



# Moving Up to Executive Director: Lessons Learned from My First 365 Days

*Joanne Oppelt*

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Studies have estimated that more than 70 percent of current nonprofit executive directors plan to retire in the next five to ten years. Do you have the skills necessary to fill this leadership vacuum? Are you an aspiring executive director? Are you prepared for the transition to executive leader? Do you want to know what to expect moving up to the corner office?

Successfully transition to the corner office!

**Moving Up to Executive Director: Lessons Learned from My First 365 Days** is written for anyone who wants to become an executive director, understand what it takes to transition into an executive leadership position, or become better prepared to handle executive responsibilities.

Becoming an executive director is a huge transition. To succeed, you must rely on your experiences, strengths, and expertise. In addition, you must learn new skills, engage in new behaviors, work well with other people, know your leadership style and be aware of your strengths and weaknesses. Be honest. Nonprofit executive leadership requires a lot. It is an all-encompassing job.

**Moving Up** will help you:

- Understand the complex nature of nonprofit executive leadership
- Identify the skills and characteristics of successful executive directors
- Gain insight into the unique obligations nonprofit executive directors face
- Manage multiple priorities
- Prepare for the transition to your role as executive leader
- Anticipate challenges inherent in your first year as executive director

Being an executive director is a big job. You must be proficient in leadership, finance, operations, technology, human resources, resource development, staff development, volunteer management, marketing, and strategic planning. You must have good communication skills, build teams and foster their development, collaborate with others, be insightful, have a high degree of integrity, and share your leadership.

Author Joanne Oppelt was ready for some of the challenges she faced in her first year—but not all. She insight into becoming an executive director and making it work. It is a must-read for anyone aspiring to nonprofit executive leadership.

## **About the Author**

Working with nonprofits since 1993, **Joanne Oppelt**, MHA, GPC just celebrated her first year as executive director, having moved up through the ranks of program and resource development. She is known for her passion for infusing organizational mission in everything she does. Joanne also teaches courses in nonprofit management and fund development at Kean University in Union, New Jersey, and is the author of several books on nonprofit topics.

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