Turning Myths Into Gifts

Shatter 10 Paradigms to Power Up Your Legacy Giving Program

Overview

Planned giving is at a crossroads. While most of us use techniques that have historically served us well, some forward-thinking nonprofits have moved on to new paradigms and are enjoying greater success. Key among the new practices is the one-on-one legacy ask, made primarily through existing relationships.

This paper examines 10 paradigms that are signposts leading to — and beyond — this crossroads. For ease and framing of discussion, this paper uses *legacy giving* to define the new paradigm and *planned giving* to define the old one.

Many nonprofits, professional advisors, and volunteers have been using elements of the new paradigm for many years, so they may find little new here. If you fall into that category, I beg your indulgence and patience.

Finally, if you are in the habit of using the phrase *planned giving*, please don't take offense as I walk you through this seemingly simplistic framework. I hope you will keep an open mind and consider abandoning this increasingly awkward "us" phrase in favor of the friendlier "you" descriptor: *legacy giving*.

Paradigm #1: It's Not Me, It's You

Planned giving is by far the most common label used to describe the work we do. I call this the old paradigm. But once it was the new paradigm.

Until the mid-1980s, planned giving was called *deferred giving*. In fact, some still use this now-quaint phrase to describe the totality of our work, rather than simply referring to a gift deferred until death. And who wants to remind our supporters of their own demise so blatantly? Still, *deferred giving* was the main title for our field going back many decades.

By the mid-1980s, local groups calling themselves "councils" had arisen around the country. Through national meetings of these groups, our field came to be labeled *planned giving*. This moniker was formally recognized when the National Committee on Planned Giving was created in 1988. We were finally making progress in getting rid of that dastardly "deferred" reference to death.

And so it was that planned giving became the most common name for our field — until the mid-1990s, when the trend to use *gift planning* emerged. This did not change the practice of most nonprofits and professional advisors, who continued to use the phrase *planned giving*. However, many of us on the nonprofit side, myself included, began to use *gift planning* in our titles (e.g. Director of Gift Planning). And many of us still do.

Throughout this time, spirited debates ensued about what constitutes a planned gift. Some went as far as to say that, at least to some extent, *all* gifts are planned — therefore, all gifts are planned gifts. While current gifts are commonly perceived as having higher value than deferred ones, viewing all gifts as planned confused the broader fund development community, because it ignored the distinct characteristic of planned gifts, the vast majority of which are deferred rather than current. Interestingly, the labeling story for our field does not end there.

In 2007, the National Committee on Planned Giving (NCPG) announced that it would henceforth be known as the Partnership for Philanthropic Planning (PPP). With the announcement, local planned giving councils (this label was still used) were encouraged to adapt *philanthropic planning* into their local council name, though only a handful have done so.

I was a delegate at the 2007 National Assembly of Delegates of NCPG when this change was announced. I later proposed a similar name change to the Northern California Planned Giving Council, a local council whose board I sat on, and was met with blank stares — and rightly so. Because what all these labels have in common is they use "us" language. *Deferred giving*, *planned giving*, *gift planning*, and *philanthropic planning* are, from the donor's point of view, all about ***us***, staff and volunteers. Our colleagues in the direct mail industry say that an "us" approach means we are focused on the process of raising funds, while a "you" approach takes the perspective of our donors and emphasizes their state of mind when they make the gift.

So why does the phrase *legacy giving* work better? We've all used the word *legacy* in our marketing materials for many decades. We've had local, regional, and national "leave a legacy" campaigns to promote such gifts. Development professionals in Canada and the UK also used *legacy giving* for many years. It's a "you" phrase: You, the donor, are leaving a legacy. With all the talk in recent years about donor-centric fund development — the "you" approach — isn't it time for those of us in the United States to catch up with other English-speaking countries and adopt the same donor-centric approach?

As for how one defines *legacy giving*, I don't think we'll ever arrive at a universal definition. The word is used many ways in secondary literature and in our community. Several years ago, Caleb Rick, the colleague who persuaded me to adopt the phrase, came up with two definitions, which he uses in his trainings:

1) To convey one's values through creation of a (usually) future gift to charity; and
2) A foresighted action to strengthen a favorite cause.

Until we can all agree on a universal definition, this will do quite nicely.

Paradigm #2: Planned Gifts and Bequests

In the old planned giving paradigm, the phrase *planned gifts and bequests* commonly appeared in articles and presentations (and still does today). A slightly more apt variation — *bequests and planned gifts* — places more emphasis on bequests. Generally speaking, though, both versions needlessly separate bequests from the broader category of *planned* or *legacy gifts*. This overemphasizes the technical side of gifts, most often life income plans (charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts, and pooled income funds). Why? Life income plans are irrevocable gifts. Historically, many organizations have coveted and overemphasized these gifts because they are irrevocable and can be recorded as assets.

Using the same logic, bequest commitments have been undervalued because they can't be booked. Yet even though bequest commitments are revocable, we know that charities receive around 90 percent of them.

In the legacy giving paradigm, the most important gift in both numbers and dollars is a bequest. While there are no exact industry standards, in my experience, the range of bequests as the total number of gifts in a nonprofit's legacy inventory is somewhere between two-thirds and 100 percent, with most between 90 and 100 percent. This is true even for most large institutions.

In describing types of legacy gifts, whether talking among ourselves or through marketing channels, I suggest we abandon the confusing language described above and focus on the range of legacy giving opportunities — including bequests, beneficiary designations, life-income arrangements, and more. These capture the broadest categories roughly in order of occurrence.

In addition, one could easily suggest that *endowment gifts* fit the second definition of legacy gifts used in Paradigm #1 above: "a foresighted action to strengthen a favorite cause." Two streams of gifts build endowment: current and deferred. Staff and volunteers involved full time in legacy giving (about 10 percent of us working in this field) most often secure gifts for the deferred stream. Staff and volunteers wearing multiple development hats (about 90 percent of us) simply by job description are more inclined to think broadly about the donor making a legacy gift through either current or deferred streams. From the donor's point of view, a legacy gift, current or deferred, can be created by any individual at any point in his or her life.

To continue with the legacy paradigm, from the "you" perspective, it helps to talk about gifts by ease of execution, from simplest to most difficult. The simplest is the beneficiary form, with no cost to the donor and a minimum time commitment. These include bank accounts (savings and checking), stocks and bonds, IRAs and other pension funds (broadly defined), life insurance policies, commercial annuities, and donor-advised funds.

Continuing in ascending order of difficulty (from the donor's point of view) is a bequest in a will or living trust. Having such a provision almost always includes a visit with an attorney. For many, the cost and time it takes to create or update an estate plan leads to caution and delay. So when seeking a bequest provision to charity, it's all about the donor's timetable. Rarely does a donor create or update a will or living trust for the sole reason of including a bequest provision (even if yours is their favorite cause and you ask very nicely).

The next most difficult to set up is a charitable gift annuity — a type of life income gift. Donors setting up this annuity for the first time have a lot of information to absorb. Fortunately, there is rarely any cost to the donor; the expense is typically absorbed by the nonprofit. Also, annuity contracts are short, simple, and written in easily understood language.

On the other hand, the trust version of a life income gift — a charitable remainder trust — presents a whole new level of complexity. And it's just one of many similarly complex gift instruments.

Paradigm #3: Putting Experts on a Pedestal

Under the old paradigm, planned giving officers, especially those of us devoting 100 percent of our time to the field, needed to be experts. Many larger organizations, and even smaller ones with a dedicated full-time planned giving officer, prioritized hiring attorneys into full-time positions. This approach persisted whether or not the newly hired person had ever practiced law. In the case of practicing attorneys, those specializing in estate planning (the most closely related field) were preferred. However, even attorneys whose familiarity with estate planning and possibly planned giving came solely from law school were often hired over non-attorney candidates with a much deeper knowledge of planned giving.

In a best-practice scenario, staff not involved in planned giving referred anything even remotely unfamiliar to planned giving officers, sometimes even current gifts of publicly traded securities. Planned giving staff were put on a pedestal and seen as the go-to people for almost everything beyond gifts of cash. When we didn't know the answer immediately, we could find it quickly.

In the legacy giving paradigm, it's not about being the expert, it's about knowing where to go when you don't have the answer. Even the most qualified among us sometimes lack immediate answers and must obtain information through other resources. When a supporter asks a question and we don't know the answer, the correct response is always, "I don't know, but I will get back to you as soon as possible." This inspires confidence in the supporter. We learn in this scenario, and we can pass our newfound knowledge on to others.

Fortunately, we operate in a highly collegial field, and it's fairly easy to connect with others to obtain the information we need or get a nudge in the right direction. We tap our network of fellow legacy giving professionals, general and major gifts officer colleagues, attorneys, accountants, and other resources. Community foundations are also an excellent resource. Every organization should have one or more go-to people who can be sources for obtaining information on legacy giving. And most should have a working relationship with a paid professional advisor who can provide timely and detailed information when help is needed.

Paradigm #4: That's Not *My* Job

Under the old paradigm, it was easy to identify the parties involved in planned giving. Some nonprofits had a full-time planned giving officer; organizations without a dedicated position might award responsibility to a major gifts officer or development director; organizations lacking any of these positions made planned giving the purview of the executive director or, less commonly, a volunteer.

Under the new paradigm, nonprofits should follow the lead of the higher education sector and make one-on-one legacy asks. Rather than automatically referring a supporter to the person wearing the legacy or gift planning hat, staff (even those outside of the development office) and volunteers who have a relationship with the supporter should make the legacy ask.

This new paradigm offers a much more effective approach. Who is involved? *Any and all staff and volunteers who have relationships with the organization's supporters*. In addition, we can more actively involve people who recommend other supporters to approach for a legacy gift.

A legacy giving committee made up of volunteers is an excellent way to promote mutual support to obtain qualified leads and legacy gifts (more on this in the next section). In this scenario, a volunteer who has also made a legacy commitment to the organization is almost always a more effective solicitor of legacy gifts. This approach is similar to a capital campaign — and we wouldn't expect volunteers who had not made their own major gift to solicit gifts from others.

Staff solicitors, as paid representatives, usually have not made their own legacy commitment, and appropriately so. Staff are not usually perceived as having a lifelong connection to the organization and can make legacy asks without having made their own legacy gift. In fact, I've seen situations where staff have made a legacy gift to their employer through a beneficiary designation, such as a long-term health care benefit — only to rescind the gift when their association with the organization ends. What kind of statement does this make to legacy givers, 90 percent of whom, on average, keep their commitments?

Paradigm #5: It's All About Supporters

While there is a growing amount of data about the importance of legacy giving, two statistics about prospects stand out above the others and represent tremendous opportunities. Currently seven out of 10 Americans and eight of 10 Canadians give to charity during their lifetimes. Yet less than one person in 20 makes a legacy gift to charity. The two main reasons for not doing so are 1) it never occurred to them, and 2) they weren't asked.

Under the old planned giving paradigm, donors were considered the most promising prospects. And certainly for the vast majority of organizations, legacy gifts have mostly come from past donors. Many programs also emphasized obtaining planned gifts specifically from major donors. And yet, for almost all organizations, donors who have not been major givers make the majority of legacy gifts, both in terms of frequency and dollars. Why? Because those unable to make a major gift during their lifetimes can easily do so through their estates.

This legacy giving paradigm encourages us to think more broadly right from the start about prospects: Legacy gifts come from long-term supporters with a "heart connection" to the charity. This includes volunteers, former board and staff, and members of the local community. For example, here in the San Francisco Bay Area, St. Anthony Dining Room, now in its seventh decade, receives a large sum in legacy gifts annually from people in the community who were not donors or directly connected to the organization during their lifetimes, simply because St. Anthony Dining Room is well known and respected.

Legacy prospects are easily found within an organization's database. Longevity is usually the most important element in selecting a legacy prospect. And it is never too late to improve how your organization collects data. For example, if you haven't historically tracked basic volunteer data, including when someone started and how frequently he or she volunteers, start now. Regarding donor research, rarely do you need to go outside for help to identify legacy prospects. While doing so can be crucial for raising major gifts, your supporters' connection to your organization is by far the primary factor in determining the best prospects for a legacy gift.

Paradigm #6: Qualifying — It's Good Enough

Under the old planned giving paradigm, obtaining qualified leads through communications and marketing was by far the dominant method. Most organizations place planned giving messaging in their donor publications and other communications. Those with bigger budgets might also send targeted print mailings, although response has declined in the past decade. Even with the emergence of digital communications, response generally remains low. (Most organizations are unable to measure response through the word "rate" on the print or digital side since the quantity is usually not statistically significant.)

Legacy giving also utilizes marketing and communications for program visibility and to generate qualified leads. Direct one-on-one legacy asks should, over time, become the primary means of obtaining legacy leads and gifts. Enlightened nonprofits, typically in higher education, have been using one-on-one solicitation for decades. However, until recently, even in higher ed, soliciting legacy gifts has mostly been the responsibility of the planned giving officer alone.

Paradigm #7: Whom Do You Ask and How?

Within the old planned giving paradigm, the question of whom to ask was moot — because most organizations weren't asking anyone (aside from some higher education institutions, as noted).

For most of my career in planned giving (starting in 1992 and continuing until about 2010), I rarely used the "S" word — solicitation — and cautioned others to not use. My thinking, which many shared, was that estate planning, with its implicit association with death, is too delicate and personal to raise with supporters. (Colleagues in higher education and hospital settings, because of the intimacy of class reunions and patient/doctor relationships, were the exception to this rule.)

I have since changed my mind. In the new paradigm of legacy giving, the personal legacy ask is not only important, it is essential. And I'm confident that, over time, this one-on-one ask will replace traditional communications and marketing techniques as the primary source for qualified leads and confirmed gifts for most nonprofit organizations. Legacy asks should be made of identified *suspects*, who should be approached in a thoughtful, coordinated effort.

Before going into more detail on this, let me present some common vocabulary — jargon, if you will — that I find helpful in talking with clients and in workshop settings. These terms will help gift officers and other fundraisers more accurately describe a given supporter's connection to the organization's legacy work. These terms track a donor's legacy giving status throughout his or her connection to an organization.

Legacy Status / Terms Defined

Supporter — anyone who helps your organization by making a gift, becoming a member, volunteering, speaking out, etc.

Prospect — a long-term supporter with a heart connection.

Suspect — a named prospect referred by an individual as someone to approach for a legacy ask.

Legacy Ask — the one-on-one question, "Would you consider making a legacy gift?"

Qualified Lead — anyone who has responded to communications, marketing, or a legacy ask.

Confirmed Gift — a qualified lead that has committed to a revocable gift, made an irrevocable gift, or been identified as the result of a previously unknown estate gift.

Legacy Group Member — anyone who has accepted an organization's invitation to join its recognition group designed to steward legacy donors.

Stewardship — active contact over an extended period of time (at least annually) with those who have made confirmed gifts, regardless of whether there is a legacy group or whether the donor has chosen to join such a group.

I've discussed the terms *supporter* and *prospect* sufficiently in prior sections.

I use the word *suspect* with great caution and specificity, as the term can be unsettling at first. But *suspect* is an especially useful word to use when building a list of prospects and coordinating an approach to making legacy asks. You "suspect" someone would be receptive to a legacy ask. *Suspects* are close to your organization — people with whom you or others have a relationship. Solicitors will have more success with a suspect they know personally. However, third-party referrals can open doors when the solicitor does not have a direct connection to the suspect.

How do you build a suspect list? First, staff, board members, and volunteer solicitors should review a legacy prospect list from your database and identify those whom they know personally. This is called the *peer review method*. Your suspect list can be several hundred or even several thousand names. It's easier for all if you use an Excel spreadsheet. Before contacting promising suspects, ask the reviewer whether you can use her name as a referral in a letter to the suspect. If your organization already has a legacy recognition group, seek out select members and ask them to be peer reviewers.

Here is a greatly underutilized way to build a suspect list: Every time you make a legacy ask, whether the response is "yes" or "no," ask the suspect for names of other people to approach. About half the time you will get one name; on occasion a suspect will provide several.

To enjoy some early and motivating success, encourage solicitors to start with people they know personally. Especially for those new to legacy solicitation, this will build confidence and show them that a legacy ask can be done quite easily.

Contacting Suspects

There are two general approaches to contacting suspects: asking directly and requesting a visit through a letter. Consider carefully which will work best in each situation.

The direct approach is more informal and works for those with whom you have a close relationship. This can be initiated simply by picking up the phone or sending an email and asking the supporter to get together to talk about building capacity for the long-term needs of the organization. These cases require no letter prior to phone or email contact.

When you have reason to believe the supporter will respond better to a more formal approach, write a letter informing the suspect of your intent to get in touch to request a visit — and follow up promptly with a phone call.

Setting up a visit solely to make a legacy ask may pose a scheduling challenge. In this case, make the ask a part of a *two-fer* meeting. In this scenario, you already have plans to meet with a suspect for another reason. By simply adding another five minutes to the conversation, you can lay the groundwork for making a legacy ask. This technique works especially well for executive directors, development staff in small or solo shops, and busy volunteers.

Whichever approach you use, be prepared to schedule a phone visit if for some reason the suspect doesn't wish to meet in person. The purpose is the same: Ask for a few moments to discuss and identify your organization's long-term priorities and what it needs to build a stronger future. This will help set up the conversation to make the legacy ask.

Settings in which a legacy ask can be combined to make more effective use of time include *dual asks* and *triple asks*. Both are greatly underutilized.

- Use the *dual ask* when your organization is not engaged in a specific campaign. Sequence is important: First make the annual ask, then the legacy ask. Donors respect that you are approaching them with one package, rather than peppering them with piecemeal requests.
- Use the *triple ask* in a campaign setting. Again, make your asks sequentially, in the following order: campaign ask, annual ask, then legacy ask. This can be done in one meeting, with extensions as necessary.

Historically, a different tack has been taken toward dual asks made during capital campaigns. This was labeled "comprehensive": first the capital ask, then annual ask. Smarter shops added a legacy ask to make this approach truly comprehensive. Secondary literature still uses the term *comprehensive campaign* in a capital setting, restricting the ask to capital and annual. What's comprehensive about that?

Making the Legacy Ask

Think of a legacy ask as a small "s" solicitation. I encourage clients, after they've discussed their organization's long-term and capacity-building needs with a suspect, to then ask, "Would you consider making your own legacy gift to help us build this future?" While the words may vary, using the qualifier "consider" makes this a somewhat less direct ask than one for a capital or annual fund gift.

In making the legacy ask, the objective is to begin building or expanding the number of qualified leads. Roughly half of all qualified leads will become a confirmed gift over time. The tricky part is predicting the timeframe during which this will occur. Conversion to a confirmed gift can take as little as a few months or as long as several years. It all has to do with when a qualified lead updates (more often) or creates (less often) an estate plan.

When someone tells you they will consider making a legacy gift, follow up with something like, "If I haven't heard back from you in XX months, may I get back in touch?" This way you have set up your next step and obtained permission to make contact again.

The key point here is that securing a legacy commitment can take time. It is all about identifying qualified leads and determining when they are ready to act. The good news is, there is no annual fund clock ticking. Maintain regular contact and arrange a next step each time you connect. Whether it's in the next month, quarter, year or several of them, your next step might simply be a voicemail message in which you say, "I'm following up on our last conversation to see if you are still interested or have any questions."

Why Don't More Charities Make One-On-One Legacy Asks?

There are many reasons for this. Some organizations solicit only for current gifts. Others believe legacy giving is too difficult and will take a lot of staff time. Staff might fear they will be asked questions they can't answer. Some still think that legacy gifts are made only by the wealthy. Those who have worked though some of these hurdles may be unsure how to create support from staff and others.

What Does Your Organization Need To Make Legacy Asks?

First, you and others must understand why it's important. Much has been written about this, and most organizations with any longevity have at least raised the idea of creating or reviving a legacy program. Much less often, what's lacking is a willingness to talk with others. As I've mentioned, even when there is support for making legacy asks, the job is usually relegated to one person on staff or to a lonely volunteer who lacks sufficient staff or organizational support.

To make legacy asks, you also need the ability to track moves in a database or spreadsheet, (more likely both). Unfortunately, database vendors are overly focused on the technical side of gift planning, and it takes a lot of work to jerry-rig a database to track legacy asks. The IT infrastructure is still stuck in the old planned giving paradigm.

While an approach for tracking legacy giving is similar to a moves management system for major gifts, it varies significantly in that the move cycle is not annual. You need to know where in the process a supporter stands:

- Suspect;
- Legacy ask and result (a one-time-only action recorded in your organization's database);
- Qualified lead (including the source);
- Confirmed gift (type); and
- Legacy society member.

I challenge database vendors to develop a legacy moves management system focused on securing legacy gifts and reporting on these areas.

Paradigm #8: Irrevocable; and Nothing Else Matters

Historically, irrevocable gifts have carried too much weight in determining the success of planned giving programs. Board members, chief executives, finance officers, development directors, and dedicated planned giving staff overemphasize irrevocable gifts because of their visibility on financial statements.

Organizations that count *amount certain* bequests in campaigns are in a somewhat better position (though still limited in their ability to maximize legacy gifts). These are usually specific bequests in which the donor shares this detail. CASE (Council for Advancement and Support of Education) organizations used a measure by which specific bequests from donors over a certain age, often mid-60s, could be counted toward a campaign goal. Fortunately, in 2009 the Partnership for Philanthropic Giving (formerly the National Committee on Planned Giving) came out with "Guidelines for Reporting and Counting Charitable Gifts," which suggested a better approach in a campaign setting. CASE has since adopted PPP's guidelines; however, practices still vary considerably, even within higher education.

Although dollar goals are generally discouraged in the planned giving paradigm, some organizations still have them. Those that have decades of data from which to draw can project dollar goals relatively safely and conservatively. Generally, however, I recommend against setting dollar goals.

Legacy giving, unfortunately, has not yet developed key or universal measurements. I suggest that the following are the most important measurements for setting goals and evaluating success.

- A decent-sized suspect pool. To consistently implement a legacy ask effort, an organization needs a growing number of supporters to approach.

- Sufficient qualified leads obtained on an annual basis. These should be segmented in the following areas: a) communications and marketing; b) legacy ask; and c) previously unknown gift from estate.
- The total number of new gifts with the same segmentation as qualified leads. For most organizations, bequests will represent the overwhelming majority of legacy gifts (somewhere between 90 and 100 percent). While measuring the type of gift is important, it is not usually a valid indicator, despite the historical overemphasis on irrevocable gifts.

Caleb Rick suggests another overall measure of success: *You know you've arrived when legacy giving is seen as an organizational priority, not a development office responsibility*.

One fact I especially enjoy about our field is that there is an exception to just about every rule — even my own rule that dollar goals don't work in well-run legacy giving programs. Indeed, I know of at least one organization that uses annual dollar goal effectively: American Cancer Society. Each staff person has a dollar goal. While this may seem counterintuitive to my guidance, their system works very well. Their dollar goal is supported by other goals, including the number of asks and visits. They use a low average (~$30,000) for bequest commitments, which is based on decades of results.

Paradigm #9: The Role of a Committee

Two decades ago, planned giving committees usually recruited primarily professional advisors as committee members — specifically in the three classic practices intersecting our field: estate planning attorneys, financial planning professionals, and CPAs (in order of importance). The thinking was that these advisors, if not bringing in gifts through their own clients, could offer *pro bono* technical help to secure planned gifts. These committees often functioned as a subcommittee of the organization's board development committee. Most provided program overview from the volunteer perspective, as well.

This approach changed over the years. Larger organizations with sufficient capacity would establish a planned giving committee consisting only of people who had made a planned gift, along with a distinct professional advisor committee to offer technical support. Smarter organizations would appoint people to the planned giving committee who were not necessarily on the organization's board. Sometimes members provided stewardship to other planned givers; however, they rarely solicited gifts.

In the new paradigm of legacy giving, the committee has evolved to not only require legacy commitment for participation, but also a willingness to solicit others through one-on-one legacy asks. Committee members help identify suspects whom they will hopefully cultivate for a legacy ask. Members also help with stewardship, program planning, and evaluation.

In order for the legacy committee to succeed, you need to adequately staff the effort. This includes providing scripts and letter templates and tracking activity. Regular contact and coaching are crucial to helping members gain and maintain momentum; otherwise this type of committee becomes a "make-work" effort yielding disappointing results. It is important to reward success with praise and to make the work visible by spreading the word to members of the legacy giving and board development committees, development staff, and other key staff, such as the CEO and CFO. Smaller nonprofits with a development director or lonely executive director responsible for legacy program implementation will especially benefit from this leveraged approach.

Paradigm #10: We Are Legacy Giving

This last paradigm applies mostly to those of us who are members of PPP and/or its local councils. The transition from the old paradigm of planned giving to the new paradigm of legacy giving correlates to the composition of nonprofit and professional advisor members. The following changes have taken place both within PPP nationally and among most local councils:

	Nonprofit	For-Profit	PPP Membership
Prior to 2000	60%	40%	~11,000
Since 2000	85%	15%	~7,000

We've seen a dramatic shift in the ratio of nonprofit members to professional advisors over the years — roughly mirroring the availability of continuing education in our field. Up until the mid-1990s, the financial services field depended heavily on local planned giving councils for training. By the end of that decade, not only did companies offer much greater internal training for advisors, the industry also started to provide more frequent external workshops for training and business development.

As I've noted, the number of those in our profession who work full time in planned/legacy giving has remained consistent at about 10 percent.

Historically, the formation of planned giving councils and eventually the National Committee on Planned Giving was roughly based on the model of the estate and financial planning communities. This approach was especially helpful in building up membership over the years and provided networking opportunities locally and nationally for those of us who intersect in the fields of estate, financial, and gift planning.

However, some aspects of this model have limited our reach right from the start. Many estate and financial planning councils meet over lunch or dinner, incurring costs substantially higher than many nonprofits will routinely support — especially nonprofits with no full-time legacy giving staff. The price point for these continuing education events, combined with the idea that those securing legacy gifts need to be technically competent in areas beyond basic bequests and designations, has kept many people away from regular council and national activity.

About four years ago, PPP made an overture to the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP). While I'm generally unaware of the proceedings, I understand they discussed possibly incorporating PPP into AFP. However, the only visible outcome of that meeting was a new title for a column in *Advancing Philanthropy*, AFP's bimonthly national magazine (circulation

~30,000). The column used to be called "Planned Giving," but around the time of these bilateral meetings, it was changed to "Philanthropic Planning." Recently the column reverted back to "Planned Giving." AFP could exert strategic leadership in moving toward the "you"-friendly legacy giving label. It might also consider promoting discussion of other new paradigms presented in this article.

What might a model for chapters and our national organization look like in the new paradigm of legacy giving? This is a much larger discussion. I suggest we operate more like the AFP model (and other fund development associations), which offers more affordable continuing education in many parts of the country (many AFP chapters hold breakfasts and lunches at less expensive venues). We also should seek more collaboration with AFP local chapters. This would include reexamining the content of the continuing education that we offer to provide more basic information that would truly help nonprofits launch and sustain legacy giving efforts focused primarily on gifts of bequests and designations. We should also propose a structure for securing and sustaining these gifts, including making legacy asks.

The phrase *culture of philanthropy* was used often in the nonprofit community in 2013. It refers to organizational values and practices that support and nurture development. It came into vogue because it appears as a major theme in the report by CompassPoint and the Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund titled "UnderDeveloped: A National Study of Challenges Facing Nonprofit Fundraising" (http://www.compasspoint.org/sites/default/files/images/UnderDeveloped_CompassPoint_HaasJrFund_January%202013.pdf). While this report does not refer to planned/legacy giving, its advice to break out of silos is certainly timely and relevant. (Full disclosure: I served on the study's Advisory Committee.)

Shifting the focus to legacy giving does not mean we need to leave behind the excellent resources and continuing education for which our council and national programs are so well known. However, we do need to provide more than the technical guidance for the 90 percent of those in our field who practice less than full time or who are new to legacy giving and need resources outside the technical information we have historically provided.

Thank you for again for reading this analysis of the somewhat artificial divide between the old paradigm of *planned giving* and the new paradigm of *legacy giving*. If you already operate in the new paradigm but still use the old name, consider embracing the new paradigm completely. If you still operate mostly or exclusively in the old paradigm, I hope this leaves you with new ideas to expand your practice.

For more information:

Greg Lassonde, CFRE
Legacy Giving Specialist / Consultant
P.O. Box 27426
Oakland, CA 94602
(510) 482-1502
greg@greglassonde.com
www.greglassonde.com