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# 150 Profiles: Cathy Mann

By Cathy Mann

*As we mark the 150th anniversary of confederation, The Philanthropist is profiling Canadians from across the non-profit sector and putting a face to 150 individuals who work or volunteer in Canada's social sector.*



**Name:** Cathy Mann

**Current role in the sector:** President, Cathy Mann & Associates – fundraising consultancy with a focus on social change/social justice philanthropy.

**Years working and/or volunteering in the non-profit sector:** If you count my days as a camp counsellor working with at-risk kids: 37!

**Can you describe a defining moment in your career working/volunteering in the non-profit sector?**

The defining moment for me came quite early in my career. After getting a business degree, I got a job working at one of Canada's top 5 banks... and I went home in tears every night. So, I quit and got my first full-time job in the charitable sector when I became Executive Director of the summer camp I had

worked at as a teenager. I had found my place! When I transitioned to fundraising half a dozen years later, it all came together for me. I got to contribute to the sector I loved in a way that best suited my skills and personality.

**Describe your desk/workspace.**

Do I really have to? I hate to admit that my desk is quite messy. But it is intentionally a small desk so that I have to tidy it more frequently. My computer sits in a little, paperless oasis between piles and stacks on either side.

**What are you reading or following that has expanded your understanding of the non-profit sector?**

I'm really digging reading anything about neuroscience and behavioural economics and trying to make the connection to how it impacts fundraising. Right now, I am reading *The Undoing Project*. It is written by Michael Lewis, the guy who wrote *Moneyball* and *The Big Short* (which both became Hollywood movies). In it, he tells the story of Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, two Israeli psychologists whose work created the field of behavioural economics. They demonstrated how breathtakingly bad people are at decision-making and why we shouldn't trust intuition. I'm not sure how it relates to fundraising yet, but it is eye opening to learn about humans' decision-making processes.

**For you as a past author with the journal, please share with us your reflections on what has changed and/or stayed the same since writing the following article:**

[\*The Role of Philanthropy in Collective Impact\*, 2014](#)

In this article I suggested we needed to move beyond foundation funding, develop comprehensive fundraising programs and incorporate best practices for philanthropy. The following year, I completed my Master's capstone and offered two new suggestions:

1. Elevate revenue mobilization – and include fundraising – to become the sixth condition necessary to ensure it becomes an entrenched part of the enabling ecology to sustain collective impact (CI).
2. Address cross-cultural differences between the worlds of collective impact and philanthropy to co-create a culture where a broad base of donors are embraced as partners.

Recently, we have seen some institutional funders specifically include collective impact among their identified funding priorities. Consequently, CI is becoming more well-known, potentially in a position to access more donor funds and to expand the approach. The risk is that the definition of CI becomes diluted as groups position simple collaborations as complex collective impact initiatives, in the hope that they can secure funding. In some respects, this is a positive development. It means CI is becoming more common. Wouldn't it be great if complex collaboration became more commonplace thanks to the emergence of CI?

*Do you know someone we should profile as part of this series? Email us at [philanthropistprofiles@gmail.com](mailto:philanthropistprofiles@gmail.com)*