



2009 Work Plan

Grantmakers for Effective Organizations

Smarter Grantmaking. Stronger Nonprofits. Better Results.

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Our commitment is to be a real resource and facilitator of learning and action. We want members of the GEO community to have access to the ideas, connections and evidence they need to make the greatest contributions to the nonprofits they invest in. This requires that we are nimble enough, deep enough and trusted enough to be considered the go-to place for collaborative work. In the next phase in our developmental process we will focus on:

- deepening and strengthening our efforts to support changes in grantmaker practice that will benefit nonprofits the most,
- supporting grantmakers to solve problems collaboratively and
- becoming increasingly sophisticated about employing network strategy to expand our community's impact.

Deepening and strengthening. GEO's Change Agent Project put us on a course rooted in what funders and nonprofits alike told us were most important to nonprofit success. Our change agenda includes practices in four core areas - Stakeholder Engagement, The Money, Leadership Development and Learning for Improvement. Members of the GEO community guide our work in each area. Our intent is to continue to support innovators as they break new ground while also translating the lessons they are learning for others' benefit.

Action learning. We know that exchanging ideas isn't enough to create real change. GEO's action learning peer groups are convenings with a purpose. We bring together grantmakers to answer their most pressing questions--ones that have immediate application and urgency for them. In these groups, participants have the opportunity to hear how their peers are creating change and then translate what they hear into immediate advances in their own work. We support each group for an extended period of time to be sure that the learning extends into real changes in how they do their work.

Activating networks. GEO's growth strategy is defined by an effort to grow our impact, not our organizational size. As such, we are embracing a network strategy and exploring how to work most effectively to create change in concert with others. Many others bring important knowledge, experience and connections to the work. We are actively employing network strategy on two fronts: First, we are exploring new ways of supporting collaborative learning and action among our membership network. Second, we are creating the space and dedicating the time necessary to explore joint work with both likely and unlikely partners. It is only through the combined efforts of a broad variety of groups that we will see a significant increase in the rate of adoption of practices that the GEO community promotes.

This work plan details specifically what we hope to achieve in 2009 and how we will go about it. You'll find an articulation of the ultimate goals of our work as well as a description of how we think about our audience. We pay particular attention to articulating our theory of change for each area of work in order to guide our experiments and what we hope to learn over the course of the year.

As ever, we are anxious to hear your feedback and advice.



Mission, Vision, Core Beliefs

Mission

Understanding that grantmakers are successful only to the extent that their grantees achieve meaningful results, GEO promotes strategies and practices that contribute to grantee success.

Vision

GEO envisions a future in which:

- Grantmakers embrace strategies and practices that are supportive of nonprofit performance and abandon those that detract from nonprofit success.
- In common trust, grantmakers and grantees communicate promptly and candidly to define and assess success, share learning and accelerate progress.
- Grantmakers and grantees exchange financial resources and knowledge efficiently and effectively.
- Nonprofits have the leadership, systems and working capital they need to be potent agents of social change and public benefit.
- United by a common purpose, grantmakers and nonprofits are mutually supportive and accountable partners in creating social change and public benefit.

Assumptions and Core Beliefs

- The status quo in philanthropy is unacceptable; change is imperative.
- Change is driven by both individual and collective action—
 - all individuals in philanthropy can play powerful roles in bringing about significant changes in grantmaker practice and
 - collective action can speed the pace of innovation into mainstream practice.
- Successful change efforts require more than just knowledge and awareness—they require a high degree of motivation and support, backed by the right incentives.
- Effective philanthropy requires engaging a broad range of historically disenfranchised people meaningfully in both developing and executing strategy.
- Incorporating feedback from grantees and other stakeholders is crucial to grantmakers' effectiveness.



Ultimate Outcomes

Each area of work described in this work plan feeds into at least one of GEO's seven ultimate outcomes agreed to by the board following the Change Agent Project:

Field Outcomes

- 1. Type of support/duration of support improves.** There are increased levels of operating support, multi-year support and other appropriate types of capacity-building support as well as larger average grants, leading to greater success for grantmakers and their grantees.
- 2. Stakeholder engagement improves.** Grantmakers more broadly adopt mechanisms that appropriately engage stakeholders by, among other things: ensuring that the make-up of foundation staff and boards better reflect the experience and knowledge of those they are trying to serve; conducting needs assessments; and soliciting anonymous feedback from grantees.
- 3. Learning practice increases.** There is an increase in the number of grantmakers that have adopted and strengthened learning practices, contributing to greater grantmaker and grantee effectiveness.
- 4. Leadership support increases.** Grantmaker support of nonprofit leadership development as a capacity-building strategy is more prevalent and increasingly sophisticated, resulting in improved grantmaker and nonprofit performance.

Internal Outcomes

- 5. More members.** GEO's membership grows significantly (500 by 2011).
- 6. Deepening relationships with members.** Members feel that GEO products and services are of high quality and there are increased levels of participation.
- 7. GEO's internal effectiveness remains strong.** GEO shows high levels of internal effectiveness, including sophisticated leadership, high levels of board involvement in key functions, strong organizational learning practices, financial security and clear progress toward mission fulfillment.

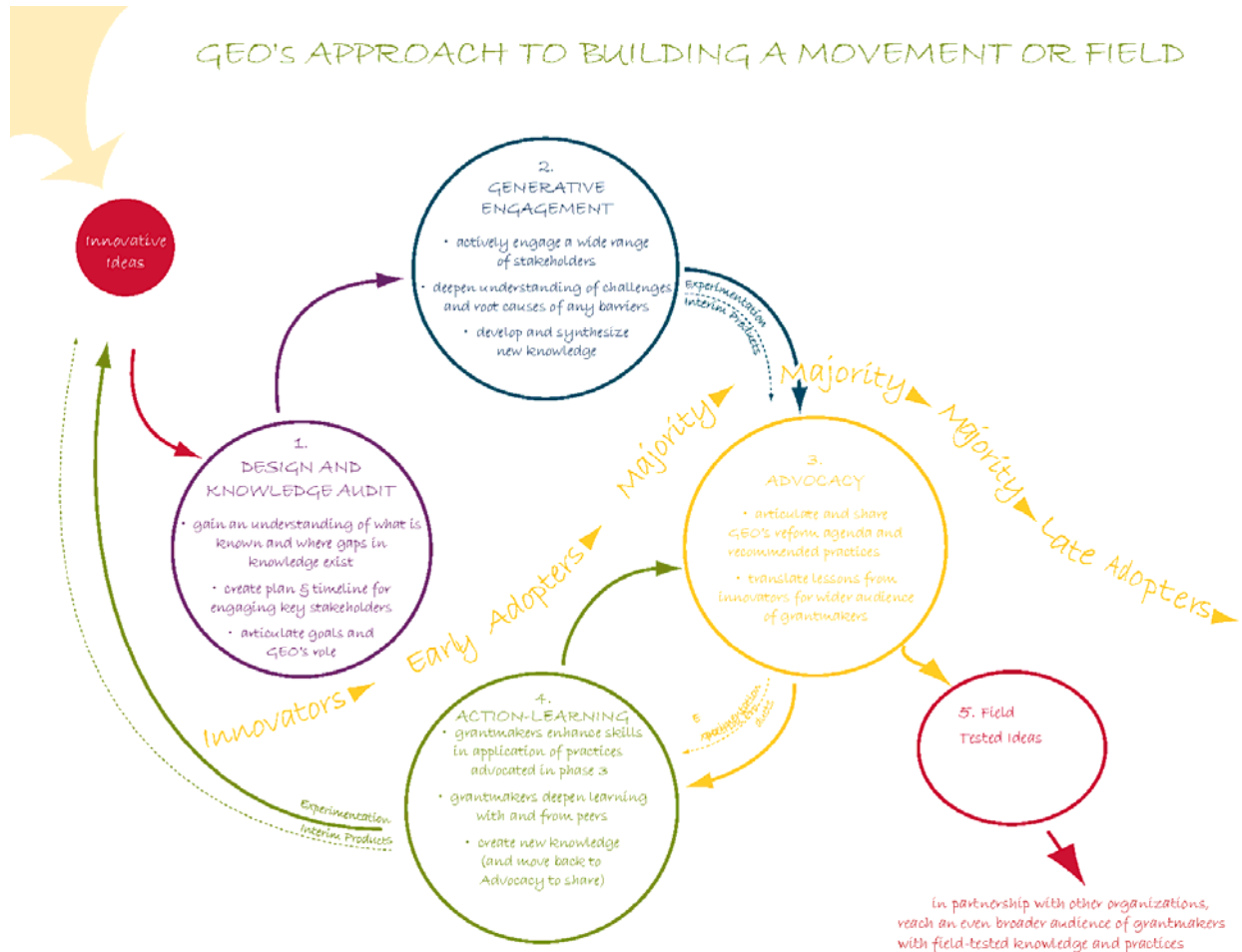
On each page of the work plan you will see a key describing which of the outcomes the work is driving towards:

Field outcomes	
■ Learning practice increases	■ Leadership support increases
■ Type of support improves	■ Engaging stakeholders
Internal outcomes	
■ More members	■ GEO's internal effectiveness
■ Deepening relationships with members	

Our evaluation plan includes logic models for each area of work. Developed with the help of Harder & Company, the evaluation plan details how we will measure outputs, intermediate outcomes and ultimate outcomes. A copy of the full evaluation plan is available on request. It includes:

- Field practices survey (every three years)
- Member satisfaction survey (biennial)
- Action-learning group evaluations
- Conference evaluations
- Web site usage and document downloads
- E-newsletter clickthroughs
- Listserv queries
- Event attendance

GEO'S APPROACH TO BUILDING A MOVEMENT OR FIELD



Audiences

GEO designs its work with four specific audiences in mind. Our approach is defined not only by the stage we are in, but also the specific needs of our target audience. The four audiences, adapted from the work of Everett Rogers on innovation diffusion, are as follows:



Innovators (I) - are breaking new ground. They have taken significant steps to implement practices that improve grantee capacity (e.g. general operating support grants or leadership development support). The problems they are facing right now defy easy answers. As they refine their practice and work to solve very specific problems, innovators need opportunities to work one-on-one and in small groups with other innovators.



Early Adopters (E) - have seen the early results from the innovators' work and have started to implement new practices in their own organizations. Early adopters will benefit from the experiences of the innovators who have come before them. They also need access to more general knowledge through online communities, seminars, publications and conferences.



Majority (M) - are intrigued by what they are hearing, and have started to think about implementing new practices. Like early adopters, they will benefit from more broad-based knowledge-building opportunities.



Late Adopters (L) - are either unaware of a new practice or skeptical that it will deliver as promised. The underlying problems may be new to them. Therefore, exposure to the issue may be what they need most.



Financial Summary - 2009

Financial Summary

	<u>Budget (\$)</u>	<u>% of total budget</u>
Programming	\$1,550,480	67.7%
▪Stakeholder Engagement	\$217,343	9.5%
▪The Money	\$215,810	9.4%
▪Leadership Development	\$129,099	5.6%
▪Learning for Improvement	\$214,806	9.4%
▪Member services	\$367,398	16.0%
▪2010 National Conference	\$175,587	7.7%
▪Communications	\$230,438	10.1%
Infrastructure	\$741,304	32.3%
▪Staffing/Org. Learning	\$310,667	13.6%
▪Fundraising	\$161,024	7.0%
▪Member recruitment	\$269,612	11.8%
TOTAL	\$2,291,784	100.0%



Programming Summary

Introduction

The Change Agent Project, conducted from 2005-2007, set us on a trajectory. We learned from nonprofits and foundations participating in focus groups and interviews that two issues were of particular interest and concern to them. In 2008, we added new areas of work on the topics of stakeholder engagement and the money. In 2009, we are deepening our impact and strengthening our understanding of the issues. The primary areas of work are as follows:

Stakeholder engagement - This area of work focuses on strategies for engaging grantees, community leaders and other key stakeholders in the foundation's decision-making. While we made strides in 2008 to understand the issues and we began to pilot programs, this is still the work in the earliest stage of development.

The Money - With a conference and two publications in 2008, our core messages are becoming much better defined. Our work in this area focuses on how the structure, timing, format and size of grants impacts nonprofit performance. In 2009, we will release publications based on our latest research and will convene a peer problem-solving group to help our members make progress on these issues together.

Leadership development - We have been working on this topic for several years and at this point our core agenda is well-established. Our focus is on investments in leadership that have the potential to improve the results that organizations achieve. We will use this moment to review existing resources to see if there are opportunities to better "market our knowledge" and tap into new audiences. We will also begin exploring the area of collective or "network" leadership in 2009.

Learning for improvement - Work on this topic began in 2002 with the merger with Grantmakers Evaluation Network. Our work focuses on how grantmakers can develop the feedback loops and evaluation mechanisms to improve their performance and help grantees do the same. In 2009, we will explore what it will take to reach trustees.

Membership services - We will focus in 2009 on increasing member satisfaction and engagement. Our theory is that if we get members more engaged - by taking a more active role in the community - they will be more likely to adopt the practices GEO promotes. We have put aside time and resources to explore new ideas, react to member suggestions and generally allow ourselves to push the envelope. This may include more on the topic of networks, innovation and risk or whatever else emerges from the community along the way.

Communications - In 2008, we launched a major rebranding strategy to sharpen our identity and heighten visibility for GEO. A key piece in 2008 was our new logo and tagline "Smarter grantmaking. Stronger nonprofits. Better results." We will continue the roll out of this strategy in 2009 with, among other things, the launch of a newly-designed Web site.

National Conference - Following a record-breaking conference in 2008 in San Francisco, planning for the 2010 conference in Pittsburgh will begin in 2009 with the convening of both the planning and host committees. We will focus on a commitment to engage grantees, create real peer learning opportunities, new content and inclusion of diverse voices.

We describe each area of work in more detail in the pages that follow.



Stakeholder Engagement

Programming

Activities



Design & Knowledge Audit

- Convene the advisory committee



Advocacy

- Theme of 3 IMPACT e-newsletters
- 1 Action Guide
- 2-3 speaking engagements



Action Learning

- 2 peer groups
- 2 skill-building seminars



Outreach

- Collaborate on 2 relevant projects led by external partners



Context - What's the starting point?

More than three quarters (78%) of GEO members indicate that it is very important for their organization to solicit advice from those outside it, compared to less than half (49%) of non-members.

Close to two-thirds (63%) of members say it is very important to their effectiveness to engage recipient communities or grantees in identifying social needs, compared to just over one-third (37%) of non-members.

source: 2008 GEO national study of philanthropic practice

Financial Data

Percent of total budget	9.5%
Total Expenses	\$217,343
Staff Time Allocation	9.0%

Theory of Change

If we provide grantmakers with the **skills and peer support** to overcome the challenges of effectively engaging grantees and other key stakeholders, then they will be able to close the 'knowing-doing' gap.

Approach

In our Change Agent Project research, participants articulated that the power differential between foundations and grantees leads to a counterproductive relationship, which is at the root of many other barriers to grantee success. This work is about being guided by an understanding that those most affected by a problem have important wisdom about how to solve it. It is about reducing the gap in worldview, experience and expertise between grantmakers and those that benefit from their funding. Our core belief is that the most effective way to solve a problem is to engage all the appropriate voices in defining the problem and helping to solve it, particularly those dealing most directly with its effects.

Unfortunately, funders all too often operate in isolation, despite broad recognition that the problems we are attempting to solve are far too complex for any of us to tackle alone. For example, only 22 percent of respondents in GEO's 2008 national study of philanthropic practice indicated they solicited feedback anonymously from grantees during the past two years.

Among all of GEO's areas of work, this work is in the earliest stages of development. We spent 2008 learning from our colleagues, scanning the field, building relationships and identifying our "niche" in the *inclusiveness and effectiveness* conversation. 2008 was a year of design, creation and knowledge-gathering. We also developed a film featuring case studies of funders who are engaging grantees effectively. After learning more about other important work underway by colleagues, we have concluded that we are well positioned to serve the innovators on this issue (those who already believe in the value of engaging with their grantees and other stakeholders) by helping them to build their skills and effectiveness.

Ultimate Outcomes

This work will feed into the following ultimate outcomes:

Field outcomes	
■ Learning practice increases	■ Engaging stakeholders
Internal outcomes	
■ Deepening relationships with members	

Baselines and Targets - 2009

	2008	2009 (goal)
Funders reached at speaking engagements	60	90
Action guide requests	N/A	50
# participants in peer group	N/A	28
# participants in skills-building workshop	48	50-75

Activities



Design & Knowledge Audit

- Convene money advisory group
- Foster relationships with content leaders
- Create and facilitate national "money leadership" dialogue



Advocacy

- Theme of 3 IMPACT e-newsletters
- Publication based on literature review and existing research
- General operating support speaking engagements
- 1 Webinar



Action Learning

- 1 peer group



Theory of Change

If GEO first sparks and then supports a **national leadership conversation** focused on increasing the awareness of how the structure, timing, format and size of grants can either help or hurt nonprofits' performance, more grantmakers will make productive changes in the types of support they provide.

Approach

GEO is attempting to reframe and reconstruct effectiveness in a way that is more expansive and potentially more transformative. Part of that conceptualization involves how the structure, "rules," timing and size of the money impact nonprofit success. It matters how flexible or restricted a grant is. It matters how many years a nonprofit can rely on support from a given funder. And it matters how long nonprofits need to spend creating funding requests and reporting on grants. Good decisions about how to fund lead to responsible decisions by nonprofits about how to allocate their time and resources most effectively.

In the two year-long investigation that was the Change Agent Project, GEO learned that some of the changes philanthropy can make that will have the biggest impact on nonprofit performance have to do with issues surrounding the money.

Our work in this area remains generative — we are focused on a high level of engagement of partners and external stakeholders, listening and gathering input that will shape our future advocacy for changes in grantmaker practices. Simultaneously, we are clear about some of the messages. For example, we have published two action guides on operating support. In 2009, GEO will build on the momentum around this conversation and go beyond promoting promising practices to facilitating field-wide changes on a range of issues related to the money.

Context - What's the starting point?

While members are more likely to say their proportion of general operating support is greater than it was three years ago, **when compared to non-members there is not a significant difference in the percentage of grant dollars they devote to general operating support.**

More than half of GEO members (53%) make multi-year grants of two years or longer often or always, compared to less than a quarter (23%) of non-members.

The median grant for all staffed foundations is **\$20,000.**

source: 2008 GEO national study of philanthropic practice

Financial Data

Percent of total budget	9.4%
Total Expenses	\$215,810
Staff Time Allocation	10.3%

Ultimate Outcomes

This work feeds into the following ultimate outcome:

Field outcomes	
■	Type of support improves
Internal outcomes	
■	Deepening relationships with members

Baselines and Targets - 2009

	2008	2009 (goal)
Funders reached at speaking engagements	225	250
Webinar participants	N/A	30
Publication (outside requests)	N/A	50
# participants in action learning group	12	14



Leadership Development

Programming

Activities



Design and Knowledge Audit

- Continue and refine research on network leadership
- Staff the re-activated advisory committee



Advocacy

- Theme of 3 IMPACT e-newsletters
- 2 leadership dialogues



Action Learning

- 1 peer group



Outreach

- Repackage/refresh existing content



Context - What is the starting point?

Well over three-quarters of GEO members (80%) support leadership development, compared to only 37% of non-members

The proportion of GEO members supporting leadership development **increased from 65% in 2005 to 80% in 2008.**

source: 2008 GEO national study of philanthropic practice

Financial Data

Percent of total budget	5.6%
Total Expenses	\$129,099
Staff Time Allocation	6.6%

Theory of Change

- If we collaborate with regional associations, funder networks and other key content partners, we will reach more interested grantmakers with core messages about leadership support that builds organizational performance.
- If we repackage our 'field-tested' leadership content, it will attract new attention and deepen penetration.

Approach

Most grantmakers would agree that strong leaders are critical to effectively run organizations. However, all too often, leaders don't have the support they need. Some require support in learning how to manage key functions of their organizations, like the organization's financials. As indicated in the 2006 CompassPoint/Meyer Foundation study, *Daring to Lead*, many of our sector's leaders are also burning out. Add to this a looming leadership deficit and the lack of a solid pipeline of emerging leaders, and you have a stark picture of the sector's future leadership situation.

GEO has advocated for the importance of investing in leadership as a critical driver of organizational effectiveness and we've highlighted a range of promising approaches to leadership development. As summarized in Volume 2 of Investing in Leadership, we've continued to emphasize the importance of three core features of these types of investments--they should be collective, contextual and continuous. We've also articulated our intent to go beyond individual organizational leadership and lead a deeper inquiry around investing in leadership for fields, movements and networks.

In 2009, we will use two of our primary advocacy vehicles: speaking engagements and convenings to further penetrate the field with our core messages around leadership. It is our hypothesis that more proactively meeting the needs and interests of regional associations, grantmaker education institutions and funder networks will re-ignite the interest in the conversation on leadership investments.

Ultimate Outcomes

This work feeds into the following ultimate outcomes:

Field outcomes	■ Leadership support increases
Internal outcomes	■ Deepening relationships with members

Baselines and Targets - 2009

Action learning	2007	2009 (goal)
Peer group participants who agree the group helped them be a catalyst for change	64%	75%
<i>source: 2007 peer group evaluation</i>		
# peer group participants	21	14



Learning for Improvement

Programming

Activities



- Design & Knowledge Audit**
- Convene advisory committee



- Advocacy**
- 1 pilot offering targeted at trustees
 - Reassess *Evaluation as a Pathway to Learning* for update potential
 - Update *Due Diligence Tool*
 - 1 new publication
 - 2 dialogues/workshops
 - 1 outside article on related topic
 - Theme of 3 IMPACT e-newsletters



- Action Learning**
- 2 peer groups



- Outreach**
- Repackage/refresh existing content

Context - Why is this work important?

Nearly three-quarters (71%) of GEO members say they formally evaluate the work they fund, compared to less than half (46%) of non-members.

The proportion of members who say they formally evaluate their work rose from 66% in 2005 to 71% in 2008.

source: 2008 GEO national study of philanthropic practice

Financial Data

Percent of total budget	9.4%
Total Expenses	\$214,806
Staff Time Allocation	7.4%

Theory of Change

If we attempt to bust the myths about “evaluation as proof” by educating foundation trustees primarily and then providing skills and techniques for foundation staff to employ evaluation as a performance improvement exercise, then grantmaker practices will shift to assessment that is contextually appropriate.

Approach

To truly improve performance, one must spend the appropriate amount of time examining what works and what doesn't. Foundations struggle not only with how to manage learning within the foundation, but also how to give grantees the tools they need to learn for improvement. Over the past several years, GEO has refined its agenda in the area of learning. This work began with the merger of Grants Evaluation Network and GEO in 2002. Since then, we have taken a closer look at the tools of learning – evaluation and knowledge management. GEO's objective is to help grantmakers see learning as a tool for improvement and as a critical element of any effective organization. Our beliefs about learning have been shaped around four key messages that seek to shift the conversation in the field about measuring impact. We advocate that grantmakers:

- 1) shift from an emphasis on gathering proof to learning for improvement (prove to improve);
- 2) shift from attribution to contribution, asking themselves, "how did our grant make a contribution to the overall success of this effort" rather than being concerned with what their specific dollars "bought";
- 3) shift from top-down accountability to mutual accountability and
- 4) shift to assessment that is contextually appropriate given the size and maturity of the organization and the size of the grant as an overall percentage of the grantee's budget.

This year we will target foundation trustees, who we recognize as key influencers of an organizational culture that supports learning.

Ultimate Outcomes

This work feeds into the following ultimate outcomes:

Field outcomes	
■ Learning practice increases	■ Engaging stakeholders
Internal outcomes	
■ Deepening relationships with members	

Baselines and Targets - 2009

	2005	2008	2009 (goal)
Advocacy	Pathway to Learning	Learning for Results	1 publication
Publication	94%	N/A	90-95%
<i>Members who agree that publication is useful</i>			
Action learning		2008	2009 (goal)
# participants in peer group		17	28



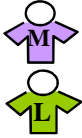
Membership Services

Programming

Activities



- Design & Knowledge Audit**
- Convene member committee



- Advocacy**
- IMPACT e-newsletter - 12 issues
 - Web site
 - Publications
 - Listserv



- Other**
- Member satisfaction survey
 - Conduct annual check-in calls
 - Focus on the first year of membership
 - Get existing members more engaged
 - Communicate dues increase in 2010

Context - What's the starting point?

Members who rate their experience with GEO as favorable or highly favorable: **99%**

Members who agree that GEO offers unique programs and services: **82%**

Members who agree that GEO is a leader in the field of organizational effectiveness: **87%**

source: 2006 member satisfaction survey

Financial Data

Percent of total budget	16.0%
Total Expenses	\$367,398
Staff Time Allocation	17.5%

Theory of Change

Members who are more engaged are more likely to adopt the practices for which we advocate.

Approach

GEO seeks to create change in philanthropy and we know that our members increasingly model the behaviors for which we advocate. To increase our impact and to sustain our growth financially, we seek to increase our membership to **500 organizations by the end of 2011**. To be successful, we will need to ensure that we are providing quality services to members and emphasize increased participation in the GEO community.

In 2009, we will focus on increasing members' involvement and satisfaction. To figure out appropriate ways to engage members more fully, we will convene a new membership committee in 2009.

We will test a strategy to more effectively get new members up to speed and engaged in their first year. We will also attempt to get existing members more engaged by encouraging more participation on the listserv, providing more opportunities to get together and asking members to participate on advisory committees.

An important part of participating in this network is being willing to support the work of the network financially. GEO has never increased our dues levels, originally established in 2002. Increasing our income from memberships is an integral part of our over-arching strategy to rely more on reliable streams of income and less on unreliable streams like income from grants and contributions. **Ultimately, this will help support our goal of increasing membership dues from \$700K in 2008 to \$1.5M in 2012.**

Part of what GEO members value about their membership is the fact that we help them keep current. We need to innovate and explore new concepts and ways of thinking. Technology is offering new tools (such as wikis) that can help us enlist the GEO community in shaping new directions. We will also be more deliberate about collaborating with new partners to ensure we are cross-pollinating great ideas.

Ultimate Outcomes

This work feeds into the following ultimate outcomes:

Field outcomes	
■ Learning practice increases	■ Leadership support increases
■ Type of support improves	■ Engaging stakeholders
Internal outcomes	
■ More members	■ Deepening relationships with members

Baselines and Targets - 2009

Member services	2007	2008	2009 (goal)
Listserv queries	57	91	110
Member renewals	2007	2008	2009 (goal)
% increase in membership	17%	11%	14%
Renewal rate	90%	92%	92%



2010 National Conference

Programming

Activities



Design & Knowledge Audit

- Convene planning committee
- In-person meeting of the planning committee
- In-person meeting of the host committee in Pittsburgh

Approach

The GEO national conference is the cornerstone event for the GEO community. It is a prime opportunity for members to meet colleagues and build connections that help them improve their work. It is also a high profile way for us to introduce new concepts and bring the grantee voice into the room with funders.

The 2010 national conference brings us back to the east coast. The conference will be held April 12-14, 2010 in downtown Pittsburgh. Our target for attendees will be 500-550 people.

The planning committee will convene in 2009 and will decide on the content and theme. We expect the conference to cover topics in each of GEO's four areas of work (Stakeholder Engagement, The Money, Leadership Development and Learning for Improvement) as well as new, emerging topics we identify over the course of the next year. In 2008 we experimented with the open space format for the first time. We will continue to experiment with new approaches to conference sessions.

Context - What's the starting point?

The national conference consistently tops the list of GEO resources that members name as the most helpful in their work.






Most helpful GEO resource

National Conference	29%
Publications	25%
Listserv	18%
Web site	8%
KM Conference	7%
IMPACT	4%
Other	4%

source: 2006 member satisfaction survey

Ultimate Outcomes

This work feeds into the following ultimate outcomes:

Field outcomes		
 Learning practice increases	 Leadership support increases	
 Type of support improves	 Engaging stakeholders	
Internal outcomes		
 Deepening relationships with members		

Financial Data

Percent of total budget	7.7%
Total Expenses	\$175,587
Staff Time Allocation	7.9%

Baselines and Targets - 2009

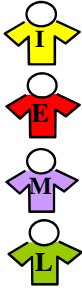
	2006	2008	2010 (goal)
Paid attendees	417	616	500-550
Net revenue	(\$34,000)	\$8,000	\$0
"Conference is worth cost of registration"	87%	94%	95%
"Conference increased my understanding of the connection between grantmaker practices and grantee success"	N/A	88%	90%



Communications

Programming

Activities



Advocacy

- Update messaging and branding on the Web site
- Update messaging on core areas - the money and stakeholder engagement
- Leverage Stakeholder Engagement film project as a communications tool
- Roll out new Web site
- 2008 Annual Report
- 2-3 major article placements
- Follow-up communications pieces from 2008 national survey

Outreach

- Produce catalogue of programs and publications targeted at regional associations and funder networks

Approach

Our communications strategy is a key component of our effort to expand the reach of the GEO network. On the occasion of our 10th anniversary in 2008, GEO went through an intensive rebranding effort. Our new tagline – Smarter Grantmaking. Stronger Nonprofits. Better Results. – grew out of this effort.

We launched our new look – including a new logo – at the 2008 national conference. This was just the beginning of a multi-year effort to broaden our outreach and reach new audiences. Our communications efforts reinforce the message that the GEO community is breaking down barriers and breaking new ground.

The next phase of our rebranding efforts will focus on enhancing GEO's visibility and building awareness of our core messages. This includes launching a new Web site and placing articles in major publications. We received an award in late 2008 that is allowing us to create a short video that tells GEO's story, which we will promote through our Web site. Additionally, we will build communications processes that support our intention to work in a more networked way with external partners.

Context - What's the starting point?

Our market research has revealed that most non-members know who we are, but have no solid understanding of what GEO does and are not finding us when they seek help on issues we cover. Some confusion also exists about the target of our focus; are we about nonprofit or foundation effectiveness? We need to do a better job linking all the work we do under the umbrella of improved nonprofit performance.

Ultimate Outcomes

This work will feed into the following ultimate outcomes:

Field outcomes	
■	Learning practice increases
■	Type of support improves
■	Leadership support increases
■	Engaging stakeholders
Internal outcomes	
■	More members
■	Deepening relationships with members

Financial Data

Percent of total budget	10.1%
Total Expenses	\$230,438
Staff Time Allocation	10.2%

Baselines and Targets - 2009

	2007	2008	2009 (goal)
Communications			
Press appearances	35	21	35
Major articles	1	1	2-3



Infrastructure Summary

Introduction

GEO promotes practices that build strong nonprofits. As such, we spend a significant amount of time and energy on the health of the organization and the network we represent. Roughly a third of our budget is devoted to GEO's infrastructure. This is larger than in previous years, in part because we are taking an aggressive approach to member recruitment.

Staffing and organizational learning - We will focus on building organizational excellence by dedicating time to learning for our own improvement. This includes deepening our evaluation plans and putting data management systems in place. We will also focus on building staff capacity by hiring new staff and supporting staff development and training.

Board - The GEO board continues to provide leadership and strategy to this community. The board intentionally constructs opportunities to both learn together - in order to better understand the issues it is addressing - and to lead together - through a combination of task forces and full board work. GEO's board will meet four times in 2009 and will focus on, among other things, recruiting new board members, electing a new chair and vice chair and reviewing and approving the 2010 work plan and budget.

Member recruitment - We are embarking on an aggressive member recruitment campaign in 2009. This is the first step in our campaign to increase membership from 350 organizations in 2008 to 500 in 2011. We will be testing whether a more broad-based strategy works better or whether a very focused, high touch strategy is more effective. To support this more aggressive approach, we are planning to hire a new Manager of Membership in 2009.

Fundraising - While we plan to keep the total level of grants steady in 2009 (at around \$1.0M) we will shift our focus to be on raising multi-year support whenever possible.

You will find more detail on each area of work on the following pages.



Staffing/Organizational Learning

Infrastructure

Activities

- Internal evaluation
- Staff recruitment , development and orientation
- Identify new earned revenue activities for 2010/2011
- Annual audit and 990
- Train new staff on Salesforce
- Evaluate speaking engagements, conferences, action learning groups and media exposure
- Manage transition to sharing office with colleague organizations
- All staff go through an EL map process
- Document processes for each team
- Learn from experimentations

Theory of Change

If we concentrate on organizational excellence, **by investing in the capacity and development of both people and systems**, we will be better positioned to grow our impact and achieve our goals.

Approach

Our focus in 2009 is to shore up our strengths and to focus on opportunities to learn about what works and what doesn't. As such, we are focusing on building our own infrastructure. The major activities we have planned to build our own capacity include:

New staff. The budget assumptions for the year include 14.75 FTEs. This includes two new positions for the year - a Manager of Membership and a Development Specialist.

Staff development and the innovative spirit. We are committed to building our staff capacity and deepening our leadership. In 2008 we sent a team of five staff members to Interaction Institute for Social Change's facilitative leadership training. We will seek opportunities for all staff to think even more innovatively and creatively.

Data management. In 2008, we worked with a consultant to document processes and train staff on the use of our Salesforce database. 2009 will be the first year that all staff will be involved in using the database. This will greatly increase the extent to which we can maintain relationships with funders as well as give us information about which of our activities are most effective.

Evaluation. The major activity during the year will be a membership satisfaction survey. Through the survey, we will assess what services offer the most value and which are tied to changes in knowledge, attitude and practice. We will also evaluate all programmatic areas, paying particular attention to experimental areas.

Ultimate Outcomes

This work feeds into the following ultimate outcome:

Internal outcomes	 GEO's internal effectiveness
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Baselines and Targets - 2009					
	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009 (goal)</u>
Staff Size (FTE)	7	8	9.75	12.75	14.75

Financial Data

Percent of total budget	13.6%
Total Expenses	\$310,667
Staff Time Allocation	9.8%



Board Infrastructure

Activities

- 3 in-person meetings (including a 2-day summer retreat) and 1 conference call
- Committee work
- Recruit new board members
- Elect new Chair and Vice Chair
- Appoint new Governance Committee Chair
- Review and approve 2010 work plan and budget

Board Work Plan

This sheet outlines the staff and monetary resources currently available in the 2009 budget for the board to do its work. These resources include travel money to assist up to two board members with the costs of attending meetings far from home.

2009 Board Schedule

Thursday, January 29
Conference Call

Tuesday, April 21

Wednesday, April 22
Boston, MA

Monday, June 29

Tuesday, June 30
Washington, DC

Wednesday, October 21

Thursday, October 22
Chicago, IL

Financial Data

Percent of total budget	1.9%
Total Expenses	\$43,520
Staff Time Allocation	1.9%

Approach

Continuing a conversation begun in 2008, the board will engage in conversations about deepening its own commitment to inclusiveness as well as how GEO can embody this commitment in all that we do. As an outgrowth of this conversation and demonstrating its continued commitment to diversity, the board will recruit a diverse class of new board members to join in 2009 and 2010.

In 2008, the GEO board recommended that GEO think of itself in a more networked way. The board will provide strategic guidance to staff as we refine our understanding of what it means to be a networked organization.

We will hold three in-person meetings and one conference call. The board's work will continue to progress in between meetings through three distinct board committees: executive, governance and finance. Below are the specific priorities of each of these committees for 2009:

Executive Committee Priorities

The executive committee plans agendas for each board meeting, appoints committee leadership and makes other committee assignments.

Governance Committee Priorities

A major priority for the governance committee will be to nominate a new board chair and vice chair. The governance committee will also continue to spearhead the recruitment of new board members and will plan the summer 2009 board retreat.

Finance Committee Priorities

The finance committee will monitor GEO's financial health, including the strength of GEO's various revenue streams. The committee also will engage an auditor to conduct GEO's annual audit.

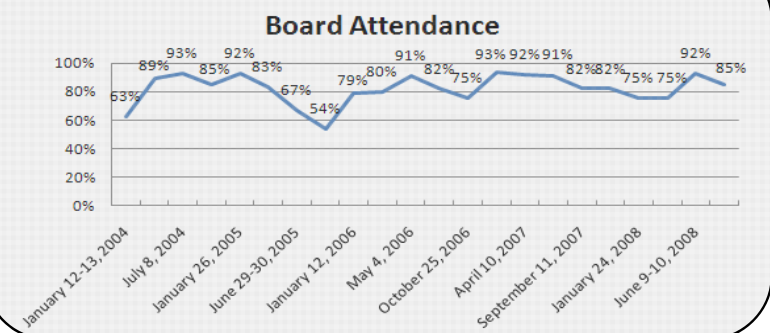
Staff support of the board in 2009 includes dedication of 10 percent of the executive director's time.

Ultimate Outcomes

This work feeds into the following ultimate outcome:

Internal outcomes	■ GEO's internal effectiveness
--------------------------	--

Baselines and Targets - 2009

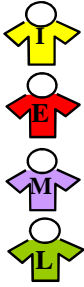




Membership Recruitment

Infrastructure

Activities



Member recruitment

- Broad-based campaign to non-members
- Focused campaign to top 250 prospects

Theory of Change

If we carve out 200-250 top prospects and go after them in a coordinated way (assuming it will take several exposures before they make a decision to join), we will be able to reach untapped audiences and accelerate member recruitment.

Approach

To increase our impact in the field and to sustain our growth financially, we seek to increase our membership from 350 organizations in 2008 to 500 by the end of 2011. To achieve this goal, we must bring in approximately 90 new organizations annually in 2009, 2010, and 2011.

To date, we have primarily taken a responsive strategy to member recruitment and renewal. This strategy has brought us a respectable number of new members each year (53 in 2005, 83 in 2006, and 72 in 2007). We believe we can do even better with a concerted, more proactive strategy. We will increase the number of organizations from whom GEO receives annual contributions in order to sustain our financial growth, which will support GEO's goal of changing practice in philanthropy by engaging more people in the conversation. **Ultimately, this will support our goal of increasing membership dues from \$700K in 2008 to \$1.5M in 2012.**

Context - What's the starting point?

GEO membership has grown rapidly from **68** paying member organizations in 2002 to **350** in 2008.

Ultimate Outcomes

This work feeds into the following ultimate outcomes:

Field outcomes			
■	Learning practice increases	■	Leadership support increases
■	Type of support improves	■	Engaging stakeholders
Internal outcomes			
■	More members		
■	Deepening relationships with members		

Financial Data

Percent of total budget	11.8%
Total Expenses	\$269,612
Staff Time Allocation	12.1%

Baselines and Targets - 2009

	2007	2008	2009 (goal)
Member sales			
New members	72	62	90
Free trials converted to membership	23%	11%	15%
% increase in membership	17%	11%	14%



Fundraising Infrastructure

Theory of Change

By shifting our focus to multi-year proposals, we can secure support further in advance and with a greater degree of reliability.

Approach

As part of our effort to grow in a sustainable way, GEO is planning to put emphasis on earned revenue sources such as membership and action learning registrations. In 2009, we will attempt to keep our grants revenue steady at roughly \$1.0M. We will continue to seek general operating grants first, but the reality is that we must concurrently attempt to raise program grants. Program grants include all of the associated costs of the program (overhead, salaries of involved staff), while our general operating support grants allow us to be flexible and move quickly as new opportunities arise. We have already raised more than \$300,000 in support for 2009.

2009 Goals:

1) Strengthen relationships with existing funders. We will focus, whenever possible, on obtaining renewal grants. We have several general operating support funders we will approach for grants at the same or increased levels.

2) Build pipeline of potential funders. As there is still a tremendous amount of opportunity to reach new members, there is an untapped funder market among our existing members. In 2009, GEO will continue to build our pipeline of potential funders. These prospects will become top prospects for grants.

3) Identify prospects in local communities. Because we will be going into local communities (e.g. for the 2010 National Conference in Pittsburgh), there will be opportunities to seek funding from grantmakers who can't fund national-level work. We will identify locations for this work far enough in advance to approach local funders.

Ultimate Outcomes

This work feeds into the following ultimate outcome:

Internal changes

■ GEO's internal effectiveness

Activities

- Identify prospects among our membership
- Identify prospects in local communities
- Concentrate on renewal funding from existing donors

Context - What's the starting point?

Earned revenue streams such as membership and conference registrations represent are increasing while grants are holding steady at around \$1M per year.

	Total	Program Grants	Unrestricted Grants	Conference Sponsorships	Membership Revenue	Conference Registrations	Other Earned Revenue
2003	\$944,469	\$177,500	\$468,833	\$75,000	\$207,200	\$0	\$15,936
2004	\$1,391,870	\$320,798	\$357,950	\$141,000	\$358,650	\$207,602	\$5,870
2005	\$1,254,731	\$324,279	\$320,333	\$74,800	\$449,900	\$64,033	\$21,386
2006	\$1,472,036	\$387,500	\$307,000	\$41,882	\$503,340	\$200,505	\$31,809
2007	\$2,168,027	\$734,802	\$490,300	\$163,000	\$596,647	\$79,200	\$104,078
2008	\$2,406,620	\$600,167	\$439,833	\$73,500	\$700,000	\$454,250	\$138,870
2009 (budget)	\$2,100,570	\$464,250	\$460,850	\$63,750	\$797,600	\$0	\$312,120
Trend	▲	▼	↔	↔	▲	▲	▲

Financial Data

Percent of total budget	7.0%
Total Expenses	\$161,024
Staff Time Allocation	9.3%

Baselines and Targets - 2009

% of funds raised	2007	2008	2009 (goal)
January 1	39%	25%	50%
June 1	123%	79%	75%
October 1	136%	87%	90%

Total to be Raised	2007	2008	2009 (goal)
	\$822,500	\$1,139,083	\$1,200,000