



A PODCAST WITH RUSTY STAHL | S4 EP1

The 8 Practices of Talent-Investing

WITH HOST
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Fund the People



INTRO [00:00:03] You're listening to the Fund the People Podcast, I'm your host Rusty Stahl. On this show we serve up a healthy nutritious alternative to the nonprofit starvation cycle. If you work as a funder, a non-profit, or intermediary, we'll help you invest in America's nonprofit workforce to drive equity, effectiveness and endurance in our nonprofit and social justice community. So let's get going.

[00:00:39] Hey everybody! Welcome to Season 4 of the Fund the People Podcast. I'm your host, Rusty Stahl. Thank you, thank you for joining us. As you may know I'm founder, President and CEO of Fund the People and Fund The People works to increase equity, effectiveness, and endurance by maximizing investment in America's nonprofit workforce. For that end we offer ideas, research, tools, education, consulting, and advocacy. This podcast is among those resources.

We're a project of Community Partners, which is our fiscal sponsor based in LA, and Fund the People itself is based in Hudson River town of Beacon, New York. You can find more about us at fundthepeople.org.

This show is about how and why philanthropy and nonprofits should—and can—invest in the nonprofit workforce. I've taken all the research, ideas and tools that I've developed at Fund the People and put them into a cohesive framework, called Funding That Works. It's all about funding that works FOR the people who DO the work to make nonprofits work.

Each season of this podcast has its own theme, and together they form the outline of the Funding that Works Framework that I've been developing since 2014, so it's a very exciting new season here, but just to give you a rundown of where we've been: Season 1 explored the

problem facing the nonprofit workforce. We reframed the problem from a general conversation about a deficit of leaders to a deficit of investment in the nonprofit workforce. Which is what I believe is the real problem.

Season 2 then introduced the concept of talent-investing, this is a potentially transformative solution for that deficit of investment in the nonprofit workforce. We defined talent-investing as the intentional deployment of capital to support and develop nonprofit leaders and workers.

And in Season 3, we explored the 8 Principles of Talent-Investing. These principles offer the values and conceptual framework upon which the practice of talent-investing can be built.

[00:03:05] And now here we are in Season 4, and we're going to dive into the 8 PRACTICES of talent-investing. The 8 practices build upon those 8 principles. In this episode, I want to share these 8 practices with you. They can be summed up with three core concepts, which is just three Rs: Respect, Root Causes and Responsiveness.

Under this general category of Respect, our first practice is Lead with Respect. Take into consideration the challenges, needs, strengths, and dignity of nonprofit workers. Nonprofit work is real, meaningful, impactful and essential work.

Practice 2: Bake It In. Make support and development of nonprofit workers a main ingredient – not a garnish – in your recipe for success: make it an integral part of your strategy, budget, fundraising, grantmaking or whatever else you do. Talent-Investing is an essential part of organizational life from the top to the bottom, not a last to add and first to cut tactic. Ok, so those are our first two practices, which I bundled under the category of Respect.

Our second category is Root Causes and there are 2 practices I want to share under this category. So Practice 3 is Build People-Systems. This is about going beyond investing in individuals to invest in the systems that ensure that organizations can invest in all their staff at any time, no matter who they are, whether or not they're considered a 'leader', no matter how irreplaceable or replaceable they seem. It's about creating policies, procedures, and practices that support and develop staff as they join, work and transition out of any organization.

Practice 4 is Advance Talent Justice. Talent Justice is our term for intentionally addressing inequities inherent to the deficit of investment in the nonprofit workforce. It's about investing in workplaces that support and develop staff across race, gender, class, age, national origin, geography, and lots of other factors. Advancing talent justice is essential to making for effective talent investments and we also believe that talent investing is essential to bringing about equity and justice in our workforce.

Finally, under the category of Responsiveness we have 4 more practices. So, Practice 5 is Ask and Respond. Create a trusting environment in which to discuss the strengths and challenges of staff and of your workplace. This is about listening deeply, and then being responsive to what you hear. You can't do one without the other. You've got to listen, you've got to ask and you've got to respond.

Practice 6: Go All-In. Start small with inexpensive steps if needed, but make plans to invest significant time and dollars for the long haul so that your investments can really work. This chronic deficit of investment in the nonprofit workforce is a big, existential problem and it necessitates a serious response. And investing in human beings does not yield results in a day or a week or a month, so we got to go all in. And that's practice 6.

Practice 7: Offer Custom Solutions. The chronic deficit of investment in the workforce it's all over the sector, but the specific symptoms are different depending on the context. So, this practice is all about designing interventions that are customizable, that are responsive, that are flexible, scalable, and that meet the needs of various different stakeholders. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Not everybody needs coaching, not everybody needs training, not everybody needs a sabbatical. So, offer custom solutions.

And then our 8th practice is: Share the Value. Share the value of investing in the nonprofit workforce, so that more funders and more nonprofits understand why this is valuable, why this is so important. This is about evaluating these investments in an appropriate way, it's about documenting with qualitative and/or quantitative results, and it's about sharing stories, the stories of why it's meaningful to invest in people in our nonprofit organizations. Now you may not have a lot of money to spend on evaluation, but that doesn't mean you can't capture stories that will pull at the heart strings of funders and others, and your board and whoever else needs to hear it. So share the value one way or the other.

[00:08:33] So those are our 8 practices of talent-investing. Again they are all about Respect, Root causes and Responsiveness. Now **we will share a link in the show notes so you can have a summary of all of that** and feel free to email me your thoughts about the 8 Practices of Talent-Investing. I can be reached at rusty@fundthepeople.org.

Throughout this season, we're going to explore those 8 practices in a variety of ways, not in any particular order, but we will have an exploratory conversation about all these practices and we'll share space with an amazing array of guests, including: Jan Masaoka of CalNonprofits, Janet McIntyre & Paula Morris of Resilience Initiative, Rodney Christopher of Funders for Real Costs Real Change, Jim Gallagher & Tiffanie De Gannes of the Ford Foundation...and many more, that's just the start of our lineup.

But, I want to hear from you. Who would you like to hear from this season or in future seasons? Who in your world is doing work to advance better pay, benefits, personnel policies, or professional development in the nonprofit sector? So feel free to send me your guest ideas and feedback. Again, my email is rusty@fundthepeople.org.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for tuning in to this episode and to Season 4. I'm looking forward to sharing some great ideas and great guests and engaging discussions with you. Talk to you next time!

NEXT EPISODE [00:10:12] Tune in next time when my guest will be Jan Masaoka. Jan is one of our most fearless, straight-shooting, highly effective, badass nonprofit leaders in the sector. She recently announced her transition from service as CEO of CalNonprofits. She was also longtime leader of CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, and a founder of the legendary nonprofit publication Blue Avocado. Jan speaks with me about why all nonprofits and funders must be advocates for the nonprofit workforce and the nonprofit sector. So join me to get some gems of wisdom from Jan Masaoka on our next episode of Fund the People Podcast.

OUTRO [00:10:54] Thanks for listening to the Fund the People Podcast. Visit fundthepeople.org and click on Podcast to find a transcript for this and other episodes, all the links discussed in the episode, and more about our guest. If you enjoyed this episode, we'd really appreciate a 5-star rating and a quick review if possible on Apple Podcasts, it helps more people to find the show. Thank you for driving change in our communities. Remember to keep your tank full, take care of yourself, and take care of one another.