

The Comhar Model

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A diagnostic and intervention framework for mission-driven organizations that have the donors, the mission, and the potential — but haven't yet brought it all together.

Comhar (KOH-ar) · Irish

The Irish word for cooperation, partnership, and mutual effort — rooted in the ancient practice of neighbors coming together to do what none could do alone. In old Ireland, a comhar was how communities survived: you helped me with my harvest, I helped you with yours. No transaction. Mutual commitment to a shared outcome. Everyone rose together, or no one did.

In practice, this is what every engagement builds toward. Most organizations arrive with the donors, the mission, and the people — but the board, CEO, and development team are not yet moving as one. What we build is the conditions for comhar: trust, alignment, shared purpose, and the infrastructure to sustain it. When that culture takes hold, philanthropic performance becomes inevitable.

THE PREMISE

Most nonprofits don't underperform because they lack donors, mission, or people who care.

They underperform because their clarity, readiness, alignment, and infrastructure are pulling in different directions. Leadership is misaligned. Systems aren't trusted. Campaign architecture is built on a false sense of readiness. Storytelling is diluted. The philanthropic strategy and the staffing model don't match.

When board, CEO, and development team finally operate as one — when trust replaces misalignment and shared purpose replaces competing priorities — that is comhar. And when comhar takes hold, philanthropic performance becomes inevitable.

Ní neart go cur le chéile — there is no strength without unity.

THE FOUR PILLARS

Every engagement begins with a diagnostic assessment across all four pillars simultaneously.

01

Clarity

Philanthropic priorities defined and agreed

02

Readiness

Infrastructure, staffing, and systems built to

03

Alignment

Board, CEO, and development team

04

Infrastructure

CRM, reporting, pipeline management, and

upon. Case for support compelling and consistent. External story reflects internal reality.

execute at the level you're planning for. Wealth scores show capacity. Readiness is something you build.

operating as one unified unit. Misalignment at the leadership level is the single most common reason strong organizations underperform.

campaign architecture built to support the scale you're trying to reach — not the scale you started at.

HOW IT WORKS

01 Diagnose

Assess the organization across all four pillars. Identify where the risk is highest and where the convergence gap is widest.

02 Intervene

Step in at the executive level. Go where the risk is highest first. Build the infrastructure, strategy, and alignment the organization needs to perform.

03 Transfer

Build the organization's capacity to sustain what we built together. Leave when the culture, the systems, and the team can carry it forward independently.

THE END STATE

A culture of trust. A culture of teamwork. A values alignment that puts everyone behind the mission. And a fundraising program that performs at the level your donors and your mission have always made possible.

Not dependency on a consultant. Not a strategy that lives in a deck. A functioning program, a goal achieved, and a leadership team that knows how to self-diagnose and self-correct.

WHAT THIS IS NOT

This is not consulting.

I don't deliver a strategy and disappear. I step in at the executive level, do the work, and stay until it's done.

This is not a package.

Every engagement is built around what your organization actually needs — not a pre-built solution looking for a problem to solve.

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