes, we're working to assess the future and mend what needs fixing, but we're keeping the "high-performance train" running and will continue to:

- Spread the word to convince minds that "performance matters" through more consistent messaging and growing our distribution capacity. And, we'll do more to help and support how you can carry the flag in this work.
- Advance the very good work underway in the "funding performance campaign" to influence funders.
- Promote ongoing efforts to encourage adoption of the PI and PIOSA, now strengthened by the new and powerful "Small, but Mighty" kickstarter.
Support the work in Pittsburgh and assess the potential of the model for other regions.
- Complete current development projects underway, including 1) the PIOSA repositioning and repackaging by end of this year; 2) the updated and improved PI v2.0 in Q1 2018, and 3) the follow-on update to PIOSA v 2.0 in Q2 2018. In the meantime, we won't start any new developments or projects.
- Facilitate and encourage your use of the community's online forum. We've been heartened to see more recent postings by ambassadors.
All of us on the Leap team are committed to support the good work so many of you are doing to convince others that "performance matters."

And, for all observing Thanksgiving tomorrow here in the States, our very best wishes for a warm and wonderful holiday.

Best wishes to all,
Mario and Leap team

Community Reflection

Excerpted Selective Lists of Feedback

Introduction

This file, **Excerpted Selective Lists of Feedback**, provides five categories of feedback extracted from the analysis of the 1,346 comments. In the first eight pages, you'll see lists for:

- Key Topics/Themes (18)
- Questions raised about the community (24)
- Concerns or issues raised about the community (37)
- Suggestions for improvement (108)

The largest part of this file is this list of quotations spanning pages 8-19.

- Noteworthy quotations – Good, bad, and ugly (266)

We hope this material provides additional insights / supporting detail to the **Community Reflection Feedback Summary** shared November 16.

These lists were developed by tagging comments when they aligned to a key topic; raised a question, issue or concern; offered a suggestion; or were considered a noteworthy quotation. The subject tagging was extensive, but certainly not exhaustive. Organizing the comments with tags allows you to focus on key points and highlights some interesting observations. For instance, in the Themes list, you can see that lack of time for ambassadors to participate was, by far, the most referenced point. At the same time, there were 67 mentions of the value you gain from the community and your involvement.

Key Topics

Each comment was reviewed and, where applicable, tagged to one or more of these topics.

| Count | Key Topics | Description |
|-------|------------|---|
| 112 | Time | Lack of time; availability to participate is challenging due to pressures/load of running their organizations |
| 67 | Value | See value in being in the LAC and what we do |
| 30 | Confusion | Core premises of community have not been clearly articulated / understood (e.g., theory of change) or there's lack of agreement |
| 25 | Email | Too much email |
| 15 | Guilt | Anxiety in not being able to participate, do more |
| 13 | Echo | View we're preaching to the choir and talking to our own echo chamber |
| 13 | Metrics | Issues raised on how we measure and/or role of metrics in our process |
| 12 | NotKnown | Community is not well known or, in some circles, known at all |
| 10 | Success | Questions around "What is community's success?" |
| 10 | Threat | Intimidated by some in community, tone of discussion, narrow discussion topics, group found off-putting |
| 8 | NotCore | Not tightly aligned with purpose and/or community |
| 8 | Outlier | A topic that may not be considered within reasonable range/scope of community |

Community Reflection Excerpted Selective Lists of Feedback

| Count | Key Topics | Description |
|-------|------------|--|
| 7 | Diversity | Concern for broader diversity in views/experience, race/ethnicity, age/younger leaders |
| 6 | Trust | Lack of comfort, trust in the community to participate |
| 5 | Given | Represents a factor that is a given for the environment we're in |
| 5 | Online | Not resonating or connecting with the online community or finding place / how to engage online |
| 5 | Politics | Concern with partisan politics |
| 3 | CoreRole | Lack of understanding / acceptance of core role of ambassador: To advance high performance and community purpose |

Questions Raised About the Community

| ID | Questions |
|-----|---|
| 31 | Does the community focus too much on individual organizations versus seeking to change wider field? |
| 43 | Can the community effectively impact change in both the government social service delivery realm and the nonprofit realm? Is it either/or, or both/and? |
| 72 | How do we engage ambassadors from other countries more meaningfully given the US-centric membership of the LAC? |
| 90 | Can LAC truly make an impact when there are significant and powerful outside sources (e.g., the federal tax code) forcing us to push a boulder uphill? |
| 137 | Do we dismiss the importance of qualitative information in our pursuit of quantitative high performance? |
| 10 | Where is the evidence that we are actually shifting minds of those who don't value or think about high performance in the field? |
| 38 | Does a theory of change exist? |
| 46 | What does it look like to help shift minds in the social sector? How will we know that it's happened? What are we really committing to change? What is the leverage in the system to make that change? How does the job get done? |
| 84 | The shift in the social sector towards outcomes is a natural evolution, and not necessarily tied to the work of LAC. How do we know that our work is actually catalyzing change versus natural shifts occurring in the sector? |
| 86 | Are we meeting the essential day to day needs of nonprofit managers - lot on their plate, how are we helping? |
| 107 | How does the community's work go to any degree of scale is unclear to me and a daunting task? |
| 109 | What kind of NEW examples would we have to see from orgs NOT in our network to believe we were having an impact? |
| 68 | Perhaps we make it too easy to join and not contribute. Would a smaller group held to higher participation standards may perform better? |
| 79 | Should there be term limits on participation, similar to a board of directors? |
| 91 | How do we accommodate those who are by nature, more introverted or not natural networkers? How can we draw folks into action or conversation that bring their strengths to bear for the benefit of the community? |

Community Reflection Excerpted Selective Lists of Feedback

| ID | Questions |
|-----|--|
| 10 | Are we getting enough diversity in membership outside the "fancy circles"? |
| 80 | How do you engage the thousands of others who could impact their work with these ideas? |
| 92 | What is motivation for a "big" community? |
| 138 | How seriously do you consider the opinions of different ambassadors as we consider candidates and if there are any disqualifying comments? |
| 150 | How do we engage ambassadors given the many commitments of their time. |
| 59 | Do ambassadors know why they are nominated and selected? Can we be linked to sub groups? Affinity groups! |
| 47 | What are folks thinking about that could make an individual's choice to leave the community ungraceful? |
| 38 | What is our theory of change? |
| 20 | Who does not agree with the Leap mission? What do they believe and do? How do those need to change? What are the obstacles to high performance facing those on the path? What help do they need? |

Concerns or Issues Raised about the Community

| ID | Concerns or Issues |
|-----|--|
| 28 | Community's focus on high performance does not consider broader social change values |
| 47 | Concern that considering difficult social and political structures we find ourselves in as a society, is outside the scope of work and worry it has usurped focus on high performance. |
| 47 | It seems the community has spent most of its time sharing long emails about who we are, and addressing the ramifications, culturally and societally, as they relate to the Trump Administration. It is unclear how energy in this direction shifts the mindset of the social sector. |
| 92 | The deliverables we have set for LAC - wholesale transformation of the social sector - is a bit out of reach for ordinary mortals. |
| 118 | I don't think we have an organized strategic way of shifting minds. You kind of have to be already in the know to even have contact with us. |
| 125 | Since the vast majority of nonprofits are less than \$3M, they have neither the time nor resources to vigorously adopt the LEAP pillars. |
| 133 | Unless we do some sort of evaluation, it will be hard to know what our effect has been. What's the counterfactual? |
| 73 | The community is dominated by a few strong voices, and this discourages new ideas or innovative discourse. |
| 74 | Ambassadors are intimidated by well-known leaders in the social sector that weigh in frequently on our work. As a result they are less inclined to participate in the online community. |
| 15 | I think the potential is incredible, but the lack of resources is probably hindering that potential. I also think the community has a tendency to get sidetracked by elements (Trump, Charlottesville) that I think aren't core competencies of the group. I understand why this happens, since people are passionate about these issues, but I see it as a distraction. There are other venues for that, while there are few other venues for advocating performance. |
| 16 | The issues of power and control are unstated or less defined than the case will be as the organization evolves. |
| 39 | Worries that we have not truly formed a network. |
| 118 | Some ambassadors do not understand the LAC purpose. |

Community Reflection Excerpted Selective Lists of Feedback

| ID | Concerns or Issues |
|-----|--|
| 125 | Sees the impact as modest at best, therefore not giving it as much time and attention as other endeavors |
| 138 | Funders, consultants, small and large nonprofits leaders are all mixed together in one community. This can cause connection barriers and reduce participation. |
| 16 | The juice has to be worth the squeeze for those who have many demands on their time. |
| 40 | If trust and comfort are the indicators of the health of a community, we have a long way to go, but we are moving in that direction. |
| 80 | Asserting that the community needs to do more to influence others, which is an expectation we already have. Perhaps we have not articulated this well. |
| 81 | There is a of lack understanding about the core premise of being an ambassador, specifically that it is not tied solely to an employer, but rather a personal affinity and commitment to high performance throughout a career/life. |
| 110 | Perhaps there is too much going on? Having so many options/projects may overwhelm ambassadors, or confuse them, thereby decreasing participation. |
| 140 | Not sure our service as ambassadors is linked to an achievable outcome, as opposed to general function as a community. |
| 150 | The LAC only recruits and accepts high-caliber professionals, who in a general sense, are the busiest and hardest to engage. |
| 16 | I think the process is indicative of an organization at an early stage of development. Power and control is vague and ill -defined in spite of what is described above. Over time a more formal process will be needed. |
| 37 | Given our current structure for recruiting, screening, and onboarding new ambassadors, we lose out on those who may be self-identifying/seeking out a community geared towards supporting high performance. |
| 43 | I think the profile of the current Community membership is much more uneven with regard to the core mission than I would like to see. |
| 74 | Nomination process may have been intimidating |
| 80 | The community is exclusive, and we cannot truly have a sector-wide movement while those who have an interest in this have no way to apply except via "who they know". |
| 103 | Questions on boundaries for ambassador selection and process seems slow |
| 109 | We are not identifying younger (millennial) talent/leaders with radically different angles on the why and how of high performance. |
| 111 | The vetting and onboarding process takes too long. |
| 138 | It does feel as though the community is growing very quickly, which is somewhat challenging given we rarely meet in person. |
| 55 | It can be hard for people to engage when they don't know who they are engaging with. |
| 127 | Can we balance meeting the needs of extroverts AND introverts |
| 92 | Believes options for future scenarios/planning is too open ended, creates many potential conflicts of interest and intellectual property rights questions |
| 80 | Doesn't feel like progress is being made and we are lacking a deliberate strategy to pursue progress. |
| 86 | ** At times I think the purpose of the community is to serve the needs of consultants more than to serve the needs of the nonprofit community. ** While I support and agree with the "liberal" testaments brought out by the challenges of the current period, we struggle to find the line between what's right and what's mostly political. As a result, this is likely viewed by many as a "democrats only group." Is that what we want? |
| 84 | PI and PIOA are not, in and of themselves, compelling marketing tools. We need a better "hook" to bring folks in. |

Community Reflection

Excerpted Selective Lists of Feedback

Suggestions for Improvements

| ID | Suggestion for Improvement |
|-----|---|
| 92 | Simplifying the message without dumbing down the content would be an essential next step on my mind. |
| 129 | I think there needs to be a specific strategy focused on the public sector (government) |
| 129 | It would be worthwhile to think about how to increase the accessibility of the great information and members of the community for those of us who currently do not have as much time as we would like to devote to this. |
| 148 | Would like more opportunities to engage with ambassadors in person generally, or in person or virtually (via online meetings) at the regional level. |
| 20 | Provide more guidance on how to fully engage or ask for help from the community. |
| 38 | Given the core purpose of the community, we must demand higher participation from members. They should be expected to fall into all three categories of 70:20:10. |
| 134 | LAC should consider use of assignments for individual ambassadors to work on specific tangible projects as a method for better engagement |
| 150 | More in person connection to foster participation |
| 72 | Use social media platforms |
| 18 | Use a specific project when new ambassadors join, to ensure they can contribute immediately and set a high bar for engagement. |
| 45 | Are there some steps that can be streamlined to reduce burden on staff for the vetting process? |
| 73 | We need to consider helping up and coming leaders as they are shaping values and opinions in this way and also give them comfort that they are not alone here....they may be the executive director of tomorrow. |
| 74 | Find a way for new ambassadors to make a concrete contribution as soon as possible to encourage ongoing, high levels of engagement. |
| 76 | Time to reach beyond networks to influential voices we don't know? |
| 86 | Before we nominate, we should share that description of expectations with the potential nominee. |
| 90 | Tier the community by roles or organizations. |
| 91 | Would benefit from the inclusion of people in nonprofit organizations who are responsible for a variety of functions, and middle to senior levels and we may need to open up to emerging leaders who believe performance matters |
| 109 | Consider new voices / perspectives that aren't predicated on tenure or pedigree-open up to millennial talent and leaders. |
| 110 | Find way to be more broadly inclusive and move away from the "who you know" model of recruitment. |
| 125 | I recommend LEAP consider moving more to a think-tank model of engagement. Where ambassadors are invited to present papers or ideas affecting the nonprofit sector. This would also mean reconfiguring the LEAP staff into more of research and outreach roles. |
| 127 | Recruit intergenerational leaders |
| 157 | Consider a way for ambassadors to exit gracefully. |
| 16 | A more formalized process with an orientation guide book would be helpful. Engaging all of us in the onboarding in some fashion for those we nominate who are accepted would also be helpful. |
| 50 | Facilitate face-to-face conversation with another community member within first 3 months. |
| 68 | Provide a clear calendar of opportunities set in advance so new members can hit a cycle of new member calls, annual gathering etc. It helps to be able to prioritize time well in advance. |
| 73 | It would be helpful to have a short and simple webinar that shows the resources available to members. I assume those resources change a lot so it may be helpful to even allow existing members to listen in. I know I would! |
| 78 | Welcome video |

Community Reflection Excerpted Selective Lists of Feedback

| ID | Suggestion for Improvement |
|-----|---|
| 81 | Provide a more personal set of connections--perhaps introductions to others in my geographic area, or field of work. |
| 87 | Talk with LAC team members more. |
| 92 | More face to face events to run through the PI and other tools, either directly or through directed webinars. |
| 103 | Provide a checklist of questions or criteria that Ambassadors can ask themselves before nominating a candidate. There would need to be a minimum number of affirmative responses in order to "advance" a candidate for consideration. |
| 107 | Create an orientation process which includes a regional gathering or an online chat to review some of the materials, outline how to access the community, and shared stories. |
| 108 | Create explicit pathways to engagement. |
| 110 | Create a buddy system with geographically close ambassador |
| 120 | Spoon feed initially with an orientation document -- a quick "this is where you can find things" - and an overview of committees that exist and which are welcoming new members. Share these with all members. |
| 127 | Provide more support for in-person gatherings. |
| 136 | Create webinars or online chats for new or relatively new ambassadors to speed up the learning curve on how to engage and what is happening in the community |
| 138 | Host local meeting with proximate ambassadors to discuss purpose of and engagement in community |
| 143 | Create a buddy system to pair new ambassadors with existing community members. |
| 144 | Create a more robust first-year orientation process. |
| 146 | Provide examples of how members engage. Partner ambassadors so that newbies can be mentored. Create community from which ambassadors can be identified based on the level of engagement |
| 151 | Perhaps briefly profiling the way different ambassadors have gotten engaged (without naming name) to help others envision how they might contribute. These short examples could all be collected in one place and serve as a kind of template for involvement. |
| 79 | If the ambassadors have a set of expectations akin to board level involvement, then it's critical that there is an option for time limitations. |
| 89 | Try once, try twice, then let go. Perhaps add to the expectations that community members are expected to be self-aware and respectful enough to leave the community by letting (who?) know that they are bowing out. |
| 92 | I believe that exit is as simple as making the request and could be a small addition to the bylaws of the community and indicated at on boarding. |
| 98 | Initiate a recommit after a specific period of time? |
| 103 | Develop a protocol or process for current Ambassadors to express concerns or reservations about particular Ambassadors who maybe aren't "playing nicely in the sandbox" -- (MM think this potentially divisive and different from core point) |
| 120 | Initiate a recommit after a specific period of time? |
| 125 | Create two year terms with the opportunity to participate for one additional two year term. Outgoing ambassadors are then placed on a list of emerita who would continue to be honored and who could be invited to participate when their areas of expertise are being explored. Also this process who keep a continuous flow of new people and ideas into the ambassadors. |
| 152 | Help those of us who aren't in constant contact with organizations now, either via a consulting relationship or because we're in their leadership ranks, understand/feel confident that what we can do. |
| 20 | The comment is good input for the process/effort |
| 73 | The community needs a more diverse set of voices; particular, voices of some younger folks engaged in thinking about data and performance. |
| 80 | Have more clear strategy to drive performance |

Community Reflection Excerpted Selective Lists of Feedback

| ID | Suggestion for Improvement |
|-----|---|
| 81 | Consider other platforms beyond email -"community" website (sort of like a private Facebook or LinkedIn community) that could keep people connected. |
| 93 | Involve more public sector leaders |
| 142 | A blog spot or a regular summary of community discussions underway might be better than "reply all" emails. |
| 156 | Use something like Slack or another tool might help make critical communications more salient. |
| 10 | Better support funders in high-performance grant making |
| 14 | Keep up annual meetings in person. |
| 16 | Improve resource offerings for small nonprofits. |
| 18 | Facilitate more small group discussions. |
| 32 | Get ambassadors to share their experience using PIOSA with their boards as a reflection tool. |
| 58 | Facilitate relationship development. |
| 59 | Make the PIOSA more user friendly. |
| 63 | Create metrics for impact to help us more clearly define how we measure our influence in our organizations and together in this community. |
| 64 | Facilitate collaborative engagement around the role of data analysis and PI |
| 71 | Host more in-person meetings |
| 72 | Create a mentor program for new ambassadors |
| 74 | Provide more examples and stories of how the PI is being implemented. |
| 76 | Create a micro-community or connection on to work on reforming government funding. |
| 79 | Determine which is more important: scale of current framework or iterating on growing body of work. Doing both is extremely challenging. |
| 80 | Get more organizations and leaders to advocate for the ideas and learn about the pluses and minuses of the performance approach. |
| 82 | Provide more tools/tactics/ideas to advance PI |
| 83 | Improve the community reach to funders. |
| 84 | Provide more effective marketing to pitch the PI and PIOSA. |
| 93 | Support shared action either within a region (geography) or field (i.e. government) for accelerating high performance for results. |
| 94 | Provide tangible ideas to advance the concepts at the core of the community. |
| 95 | Start a "problem of practice" for a small group to work on. |
| 103 | Set up a message board (internal to the community) that individuals could subscribe to, to share information about new reports, job postings, needs for their organization. |
| 106 | Develop web-based PIOSA. |
| 107 | Provide greater opportunities for networking and learning from each other in meaningful ways |
| 118 | Create a better feedback loop for ambassadors to report what they are doing in the field with the PI, PIOSA, and high performance. |
| 120 | Focus on how to actualize the pillars as practitioners. |
| 131 | I would like the community to give us an opportunity to strengthen the pillar that we feel most passionate about - by bringing the credibility of the community to the topic. |
| 132 | Provide more training/sharing opportunities online for CEOs to talk through specific issues. |
| 134 | Provide more examples of the success/failure of implementing PI at the organizational level. |
| 136 | Offer some professional development training (online or in-person). |
| 138 | Serve as a clearinghouse to connect thoughtful funders and social entrepreneurs committed to high performance. |
| 139 | Provide more tools/tactics/ideas to advance the PI. |
| 142 | Provide more PIOSA case studies. |

Community Reflection Excerpted Selective Lists of Feedback

| ID | Suggestion for Improvement |
|-----|---|
| 144 | Better support funders in high performance grant making. |
| 149 | Design on-demand learning path that curates content about the high performance journey. |
| 155 | Host more in person meetings. |
| 20 | Apply high performance to us: define the metrics by which we would know that the sector was higher performing, as well as earlier indicators of our impact. |
| 76 | Provide more webinars and trainings. |
| 78 | Use slack or another platform that makes real-time engagement easier. |
| 81 | Have real-time calls periodically. |
| 83 | Pair ambassadors 1:1 to work on projects for the individuals agencies. |
| 89 | Provide support for ambassadors to write op-eds about high performance. |
| 91 | Engage the federal bureaucracy on high performance. |
| 102 | Combine ambassador communications into a newsletter form to reduce email. |
| 103 | Find ways to engage ambassadors more proactively, vs reactively. |
| 110 | Have subscription options for specific emails. |
| 125 | Move the LAC to a think tank model. |
| 130 | Revisit pillar 7, in the fullness of time, to move the community forward. |
| 139 | Add more staff to facilitate connection with ambassadors. |
| 149 | Design a capacity model to help nonprofits use the PI. |
| 92 | Create a subgroup for CEOs to interact in a separate micro-community - this would be valuable to me. Do the same for consultants. |

Noteworthy Quotations—Good, Bad, and Ugly

| ID | Noteworthy Quotations |
|-----|--|
| 20 | Where we focus? On those nonprofits that deliver the very best services to 1% of the applicable market) or one those that deliver very good services to the applicable market AND creates new government funding streams to serve the mission? |
| 37 | The LAC underscores, for me, that this belief is not wrong-headed -- a real gift in a sector that hasn't always viewed management as preeminent. |
| 54 | I think there is nothing more important than finding ways to be more efficient in the social sector |
| 55 | we need to both be making a positive difference in the lives of the people who turn to us as well as have the evidence to prove it. |
| 64 | Through years of research, evaluation and nonprofit capacity building, particularly with respect to data, metrics and performance measurement and management, I have concluded that the best led, most learning-based organizations are more effective for all metrics - financial, operational and mission success. |
| 68 | This is tough work and leaders need both technical and emotional support to stay in the game! |
| 74 | I struggle sometimes with how long it takes in terms of time and capacity investment to get organizations beyond "settling" for less than high performance. |
| 78 | I believe that nonprofits should produce meaningful change and be able to show this change in a measurable way....if they aren't producing results, they should not be doing what they are doing, what's the point? |
| 107 | A community that brings together diverse people around this is oxygen to a world that can't breathe. Every small step forward matters- light into darkness |
| 123 | It's important that "low-flyers" can learn to become "high-flyers" and that "high-flyers" can't just rest on their laurels or brand names. |
| 125 | I believe that nonprofits constitute a very unique dimension of American culture and democracy. That said, |

Community Reflection Excerpted Selective Lists of Feedback

| ID | Noteworthy Quotations |
|-----|--|
| | there are operational, systemic and perceptual problems that keep it from being an even more powerful sector. |
| 142 | The community provides ongoing framing and, at times, feedback on building a culture of performance. It's good to be connected to a broader group challenging themselves to on this very difficult journey. |
| 144 | I feel like I have found "my people" |
| 155 | There is too much focus on doing something and too little focus on making sure what is being done is effective. This community cares deeply about both. |
| 11 | We knew going in that it would be a marathon. |
| 13 | PIOSA is a critical part of our work, because it answers the common question "how do we do this" and can help people who are predisposed to become believers who work toward high performance in their organizations. It is excellent for all who speak about performance to be able to refer people to the PIOA; it's like the missing link between talking about it and being able to do it. |
| 45 | One is humbled by the challenge of affecting a mind shift in any sector given the magnitude of information flowing into the system. |
| 64 | The level of ambassador connections, engagements, joint sharing, teaching, educating, publishing and discussions are at the edge of what matters most to advance the sector. |
| 72 | The sheer size of the sector means this is extremely difficult to accomplish |
| 79 | The first phase of building a group of thought leaders is critical, but it's only a first phase. A ground game and narrative reframing is essential to drive the movement forward. |
| 80 | This is the most challenging professional marathon I have encountered. I learned that without compelling market type forces, change is glacial. It requires sustained effort that an initiative like this can bring to bear. |
| 86 | Maybe we are being overwhelmed by the national crisis of purpose. |
| 90 | I think the very best thing the community has delivered is an accessible, easy to understand, framework to discuss performance that enjoys a "community blessed" status. |
| 91 | I think what the community has done is bring people together who are doing this important work, and that tends to be reinforcing. I know that the work I do with the community helps me feel engaged--in many projects and for many years, I felt pretty isolated. There would usually be a few people who knew what I was doing and knew it was important, but in this group, performance always matters. |
| 102 | I believe the community has hit at the right time, done the necessary research, and had grown in size in a way that is improving/increasing impact. |
| 103 | I think we've done a great job getting the word out, elevating the level of discourse, sharing knowledge, etc. I think the sector has been slowly coming along, even before our efforts. It is unclear how effective we will be in shifting minds that don't want to be shifted - but in the end that may be okay. |
| 112 | I don't know how we are measuring this. Any assessment would be impressionistic at this point. |
| 120 | We are a united voice but only beginning. |
| 124 | As a 'wannabe' performance leader I feel supported by the Community - this all gives me hope that impact can be created, or is already at a level I can't see.. When I share resources people get it and are impressed. |
| 127 | The community has done an incredible job laying the groundwork: creating a framework, corresponding tools, and a robust community. |
| 130 | I could not be more impressed or more inspired by how you all assemble and lead our growing band of system changers. |
| 142 | This is a marathon, not a sprint. I don't think we are quite at critical mass. |
| 149 | We have created a very credible North Star but much work is left to be done to change mindsets and to provide the sector with the funding and capacity it needs to change practices. |
| 151 | I say "slightly" with tremendous admiration! Getting to "slightly" after such a relatively short time is a HUGE achievement. The community is on the right path. Real change takes time - a long time. |

Community Reflection Excerpted Selective Lists of Feedback

| ID | Noteworthy Quotations |
|-----|--|
| 152 | It takes a lot of drops of water to change mindsets and social norms. |
| 10 | I love being able to get expert insights from fellow ambassadors. I love drawing upon community products (funder stories, PI, PIOSA) for my work. |
| 14 | The community continues to help me learn and grow professionally and personally. |
| 21 | This is an extremely bright, thoughtful group of people. I've had more interactions than I can count that have made me smarter and more thoughtful. |
| 44 | PIOSA accomplishes the objective that drew my interest and is proving a far better tool than the one I devised. Leap work with foundations is very promising if it finds traction |
| 46 | 1. Promoting the PI gives my work clarity, context, and legitimacy by association 2. Connecting with individual Ambassadors who inspire me, connect me with other contacts, and help me learn about nonprofit high performance. 3. The Ambassadors regularly inspire me to persevere in my work, both individually and corporately. Just the fact that a national movement to incite nonprofit high performance actually exists is a huge source of hope for me. Surely i would have quit my work by now if it were not for you all. 4. Investing in the PI for Small Nonprofits micro-community and helping to draft the Small but Mighty kick-starter, something I am responsible to help with but could never pull off on my own. |
| 48 | Hearing and learning from the awesome group of individuals is invaluable |
| 82 | I feel fortunate to be a member of this community and to be able to tap into its knowledge and wisdom. |
| 98 | I can't tell you how valuable it is to connect with other like-minded professionals. Also, the knowledge sharing - on and offline, one-to-one and with the whole group has been incredible. |
| 120 | Ongoing dialogue. New connections. Challenging my thinking. |
| 123 | Community has provided a forum for me to - first of all, learn - and second of all help promote and improve my own work related to feedback in the sector. |
| 125 | I have appreciated the critical questions being discussed; the camaraderie of colleagues committed to a better nonprofit sector both in person and online. |
| 130 | I am inspired and educated in full measure. |
| 131 | It has been amazing to share thought leadership with such an amazing group of individuals. |
| 133 | Very strong peer group and moral support. |
| 140 | It's been and is a source of inspiration more than anything. |
| 144 | The community has helped provide me with the support to keep doing what I'm doing, and want to do more. |
| 149 | I have a group of people to turn to for advice and expertise with a shared reality about what is necessary to improve performance in our sector and ultimately improve the lives of people the sector is set up to help. |
| 152 | I've met wonderful, inspiring people and expanded my horizons on what's possible. That has had a profound influence on, among other things, how I teach. |
| 154 | Online exchanges are informative and inspiring. |
| 20 | The Leap team, LAC, and PI influences how I think and what I do on a daily basis in all of my work. |
| 37 | I am proud to be associated with such a strong group of leaders from various parts of the sector, all of whom believe in the seven pillars which, from the first time I saw them, I thought were a perfect articulation of what strong organizations should strive for. |
| 40 | I feel like I have a new community of peers in which to learn and pressure test my ideas. |
| 109 | I have tremendous respect for this community and for the rigor that goes into becoming part of it. I've learned a lot from my peers in the in-person interactions and some of the online exchanges |
| 130 | I am benefiting and I also feel the community has been open to my particular brand of madness. That is super satisfying as it is easy to spin into self-doubt. |
| 37 | I believe we live our lives in seasons, with multiples springs, summers, winters, etc. This approach allows people to plug in in various ways, depending on which seasons they are in the midst of. The "when you can" approach -- along with a core commitment to carrying the banner of high performance -- is clear and |

Community Reflection Excerpted Selective Lists of Feedback

| ID | Noteworthy Quotations |
|-----|---|
| | fair. |
| 40 | I think these are fair expectations for membership - active participation is critical to growth. In addition, I think of trust and value as key components of strong networks of the kind we're seeking to build. |
| 107 | This is well defined and allows a range of participation engagement as this can ebb and flow with the demands of one's own work |
| 114 | These seem reasonable -- and a baseline of what is needed to have a real community. |
| 144 | I LOVE the clarity of expectations - so often we are asked to part of things without real clarity around roles. |
| 152 | I don't always refer people to our website/materials. Reading this, I'm realizing that I've been missing an opportunity. |
| 64 | I feel connected in many ways, and have engaged in convenings, off-line discussions with ambassadors involved in the PIOSA, online discussions, webinars, and will continue to do so. That said, I know there's always room for improvement. I have been working with a few ambassadors on some areas - particularly re to the use of data to improve and evaluate effectiveness. |
| 69 | I have definitely been in the 70% up to this point, and plan to find ways to join the 20% at the right moments. |
| 73 | I have engaged in recruiting and recommending new members. And I have contributed at times to the dialogue. And I certainly try to walk the talk. I would likely contribute to the dialogue more if it didn't feel so overpowered by a small group --notably, disproportionately comprised of older white men. I think greater effort needs to be made to engage a more diverse set of voices and ideas. Those that have been in the field a long time have a lot to contribute about it what has worked and what has not worked in the past. But those that are newer to the discussion may bring novel ways of thinking or acting --or even old ways that have found their time. They are the future of the work but may need to be more actively encouraged to engage. |
| 82 | While I promote the PI at every opportunity, I feel I could do a better job at suggesting dialogue with others in the community. |
| 89 | Whenever I give a presentation on trends impacting charitable nonprofits that gives me an opportunity to talk about Leap of Reason and the Performance Imperative; my role as the curator of content on our website, and as chief "knowledge sharer" for our xxxxxx network similarly offer me many opportunities to connect our network with the community's experiences, perspectives, and tools, as applicable. |
| 92 | I engage when i can and where i can |
| 107 | I read everything and have engaged in a working group and have lent content to one question and sent resources independently to another group of ambassadors. I promote the materials frequently and am using them in my work |
| 111 | I frequently speak about the Leap Ambassadors, and promote it regularly. I have presented the content at conferences, and consistently am at least a passive participant. My current organization has a long way to go to really get to a place around performance that I would desire to be able to be proud of how we are manifesting the first three bullets... |
| 125 | Regularly monitor the online discussions. Have helped in vetting candidates. Have contributed to discussions regarding small nonprofits and ambassador participation. |
| 147 | I would like to contribute more actively as topics come up where I am uniquely able to move the conversation forward, but otherwise, I am very comfortable in my 70% role at the moment. |
| 150 | I do read and keep abreast of what is happening in the community. And in my own work I believe in and advance the principles and values of the group; it is just difficult for me to do so as part of this collective body. |
| 30 | I think this process has been quite thorough. At times the seniority of people in the community seems mixed -- but that is probably a good thing! |
| 42 | it's been critical to the quality and vitality you've had so far |

Community Reflection Excerpted Selective Lists of Feedback

| ID | Noteworthy Quotations |
|-----|--|
| 46 | I think this process is very effective for the "forming" stage of the Community, while we define what the content is and how we want to help engage in change. However, as the message spreads and the Community actually helps promote a shift in mindset, we need to remove the barriers to entry. If we are effective at changing minds, thousands of nonprofit people will need to buy-in and create their own sense of belonging too. |
| 64 | Generating clear and high-bar standards encourages setting standards to evince them for anyone wanting to join the community. To achieve high engagement requires the predictor of motivation, as evidenced by observable behavior (hence the need for a referral - witness to observable walking the talk). For this reason, we ensure that ambassadors will be most likely to engage, which is the key to creating a "community." |
| 73 | I like every aspect of the process, with the one exception being the tendency to only engage the top leaders in organizations. I think it is important to help up and coming leaders as they are shaping values and opinions in this way and also give them comfort that they are not alone here. They may not be able to persuade their current bosses (although you never know!) but they may be the executive director of tomorrow. |
| 76 | I think the vetting process and litmus test are excellent. I just wonder if it is time to explore ways to reach beyond our networks to influential voices that share these values but perhaps we personally don't know. |
| 92 | There is little value in a huge community of random people that kind of care about performance - anyone asked would say that they do - more is not better and quality matters. |
| 95 | I thought the process did a great job of making sure the candidate knew what he/she was getting into and the beliefs behind it. It didn't feel like too much. |
| 98 | I think the vetting done by community and curating of members has been be valuable. There is a tradeoff between this type of curation and spreading the movement, but given the nature of the work we need to focus on quality. |
| 106 | It's more important to ensure the quality of members then to increase their number, to be a landmark in this sector. |
| 108 | It's not just lending your name to something. There's also an element of professional recognition/cachet in being asked to join. |
| 112 | I agree that smaller is better - it will take longer to build but the quality of the thinking and the group's credibility will be higher. I think the focus on quality over quantity is spot on. I also think that the smaller size of the group encourages responsiveness. |
| 114 | I have been impressed by the process -- a community truly building the community. It helps to create a bit of boundary between those who are really enacting things versus interested in reading things. |
| 130 | Nothing is more important than selection for communities of purpose |
| 139 | For me, the vetting process was illuminating. And I enjoyed helping bring on a new ambassador. |
| 144 | I think this is a best-on-class model - I've suggested it to other networks. It's very thorough and effective. |
| 152 | I think the rigor of the process is essential, because there is so much smoke around effective social purpose, that it could be easy to fall into the camp of genuflecting without questioning what (and whom) we're genuflecting to. |
| 157 | Background: With the addition of two new support team members, we believe we could (and should) do a better job in onboarding and engaging ambassadors. Learning more about your interests and needs and helping you better understand ways to benefit more from your relationship with the community are important steps to strengthen the community. It's remarkable that only one ambassador has resigned from the community since its inception. Yet we suspect |

Community Reflection Excerpted Selective Lists of Feedback

| ID | Noteworthy Quotations |
|-----|--|
| | there is a small subset who may not find the community especially engaging for a variety of reasons. |
| 13 | It could be helpful to be more explicit about ways in which individual ambassadors can make unique contributions, which would perhaps require getting to know them better. For example, could nonprofit CEOs offer good PiP examples? |
| 20 | Personally, I need more concrete steps I could take to be more engaged. |
| 39 | In addition to considering ways to help ambassadors exit gracefully, I think we also need to find ways to get ambassadors to feel more able to freely (and anonymously) express their true feelings about the community. I worry that there are perhaps multiple communities forming: those who are closely aligned with Mario and the support team and those who are less engaged, for various reasons. |
| 41 | I felt reasonably well introduced though, based on my own learning style, some vivid case examples would have helped at the outset. I've since collected them but, when moving fast, that kind of information can help for grounding. |
| 50 | I think facilitating a face-to-face conversation with another community member within the first 3 months would allow for a stronger connection |
| 55 | the local gatherings have been valuable... I suspect the stronger the connection the greater likelihood there will be participation. It can be hard for people to engage when they don't know who they are engaging with. |
| 64 | I believe that the onboarding and engagement process is amazing. All I would like to know is how to receive more feeds of work going on with re to specific topics, in order to plug in. |
| 102 | My onboarding was incredible. I don't know what others' experience has been, but I don't know that you can improve things much more. |
| 139 | I think on boarding process is good, but the more personal reaching out and seeing how individuals can contribute and participate would be a real plus. |
| 144 | I felt lots of love in the nomination and onboarding process. Way more attention than other efforts I've been a part of. There is more room for stewardship during the first year, to help engagement become deeper...that's where I feel like I could do more and could use help on how I can do more. |
| 78 | Everything is not always a perfect fit and rather than just going along with things and not participating, people should have a way to leave. |
| 83 | Certainly, I think this is an important part of any mature and thoughtful engagement/commitment. |
| 91 | Definitely, as long as you're talking about letting people exit gracefully, not figuring out how to offboard people gracefully because they're not contributing.. |
| 108 | Exit ramps are always nice, but I think Ambassadors are grown-ups who can manage their own graceful exits. Certainly there's no penalty for exit now. |
| 110 | If people want to leave for any reason, it doesn't behoove the Leap community to make it difficult for people to leave. Their desire to leave may have nothing to do with their philosophical feelings about the work. |
| 116 | Want to have participants who desire to be part of community |
| 118 | I think the people that we have selected will exit if it does not work for them. That said by continuing to communicate the expectations and the purpose I don't think this will be a problem. People want to do well and the right thing but when they don't know what that is, it's kind of hard to do. |
| 122 | Things change and respectful exit strategy would help lower the number of unengaged members. |
| 125 | Ambassadors should only continue to participate as long as the experience is meaningful. The difficulty now is the prestige factor. It is an honor to be included in the range of such extraordinary nonprofit professionals. |
| 137 | Yes. Letting people cycle off frees them up from guilt and strengthens the community by having true believers to carry the torch. |
| 138 | A large (and constantly growing) community only works if its membership feels tethered to the mission and |

Community Reflection Excerpted Selective Lists of Feedback

| ID | Noteworthy Quotations |
|-----|---|
| | each other. It's less engaging for new members if a large cohort of the current members are not engaged. |
| 142 | I really am not sure that I see this as a problem that needs a solution. It seems that you attract the kind of participants who could freely exit when they see that neither the group nor their participation adds value. |
| 148 | I do think it's important to have ways for folks to exit gracefully/ "renew" their commitment |
| 10 | How could we possibly meet the needs of the ambassadors without asking them what they want, need, expect?! |
| 14 | I am a strong believer in collecting constituent feedback, and believe that the ambassadors community is no exception. It is what will keep us relevant and vibrant. |
| 16 | It is a critical means of assessing impact and has implications for the whole sector that may be far more viable as a quicker, better and cheaper way to get to outcomes for many smaller organizations. However, the feedback must be gathered in small bites given the time constraints of many ambassadors. |
| 40 | It seems important to verify that the PI is showing up in work - and also to make note of how it is adapted in different contexts - versus just being communicated to passive audiences. |
| 44 | You already do this better than most... |
| 55 | Same question as with clients. Does the community make a difference? How much of a difference and how do you know? As a side, it might be interesting to reflect on if people feel they are part of a community and what would make them feel like part of a community. I suspect people feel tied to a community to the degree they have relationships with the group. |
| 64 | I am a firm believer in feedback, continuous, critical (positive, negative or indifferent), and analyzing that data to make improvements. |
| 73 | Data data data. Having said that, some of us need nudges to complete these surveys. And don't overdo it. |
| 89 | Feedback from those "in the fold" as well as those outside the community is important to monitor community commitment and engagement, as well as to test whether any of the community's "work" matters - to whom - and what has changed as a result. A perception that engagement in the community matters will keep community members engaged, to a point - but data will encourage them to stay and contribute more. The bigger (and IMHO "better") question is "What difference is my engagement making?" Being able to point to concrete answers to that question is, I believe, why this community exists. |
| 98 | I think you have a done great job getting ambassador feedback. I think that it is important to get more feedback from those you seek to influence. You may be doing this, but I am not aware of it. |
| 108 | If the Ambassadors don't feel like they are heard and listened to, I believe they'll feel less invested over time in the work of the community. |
| 152 | The mandate for ambassadors is broad. Understanding what would be helpful for people advancing these ideas in a variety of circumstances/venues is essential - even if not all of the 'wouldn't it be wonderful if we could's' can be accommodated. I'm confused as to where feedback from the field enters in. If the ambassadors are meant to be evangelists (in whatever fields we work in), looking for changes in what people say/the conventional wisdom would seem to be the best way to test whether we're making headway in changing mindsets. |
| 20 | I think I and everyone would benefit from understanding and seeing how this effort will produce more results than similar efforts such as by GEO and the work around the Forces for Good: The Six Practices of High-Impact Nonprofits book. I think that GEO has suffered because it does not really get beyond the points of easy agreement. Who does not agree with the Leap mission? What do they believe and do? How do those need to change? What are the obstacles to high performance facing those on the path? What help do they need? |
| 44 | I'm interested if its scheduled and as effective as the last time we convened in DC |
| 56 | I believe I've thought much and practiced some of the purposes of the community. I've also got a good sense of the field. And, I think this is the most serious bend in the road we've come to, to create and help run realistic programs and so as to influence the outcomes of the social sector. |

Community Reflection Excerpted Selective Lists of Feedback

| ID | Noteworthy Quotations |
|-----|---|
| 58 | I'm passionate about the PIOSA. We're using it in our scaling efforts around the country and more organizations need to know about it and use it. |
| 67 | Love to see the work blossom in any or all of the above possibilities. |
| 78 | I always enjoy interactive sessions with the community and they motivate me to do more. |
| 79 | These are the right strategic questions. And an additional one would be an exploration of whether to embed the ambassadors into an existing org to leverage its network, brand, and reach. |
| 91 | I think this work is critical, and I think that the LEAP community has set some excellent standards that can actually be operationalized. It's clear that the current structure isn't sustainable, but the need for this type of association won't go away. |
| 125 | I think this is the highest and best use of the ambassadors. From there, the LEAP staff implements whatever materializes. |
| 130 | Many systemic factors -- positive and negative -- are best addressed collectively. This is a very high value add for the community. |
| 133 | I think our value-add lies in: a) offering mutual support among members; b) updates on key developments (like Mario's Leap letters), c) creation of learning products related to performance like PIOSA. Perhaps there is an opportunity to do more with the third type of offering. |
| 139 | All of the above ideas have potential. The keys, as you note, are "time and resources." Or as I often ask, "who wakes up in the morning thinking about this?" This is a challenge for a community of volunteers. |
| 149 | The biggest priority for me is how can the Community support the capacity of nonprofits to make changes in to reach high performance. The PI framework can be intimidating and more support is needed to encourage its uptake. |
| 150 | The comment is good input for the process/effort |
| 31 | Very keen on the strategic discussion on focus and core beliefs |
| 45 | Always interested in helping where I can make a contribution to this important effort. |
| 78 | I've always enjoyed the micro communities. |
| 91 | It's a critical need, so I want to be involved. |
| 130 | This is a situation where you make a path by walking it. If we don't bring collective intention here it won't get done. |
| 139 | Very interested in the issues and potential impact. |
| 147 | This would be a good fit with my professional background and I'd be happy to try to contribute in this way. |
| 152 | I think the roles nonprofits play on two dimensions - addressing needs that wouldn't otherwise be met and engendering productive citizenship - are essential. Anything the Leap community can do to (1) get this message across, and (2) inspire the people who are engaged with and support these organizations to focus externally -- on what helps others (i.e., performance matters) -- rather than promoting our own individual interest deserves support. |
| 13 | Getting to know fellow ambassadors and having access to an incredible range of expertise on so many topics related to high performance. |
| 14 | The opportunities the community provides to learn and grow from some of the best minds in the field. |
| 15 | The opportunity to interact with other top leaders via meetings and the email list. |
| 16 | It speaks to the very core of what the nonprofit sector should be focused on. |
| 39 | Ability to connect with like-minded people. |
| 40 | The spirit of generosity and deep commitment of members to advance the sector. |
| 41 | Feeling part of a like-minded group of deeply humble and talented leaders |
| 43 | Access to interesting thoughts and opinions regarding performance in the nonprofit sector. |
| 45 | The breadth and depth of the expertise and experience of the community. |
| 46 | Personal and professional association with national leaders devoted to nonprofit high performance. |
| 48 | Hearing and learning from a cadre of incredibly smart, insightful and effective leaders committed to |

Community Reflection Excerpted Selective Lists of Feedback

| ID | Noteworthy Quotations |
|-----|---|
| | thinking about how to achieve better performance to realize better outcomes for those/communities served. |
| 52 | keeping a pulse on current thinking |
| 54 | It is a talented community and a caring and compassionate community. Helps not to feel alone in this hard work. |
| 56 | Meeting and sharing information, perspectives and experiences to keep my efforts sharp and effective. |
| 57 | Getting up to date information on the state of performance management |
| 58 | The thought leadership is inspiring. |
| 63 | I like the breadth of the knowledge and experience of the group. |
| 67 | The collective passion, energy and brilliance. |
| 68 | Building connections to smart, thoughtful, get-it-done leaders. |
| 69 | I appreciate how ambassadors respond to broad questions from the group in thoughtful, comprehensive manner. |
| 71 | Networking with others who care deeply about results, and understand the complexity |
| 74 | It pushes my thinking to the larger system issues blocking high performance in the nonprofit sector, and fuels my sense of urgency about the work. |
| 76 | Connection to people who prioritize performance/impact/results. |
| 79 | Sharing with impressive leaders a view about the social sector being grounded in high performance. |
| 80 | The energy around topics that have languished for decades. |
| 82 | Being with like-minded individuals who share the same passion and commitment to high performance. |
| 83 | The authenticity, credibility, and consistency |
| 86 | Keeps me up to speed on implementation challenges in the field. |
| 87 | Good info. Connected to key leaders and movement for change. |
| 89 | That it is structured as a "community" that operates respecting thoughtful community members who have a shared commitment to high performance. |
| 90 | Mario's team and Mario. Just straight up amazing to watch someone else's vision turn into reality. |
| 103 | Shared values; and the support team rocks! |
| 107 | Being connected to a community of thought leaders committed to mission and high performance who share generously and freely their experiences and expertise. I feel more equipped to do my work and have greater credibility in my sphere of influence. |
| 108 | Being in the company of such extraordinary leaders. |
| 110 | Knowing that there's a robust community that I have the potential to leverage, if needed. |
| 117 | Being part of a network of people who share a passion for high performance and making a difference. |
| 120 | Feeling part of something bigger, and knowing I can reach out to folks within the community. |
| 124 | A feeling that it is a group who don't think good intentions are enough! And who are happy to talk about the gap between intentions and reality, rather than brushing under the carpet. |
| 125 | The collection of great minds in the nonprofit sector committed to improving the sector long term. |
| 127 | The shared mission of the PI is incredibly powerful and needed by the sector. |
| 130 | Authenticity |
| 132 | Email updates and perspective; sense of solidarity that comes with these communications |
| 133 | Connections with people who care about performance! Makes you feel that you're not alone in your efforts. |
| 136 | The access to the breadth and depth of expertise and experience. Being a part of this community. |
| 138 | Proximity to a thoughtful, committed and passionate group of leaders |
| 142 | Being connected with a group of invested, like-minded professionals in leadership positions throughout the sector. |
| 146 | Ideas, thinking, inspiration |

Community Reflection Excerpted Selective Lists of Feedback

| ID | Noteworthy Quotations |
|-----|--|
| 149 | Its vision and collective knowledge. The community is promoting a powerful framework for change that will transform mindsets and service delivery that will improve the lives of people the sector is set up to help. |
| 151 | Feeling like I'm part of a burgeoning movement that matters. |
| 155 | Enjoy being with members who care deeply about evidence. |
| 155 | I love feeling like I am not alone... that I have partners in this extremely important and often challenging work. |
| 14 | I sometimes don't have time to prioritize everything that comes through, and I am frustrated when I cannot get to everything. |
| 16 | There is an implicit divide between those who have ample time to contribute and those who may have plenty to contribute but have too much else on their plate. |
| 54 | At this point, it can still feel a bit distant. Not sure how to find stronger ways to connect. |
| 55 | Don't know who these talented like-minded people are. It is difficult to create relationships and reach out to people I don't know. |
| 63 | Not always sure how to engage. |
| 73 | I'd like to see us amplify a more diverse set of voices. I particular, I'd like to see the voices of some younger folks engaged in thinking about data and performance. I think the community does a good job of representing both the folks that tend to work on performance issues as their do job and those that run nonprofits. But we aren't necessarily representing the younger generation of folks thinking about performance. |
| 76 | I personally don't feel like I ever have enough time to engage - given work and family obligations. I am part of the 70%. Always read the content. Often forward it and act on it. But don't engage enough. |
| 79 | The seemingly denseness of communications. It's hard to quickly digest the key idea/to do on my part. |
| 81 | If I have to remember to go to a specific website I won't do it. I rely on communications or alerts to find me. |
| 83 | It is a constant reminder that I need to do more - to support the community and strengthen the sector. |
| 84 | I feel like I don't really have a handle on what the community 'is' anymore or what we are hoping to achieve. The size of the community makes it easy for people to become observers and to intentionally (or unintentionally) lead to confusion about what the community stands for now.. |
| 98 | That we don't connect more often - and I know we are all busy people |
| 112 | Nothing not to like! |
| 120 | Volume of info is sometimes like drinking from a firehose and I feel guilty for not keeping up. |
| 124 | I worry that the Community leaders worry that the Community isn't effective (but I also like the anxiety!) |
| 125 | I feel LEAP is not having the more comprehensive effect on the sector that's possible. |
| 131 | Sometimes it feels like information flows to us in lengthy emails that I don't always have the time/focus to read and then it becomes very difficult to go back to and refocus. |
| 134 | I don't know who is out there. There aren't faces with names and it makes it hard to feel comfortable in on-line conversation. |
| 136 | The virtual nature makes it difficult to form strong relationships. |
| 144 | Not knowing if we are preaching to the choir or if we have actually converted folks. |
| 150 | I don't feel like I can keep up with the communications and it's hard for me to respond thoughtfully to posts, even if I'm interested in the topic. |
| 156 | I find the modes of communication to be inefficient and frustrating. Using something like Slack or another tool might help make critical communications more salient. |
| 16 | Continue to find ways to provide simple, bite sized pieces of the imperative for smaller nonprofits to consider. Evolve our thinking on this and offer up tangible resources to help them get to better outcomes. |
| 37 | I think when/if I am back in an organization, the knowledge there is a network I can reach out to (and your help in doing so) will be invaluable. |

Community Reflection Excerpted Selective Lists of Feedback

| ID | Noteworthy Quotations |
|-----|--|
| 40 | I'd love to have a venue to debate thorny questions and advance new thinking with other experts in my field (scaling, large-scale change). |
| 55 | I would like to be able to reach out to folks who have faced the challenges I am facing to learn how they navigated them. |
| 69 | Possibly help connect to opportunities to work together in the field. |
| 73 | I would love to be more engaged in a group of philanthropic leaders focused on this issue. |
| 84 | there needs to be a greater emphasis on what we are supposed to be communicating as speakers/leaders. As great as the PIOSA and PI are, they are not terribly great motivators or 'hooks'. We need to better figure out what the inspirational and useful messages are that can be delivered to various audiences. |
| 86 | Address the challenges of survival. |
| 114 | Banging the drum on the macro message about the link between org capacities and results. |
| 118 | I need a way to let people know when I am pushing the PI. When I am asked to speak now the PI is always a part of speech and often times my entire speech is framed by the PI |
| 124 | The more I contribute the more I will reflect on what I produce, sharpen it, and be confident to take it to an even wider audience - I think this is key. |
| 128 | I think a clearer and more direct ask of what is needed, what could be (needs to be) influenced/communicated. |
| 139 | i have loved having access to high quality PowerPoint slides that help practitioners in the social sector. More of these, with even more visual appeal, would be great. |
| 141 | How to influence others to think in a similar way and make it feel not just the 'right thing to do' but strategic in the short and long-term |
| 143 | continue to make the case in the nonprofit community of practice and with funders that performance matters |
| 152 | Keep working on what will be helpful for all those community based organizations that will be stitching together the fabric of their communities at the same time that they're addressing its needs. |
| 13 | Find a way to welcome and engage all those people who are not ambassadors but want to be part of a performance-focused network. These are sometimes individuals who advocate for high performance but feel isolated in their organizations or community. A support network might help them advocate more effectively, which would help us achieve our mission. |
| 20 | Apply high performance to us: define the metrics by which we would know that the sector was higher performing, as well as earlier indicators of our impact. |
| 31 | Engage in a new strategy and vision process, reflecting on what we think has and hasn't changed through our efforts |
| 44 | Let's set some specific, quantified results for our work. |
| 56 | I'd work to uncover a galvanizing purpose among a large number of members so they find it energizing to participate more. |
| 73 | Perhaps more intentional and targeted communication and outreach to both expand the range of voices and also ensure that those that stand the most to benefit from (or contribute to) a particular effort are targeted |
| 103 | I think we need to find ways for members of the community to be more proactive in engaging with the broader community. I suspect most of us are pretty reactive and respond when prompted (once, twice, thrice) by members of the support team. I don't know exactly how to do this, but maybe it can be an agenda item for a future discussion. |
| 124 | Find ways to make (and the rest) contribute more! Might the Community consider a range of activities and developing the next gen of leaders - winning hearts and minds early? Perhaps we can't change those who are CEOs already and 30 years in, what about those who'll be in their place in 30 years time? |
| 10 | I'm incredibly grateful to Mario for his investments in the infrastructure of this community. I really hope we |

Community Reflection Excerpted Selective Lists of Feedback

| ID | Noteworthy Quotations |
|------------|--|
| | can find another Mario-like leader who cares this much about performance! I fear this community will fizzle if we don't. |
| 20 | I'm excited by the potential. I have a high need for strategic and performance structure. |
| 38 | Thank you for investing the time and effort to make this community work. |
| 44 | As networks go, this one is already better than most |
| 46 | The nonprofit sector is addicted to fundraising success as the only important capacity to build and the only clear measure of effectiveness. I hope that this community can present a clear counterpoint, calling nonprofits to measurable improvement for specific people and causes. It matters whether we reach that end goal. High performance on the 7 Pillars alone is not enough. |
| 74 | Thank you for such a thoughtful process! |
| 78 | Thanks so much for continuing to allow me to be part of such an amazing group. It's been fun to watch it grow! |
| 80 | This community can contribute to a game-changing shift in perspective and, hopefully, practice. But, it will be a long slog, which will require multiple ways to prove the idea will benefit society more than current typical practice in the field. |
| 100 | We gotta keep trying if we want to get anywhere near the goals we seek to achieve. |
| 107 | Thank you! This is an important community that was inspired and visionary. I am on board to help it continue to grow in any way I can. |
| 114 | I appreciate the thoughtfulness and effort that has gone into building the community. I have learned from that and do think it provides a certain sense of identity to people who share a certain set of beliefs. |
| 120 | Continue to be proud to be a part of this community. Exciting to see it evolve. |
| 130 | Gratitude. Thank you for your stewardship, your leadership, your sensitivity. |
| 139 | I'll just repeat that this effort seems more important to me than ever, and I support the directions this survey proposes. |
| 144 | I think the recent updates Cheryl and team have been sending routinely are AWESOME - capturing where we are and where we are going in an almost weekly digest is super effective. Keep that up! And let me know how I can help! |
| 149 | Thanks for asking! I am also grateful for the work of the Leap leadership team in moving us closer to realizing Mario's vision. |
| 150 | Appreciate the chance to weigh in and getting prompted to complete the survey. The ambassadors and the support team are great folks! |
| 152 | Thank you for all the care and attention you've put into this and so much else that this community is and does. |

Moving Forward on Your Feedback

(11/30/2017)

In my September 7 letter, I shared how grateful the team and I are to the many of you who contribute your time, intellect, and spirit in big and small ways to move our collaborative work forward. I also asked for your help in answering a number of questions, including these very important ones: Are the community's efforts to encourage and inspire nonprofits and funders to embrace high performance making a difference? Is the concept of community feasible, relevant, and sustainable at this moment in time?

You clearly affirmed there is much to celebrate. Your feedback also unambiguously indicates that the community's future warrants deep reflection to determine what it can be, the challenges it faces, how it might evolve, and how it might transition. Such reflection will take time—likely well into 2018.

Core to the team process of reflection and responses will be our transparency about what's not working. We'll explain where assumptions have failed and why—not for self-flagellation but to learn and inform what happens moving forward. We'll make some hard calls to fix and/or stop certain aspects of what the community does—with a positive outlook toward what lies ahead.

While we focus on the strategic issues facing the community, we're moving forward over the next several weeks to introduce these tactical actions in response to your feedback:

- **Some of you said there was too much activity overall** – We're doing a "level set" to slow down current projects and curtail others now through mid-2018.
- **Some of you said you get too much email** – We'll be reducing email activity and provide ways to help you better manage what you receive.
- **Some said you don't have enough time** – We'll propose options to give relief for those who don't have the time or desire to be involved in the online communications and would welcome decreased expectations around their overall involvement.
- **We gleaned that there's too much ambiguity about the community and lack of understanding on role of ambassador** – We'll offer clearer explanations of the community's purpose, strategy for change, and fundamental premises of community operation. We'll also share more specific criteria and expectations for ambassadors.
- **We've determined the need to improve ambassador selection/onboarding** – We'll propose changes to vet and onboard candidates in a faster and more responsive manner and, most important, explicitly confirm that candidates have a strong desire and expressed enthusiasm to be in the community.

We believe the steps we take will help address these concerns. We'll do our best to avoid overwhelming you with a deluge of data. But the reality is that a community needs a rich communication stream to flourish.

As always, our best wishes,
Mario and Leap team

A Personal Video Message from Me to You (1/16/2018)

Hello everyone,

I hope you can find 30 minutes to view this video (actually 29:16 minutes!). It's nothing fancy—just me talking. I share my thinking on the community, the feedback you've provided, how we're responding, and what lies ahead.

This is something I wanted to do to thank you and to speak more personally about what we're doing together.

Thanks in advance for taking a look and for additional feedback you'd like to share.

My best, Mario

PS – I'm attaching the deck I used for talking points if you want to follow along with the video.

Our Vision, Purpose, and Guiding Principles (2/6/2018)

As promised, we're committed to do more to explain the core definitions of the community and the role of ambassadors. Here's the description of the community's vision and purpose that has guided our activity and growth to date.

Vision and Purpose

The Leap of Reason Ambassadors Community is a private community of nonprofit thought leaders, leader practitioners, forward-looking funders, policy makers, and instigators who believe that mission and performance are inextricably linked.

The community's audacious **vision** is to trigger a vital core of the social sector to embrace the importance of high performance.

The members of the community share the **desire** to inspire, support, and convince nonprofit and public-sector leaders (and their stakeholders) to build great organizations for greater societal impact and to increase the expectation and adoption of high performance as the path to this end.

Guiding Principles

We come together with mutual respect for one another's experience, expertise, and viewpoints. In this trusted place, members value and protect the credibility of the community as a whole. Our **guiding principles** provide the roadmap for our journey.

- **PERFORMANCE-DRIVEN** – Mission and performance are inextricably linked. High performance is an essential prerequisite to delivering meaningful and lasting results for the people and causes we serve, and ensuring a more just and sustainable world.
- **RELENTLESS** – High performance is a long, obstacle-filled journey. Direction and continuous improvement are more important than distance.
- **POWER OF COMMUNITY** – Changing minds and attitudes toward high performance starts with the doers and believers—and expands to those who are pre-disposed or open.
- **RELATIONSHIPS** – Trusted relationships are the essential connective tissue of community.
- **OPEN MINDS** – How we engage is as important as what we produce—we intentionally seek diverse perspectives and expertise and value an open and transparent environment, in which we share successes, challenges, and obstacles with candor.
- **RESPECT** – We respect present and past leaders who have worked tirelessly to advance high performance within their organizations and throughout the social and public sectors; we seek collaboration, not competition.
We welcome any questions, comments or suggestions.

Best,
Mario and Leap Support Team

p.s. The next topic in the series will be “Strategy for Change.”
Catch up on the **Reflection Blog** series [here](#).
Not had time to watch my “personal video message to you”? Click [here](#).

Our Strategy for Change (2/20/2018)

In the reflection feedback, a number of you asked about the community's plan, strategy, and/or theory of change. The team and I have always had a view of the community, what it could do, how it would function, and what it could become, but we certainly didn't share our views as clearly we should have. So in our ongoing efforts to explain the core definitions of the community and the role of ambassadors, here is our “strategy for change.”

Our Strategy for Change

Imagine the power of 300 respected leaders regularly speaking out in their communities and networks with a unified message to funders, policymakers, and nonprofit leaders: Building high-performance organizations is a vital pathway to achieve meaningful, measurable, and financially sustainable results for the people and causes served.

Imagine that these 300 leaders are linked together in, and supported by, a community of peers—a network greater than the sum of its parts.

Imagine this community of peers tapping its collective knowledge and experience to help each other:

- perform better in their own work, communities, and networks
- continuously hone the “performance matters” message
- learn ways to deliver this message more effectively
- collaboratively develop products that benefit thousands of other nonprofits and funders eager to be more effective in meeting their critically important missions.

Imagine yet further these 300 leaders scaling to three, four, or even five times their numbers through a thoughtful, systematic process of engaging and energizing other leaders with a strong affinity for the community’s purpose, desire to be involved, and knowledge of what it takes to build high-performance organizations.

Imagine doing this steadily over many years and how mindsets in our sector could shift.

This is the Leap Ambassadors Community’s strategy for change—what we are meant to do and become.

Again, we welcome any questions, comments, or suggestions.

Best,

Mario and Leap support team

p.s. Next topic in the series: “Changes in [Ambassador] Criteria and Approach.”

Catch up on the **Reflection Blog** series [here](#).

Not had time to watch my “personal video message to you”? Click [here](#).

Ambassador Criteria (3/6/2018)

In an earlier post, I highlighted our commitment to explain the community's core definitions and the role of ambassadors better. We've worked on clearer criteria to give ambassadors better guidance on what to consider when nominating individuals and to allow a candidate and the community to determine if there's a good fit and match. The process for determining that fit has also been improved.

Courtesy, respect, and thoughtfulness guide the systematic approach to recruiting and vetting new ambassadors.

For consideration, candidates must demonstrate:

- **Strong affinity for the community's purpose**—the belief that performance matters and that building high-performance organizations is a vital pathway to achieve meaningful, measurable, and financially sustainable results for the people and causes served.
- **Strong desire and expressed enthusiasm to be a member of the community** over and above any benefits gained through affiliation.
- **Meaningful accomplishments** in their lives and **work that demonstrates excellence** in their field and contribute to the community's purpose.
- **Depth of knowledge and expertise** of what high performance is and what it takes to build high-performance organizations, whether through experience in leadership, management, programs, financial health, organizational culture, internal monitoring, external evaluation, or other related disciplines.
- **Ability, willingness, and time to contribute to the community and advocate** its “performance matters” message in their communities and networks.
- **Alignment with community norms** to ensure a reasonable fit with the community's group chemistry and protocols that allow for and encourage dissenting views, independent thinking, and objectivity—always done with respect and courtesy.
 - Ability to separate himself/herself from his/her organization
 - Ability to avoid unreasonably skewing, constraining, biasing dialogue or extreme positions
 - Comfort with constructive conflict and the willingness to respectfully call others out.These are the heartfelt ties that bind each ambassador within the community.

Improvements to the exploratory invite process allow for a series of focused discussions with candidates and provide a structured way for the candidate and our team to find the mutual match and fit.

Again, we welcome any questions, comments, or suggestions.

Best,

Mario and Leap support team

p.s. Next topic in the series: “Ambassador Expectations.”

Catch up on the Reflection Blog series [here](#).

Not had time to watch my “personal video message to you”? Click [here](#).

Ambassador Expectations (3/29/2018)

As you know, the exploratory inviting and onboarding process is back underway. Thanks to feedback from many of you, we believe we're in a much better place in how we share and explain the:

- Criteria for assessing the mutual match and fit of a candidate and the community (shared in the March 6 [Ambassador Criteria](#) post), and
- Expectations for what's involved in being an ambassador and a member of the community (see below).

In presenting the expectations, we're very clear that, first and foremost, ambassadors “walk the talk” by demonstrating “performance matters” in your own work and actively encouraging others to do the same—*in your own words, time, and way*. The cornerstone expectation is that “As an ambassador, I will participate in some way.”

As an ambassador, I commit to my fellow ambassadors that I will:

- **Serve as an ambassador of the community's purpose in my own work, communities, and networks by:**
 - Buying into the need to trigger a mindshift that mission and performance are inextricably linked
 - Inspiring, supporting, and convincing nonprofit and public-sector leaders (and their stakeholders) to accept that “performance matters”
 - Incorporating the community's messaging—anchored in the definition of high performance and its seven disciplines—to deliver a consistent, ongoing, and unified message to the field
 - Representing the community's purpose, products, and positions in speaking engagements, planning retreats, conferences, informal conversations, personal emails, and social media channels, *when I can*.
- **Be a contributor, learner, and beneficiary of the community's online forum by:**
 - Being reasonably present in the online forum—asking and responding to requests for assistance or information, contributing to conversation prompts that help build relationships and the social fabric of the community. I will contribute if and when I want and in my own way, with the expectation that my participation in the online forum contributes to the community 70-20-10 [rule of participation](#):
 - 70% observe—you read or observe but don't contribute
 - 20% comment—you respond, question, exchange, share, or suggest in dialogue with others in the community
 - 10% create content—you are part of the community's collaborative-development backbone.*(It doesn't matter in which of these online participation levels you engage; you just need to be in one of them. Episodic observation counts, but no one should be completely dormant. To date,*

ambassador participation has been higher than the 70-20-10 ratio, noteworthy for a community of our size.)

- - Contributing to the collective IQ of the community by sharing specific knowledge and experience in building high-performance organizations, whether in leadership, management, program, financial health, culture, performance, evaluation, etc., *when I can*.
 - **Contribute to growing the community and the relationships on which it is built by:**
 - Lending a hand to nominate ambassador candidates, invite those you know, participate with others in regional gatherings, make connections for other ambassadors, and help build the social fabric of the community, *when I can*.
 - Sharing examples of my efforts in the field to promote the community's messages of high performance, products, and positions to share with others
 - Responding to short queries, surveys, and requests for feedback to vet proposed candidates, review and critique new products, and gain insights on issues facing the community.
- An early version of these expectations that was featured in the Community Reflection Outreach appeared to be well received. Again, thanks to many of you, we believe this version is refined and improved.

As always, we welcome any questions, comments, or suggestions.

Best,
Mario and Leap support team

p.s. Next topic in the series: "Nominating Ambassador Candidates."

Catch up on the **Reflection Blog** series [here](#).

Not had time to watch my "personal video message to you"? Click [here](#).

Broadening Community Review Process for Products (5/8/2018)

Over the past several months, three ambassadors raised concerns about whether we're being too self-promotional/self-congratulatory in some of our materials and providing enough balance (the good, bad, and/or ugly) between what a leader self-reports about his/her organization's progress and a third-party's point of view.

It's important that any piece published under the community's banner be vetted and reviewed by the community in advance of public availability. We've done a pretty good-to-ok job on some and a not-so-good job on others. Here are some proposed changes to ensure that we aren't inadvertently reflecting poorly on the community and its credibility. Of course, we welcome your thoughts.

Performance Imperative/Performance Practice (aka “foundational products”)

The current process “develop collaboratively, review, repeat” seems to work well. So no change.

Ambassador Insights (curated from community online forum discussions)

The online forum dialogue is available so ambassadors have excellent context on an insight curated from online exchanges. Individual review/sign-off from any ambassador who contributes to a discussion is already in place. We will add a review period of at least a week to allow you to raise concerns prior to public availability.

Kickstarters, Performance in Action vignettes, and other similar pieces

We propose a more extended process, with the help of a to-be-established editorial/communications advisory micro-community (MC), to allow for vetting/justifying meaningful examples and confirm there are no outstanding issues or concerns. After review by the MC, we’ll also share with community for feedback at least a week in advance.

NOTE: Currently there are two Performance in Action vignettes already in draft so we’ll use a slightly revised approach for them. Look for an email from Ingvild Bjornvold soon.

Funder Profiles

For the near term, we’ll present the new funder profile to the community at least a week before public launch. Later in the year, we plan to revisit how a micro-community (probably a different one than the above) might help in the selection/approval of targeted profiles.

Promotional emails and social media posts sent on the community’s behalf

This approach appears to be working since overall reaction to these messages has been positive and our 2018 unsubscribe rate has averaged 0.37% (less than a half-percent). To avoid overloading your inbox, we’re suggesting no changes to our current process of team development and review. But we want to be sure the community trusts us to act on its behalf. We’re looking at ways to get your occasional feedback to confirm all is well. And, if you EVER have a reservation/concern about an email or social media post, please reach out directly to Cheryl Collins, ccollins@morino.org, who leads the Communications and Content Management team.

Our thanks to the three ambassadors who raised the issue in such a constructive way and our appreciation to all of you for your assistance in making sure that we are continuing to be thoughtful and rigorous in all of our work together.

Best,

Mario and the Leap support team

PS – Have a candidate to nominate? Go [here](#).

Another Video Message From Me to You (Community Progress and Plans) (7/26/2018)

Hello, all,

This two-part video aims to give you some context on our work (Part 1) and a six-month update on the community’s progress and plans (Part 2). Again, nothing fancy—just me talking.

- **Part 1** explains what we're doing (and why) and why the community itself matters. Please click [here](#) to view the **first video** (14 minutes). For your convenience, you can download the PowerPoint deck [here](#) to review in advance and/or use as a reference.
- **Part 2** shares updates on progress we've made as a community since the start of this year, touches on issues we face, and details major actions for the rest of the year and into 2019. Please click [here](#) to view the **second video** (23 minutes). You can also download the PowerPoint deck for the second video [here](#).
And, as you'll see with almost anything we do from now on, we're asking for feedback. Just go to <https://leapambassadors.org/tell-the-team>.
We're also trying something new—**two online interactive “community conversations” (~ 45-minute session)** to give you and your fellow ambassadors the chance to gather online for a brief review of the strategy followed by an open discussion/Q&A session.
- Join us for one of the online community conversations:
 - **August 15, 2018, 2p (ET)**. Register [here](#).
 - **September 18, 2018, 2p (ET)**. Register [here](#).
- The preliminary agenda for the online gathering allows five minutes to welcome everyone and take care of a few housekeeping details, a 10-minute summary/overview, and up to 30 minutes for open discussion and Q&A.
I hope you'll find the time in your busy schedules to view both videos and join us for one of the online sessions.

As always, thanks for what each of you are doing to benefit others and the sector and for helping further develop our common interests in our community.

Mario and Leap support team

Making Diversity Intentional (10/18/2018)

This post and video (6 1/2 minutes) – click [here](#) to view – starts our ongoing effort to be a more diverse community and be better for doing so. Please consider joining us on November 1, 1:00pm (ET), for our next Community Conversation where we'll be discussing community updates and our plan to increase diversity.

In last year's community reflection survey, ambassadors expressed a desire for greater diversity in the community, and we couldn't agree more. It's taken some time, but this post proposes an intentional and ongoing effort to increase diversity within the Leap Ambassadors Community. We're grateful for the continuing work of the Growing Community MC, assisted by the Leap support team, which has shaped our approach to this effort. Special thanks to MC members—**Ellen Bass, Ingvild Bjornvold, Tynesia Boyea-Robinson, Tracy Gray, Nan Stone, Denise Zeman**—and ambassador **Michael McAfee**. We also want to thank **Carol Thompson Cole, Dominique Bernardo, Ellen, and Henry McKoy**. You'll see Carol, Dominique, and

Ellen’s comments in the video, but we don’t want you to miss Henry’s powerful quotation that arrived after we moved into production:

“Diversity allows us to fulfill the promise and potential of the Leap Ambassadors Community. Talent comes in all shapes, sizes, colors, forms and genders.”

– Henry McKoy, Professor and Director of Entrepreneurship, School of Business, North Carolina Central University

Many organizations are now striving to achieve better diversity, equity, and inclusion. Some are thoughtfully pursuing the goal for the greater good. Some want to be “in step” with the movement; others are simply engaging in intellectual discourse; and others only acting for compliance. For our community, this is more than a numbers exercise. It’s a way to be better, and we’re using the lens we collaboratively defined in the Performance Imperative:

“Executives and boards cultivate diversity and inclusion at every level of the organization, because a wide array of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives contribute to an organization’s creativity, empathy, and effectiveness.”

Based on feedback and our own assessment, the plan (at this time) focuses on four areas, listed in order of priority (see community’s current diversity make-up below):

- Race/ethnicity, people of color
- Age, specifically younger and emerging leaders
- Domain, specifically leaders of public-sector municipal agencies
- Geographic, mid-United States, and other metropolitan regions that are not East or West Coast-centric

Actions, More Than Words

We need to lead by prioritizing, committing, and demonstrating positive action. We must establish (and keep) this as a top priority for the community and the Leap team as well. We propose holding ourselves accountable as a community and ask each of you to help us gain broader diversity within our ranks that is well above sector norms. To do this, we need to “walk the talk” and demonstrate our commitment through our actions and outreach. And, while we can set policies, establish targets, and take other positive actions, the community must demonstrate a commitment by taking the extra steps to find and nominate quality, diverse talent. It means not accepting the “We can’t find qualified candidates” response.

We, the Leap Ambassadors Community, must demonstrate a model / approach for how leaders can break beyond their normal networks and step out of their comfort zones to discover quality leaders who have the potential to fit with our community. These leaders will bring different perspectives, insights, and contacts. The team is already underway with outreach to influencers and thought leaders outside the community for their suggestions for those in the field we could consider—leaders they respect and know are doing good work, are performance driven, and constantly strive to improve for those they serve.

While diversity in the community must be prioritized and pursued, we must also ensure that any candidate—regardless of gender, race, age, domain, or geography—meets the criteria, especially possessing and demonstrating a **strong affinity to our core purpose and meaningful, relevant achievement.**

The most valuable sourcing will be your own thoughtful and diverse nominations. Linda Johaneck, Liz Walters, the rest of the Leap team, and the GrowCom MC all stand ready and eager for your input and nominations.

Best regards,
Mario and Leap support team

Community Plans and Progress for 2019 (1/18/2019)

The beginning of a new year prompts the Leap Ambassadors support team to look ahead and look back on the community's work. This letter gives you a view of what we're thinking for 2019 and a snapshot of some 2018 data points. The July 2018 video and presentation provide context and a baseline for what we're looking to do in 2019 and what we've done over the past six months to advance our work together.

What Can You Expect in 2019?

- **Pittsburgh Learning Circles Program Story**— Later this month, you'll receive a draft of a story about the Forbes Funds' Pittsburgh Learning Circles pilot that brought 26 nonprofit leaders together to guide them through a structured approach to reflect, discuss, and continuously improve their organizations, using the Performance Practice. It's an encouraging (and exciting) look at how a region brought leaders together for greater good.
- **Greater Intentionality** – We believe the rich discussions in the online forum in Q4 are strong signs **that** the community has the appetite to take on important issues (e.g., the argument for unrestricted funding, the importance of being evidence based, funding organizations vs. programs). The team has been following up with those who posted in Q4 to see if there's a logical next step or if more facilitation is needed to arrive at a meaningful next action.
- **The Performance Journey Campaign** – This campaign is aimed at increasing awareness and **adoption** of the combination of the Performance Imperative and Performance Practice. The campaign is anchored by the two points below and will kick off with the promotion of the Pittsburgh Learning Circles program story.
 - High performance leads to meaningful, measurable, lasting change—whether it's lifting families out of homelessness, closing health inequities, or any of the myriad missions that give purpose to the world's social-sector organizations.
 - The Performance Imperative and Performance Practice provide a succinct, focused approach to help organizations discover and act on ways to improve. They also aim to shift minds and behavior in the social sector by making a clear case to funders, policymakers, and business leaders that nonprofits have little hope of producing great results if they don't have the

encouragement and support to strengthen their organizational muscles, foster a culture of continuous improvement, and become a high-performance organization.

We believe this one-two punch approach (in the campaign and across all of our outreach efforts) will make a stronger case to the field that continuous improvement is a necessary and vital path for leaders to pursue for their organizations.

NOTE: In Q1, you can also expect a request to review the Performance Practice with additional proof points aligned to the Performance Imperative 2.0.

- **Community's Theory of Change (TOC)** – Thanks to the urging of several ambassadors, we'll work with some of you who are TOC experts to refine and better communicate the TOC for building a community of value for its members and how its collective contributions can lead to impact on the field. We'll engage a broader group of ambassadors for further vetting. The full community will have the chance to review the TOC at different developmental points and then vet the resource before it's publicly available. This will likely take place through the first half of 2019.
- **Other Areas Under Consideration** – We'll be reaching out for your input, interest, and participation in:
 - Facilitating, enriching, and increasing online discussion for greater value and relevance
 - Continuing the funder profile series
 - Developing a funding performance monograph
 - Assessing the community's performance
 - Simplifying and streamlining the community's website.
- **Ad Hoc Advisors / Futures Project** – After starting and then stopping an exploration of a process to explore how to benefit from ad hoc advisors in late 2018, we're getting back underway this month. We'll reach out again to the 50 ambassadors who expressed interest in scenario-planning and offering their strategic advice. A position paper (in development) will serve as the basis for this restarted effort. As this shapes up, we'll share more to engage the full community.
- **Internal Team** – In Q1, the team is taking a hard look at all of our work to determine if we're 1) doing the right things, 2) doing those right things right (effectively), and 3) aligning the team's skills & strengths for maximum benefit. Intentionality and focus are our watchwords, and we're keeping how 1) you can get the most value from being an ambassador and 2) we can collectively inspire and convince others to advance our purpose at the forefront of every conversation. While we need more substantive feedback, getting positive input along the way is encouraging. See this recent email from the executive director of an Overland Park, KS nonprofit:

I'm still getting familiar with all you have to offer, but I wanted to take a moment and tell you how much I appreciate the good work you're doing. I have especially liked reviewing the Seven Pillars material. One of the things that impressed me was the clear, forceful prose in these documents. I know they reflect the wisdom of many contributors, but I was surprised by the strong, clear voice that came through. Please pass my compliments on to the authors of those articles and reports.

This is definitely a journey for me, and I'm moving slowly to embrace your practices and philosophy, and I'm very much enjoying the trip so far.

Thank you again for doing this. I'm one of the many quiet nonprofits you were probably hoping to help. Just wanted to share my deep appreciation for all your good work.

We're still grappling with the best way to learn more in our own efforts for continuous improvement. We would love your feedback!

What Do We Know From 2018?

The data points below illustrate that efforts to grow and engage the community, offer more options for face-to-face interaction, continue to produce and disseminate collaboratively developed resources, and improve your communications experience are moving forward.

Six-Month Progress Indicators (mid-July 2018 to mid-January 2019)

- Community Growth and Engagement
 - Twenty-six new ambassadors onboarded (from 168 to 194) with 36 more in the vetting process
 - More than 50 ambassadors met in five regional gatherings – Bay Area (10), Boston (4), Cleveland (13), Seattle (4), and DC (22)
 - Intentional broadening of community diversity is gaining traction; you've submitted 44 nominations, and 19 are people of color, three are millennials, three are from the public sector, and 26 are from the Middle U.S.
 - Thirty-eight more ambassadors contacted in one-on-one outreach calls (total of 120 in 2018!)
- Online Forum
 - Definite uptick in ambassador posts to online forum (73% of the 220 messages were ambassador-initiated or responses, thanks to multiple threads in November 2018)
 - Sixty-nine ambassadors have posted at least ONCE
- New Community Resources
 - “Network Effect” funder profile featuring Venture Philanthropy Partners
 - “Graceful Exit: Succession Planning for High-Performing CEOs“
 - “Board Stewardship for Mission Effectiveness and Performance“
- Beyond the Echo Chamber
 - Weekly email distribution recipients increased from a monthly average of 46K to 50K (including 15K funders)
 - ~33K unique page views on <https://leapambassadors.org>
- Social media reach
 - Twitter: 222,800
 - Facebook: 18,950
 - LinkedIn: 24,455
- **Improving Communications Experience**
 - Shorter emails that don't come as often – Sixteen direct team emails with average length of 424 words compared to 34 with average of 614 words in previous six months
 - Online gatherings
 - Community Conversations in August/September on community progress and in November on growing a more diverse community.

Best,
Leap Ambassadors support team

The Community's Ongoing Diversity and Inclusion Work (3/8/2019)

As we're in the process of vetting our first 2019 slate, we're happy to say that, thanks to your thoughtful nominations, community diversity is increasing in our four priority areas. This slate demonstrates your efforts with 24 (51%) people of color, 3 (6.4%) millennials, 1 (2.1%) from the public sector, and 13 (27.5%) from the mid-U.S.

We're grateful for the many ways you have leaned in on this effort. Yet, we all know our work of diversity and inclusion must be intentional and never ending. The latest issue of [Change Agent: The Journal of Communications Network](#) recently landed in our inboxes and it's full of thoughtful articles and reflections to feed our minds and hearts.

The Editors' Note from Michele Norris and Sean Gibbons lays an important foundation for the journal's content when they remind us:

“Racism is a dynamic thread in American life, and it has been since the founding of this great nation. And in a country as diverse as the U.S., race will always be a bright throbbing vein in our body politic. We cannot cure the cancer of racism without understanding the way race shapes our lives, our perspectives, our assumptions, and our actions. We will never understand the limiting forces of racism or the opportunities around inclusion and diversity without creating brave spaces for dialogue and exploration.”

In what ways are you creating brave spaces for dialogue in your own organization, professional circles, or personal networks?

Please continue to nominate talented individuals who add to our diversity while ensuring that any candidate—regardless of gender, race, age, domain, or geography—meets the criteria, especially possessing and demonstrating a **strong affinity to our core purpose** and **meaningful, relevant achievement**.

Best,

Linda and Liz