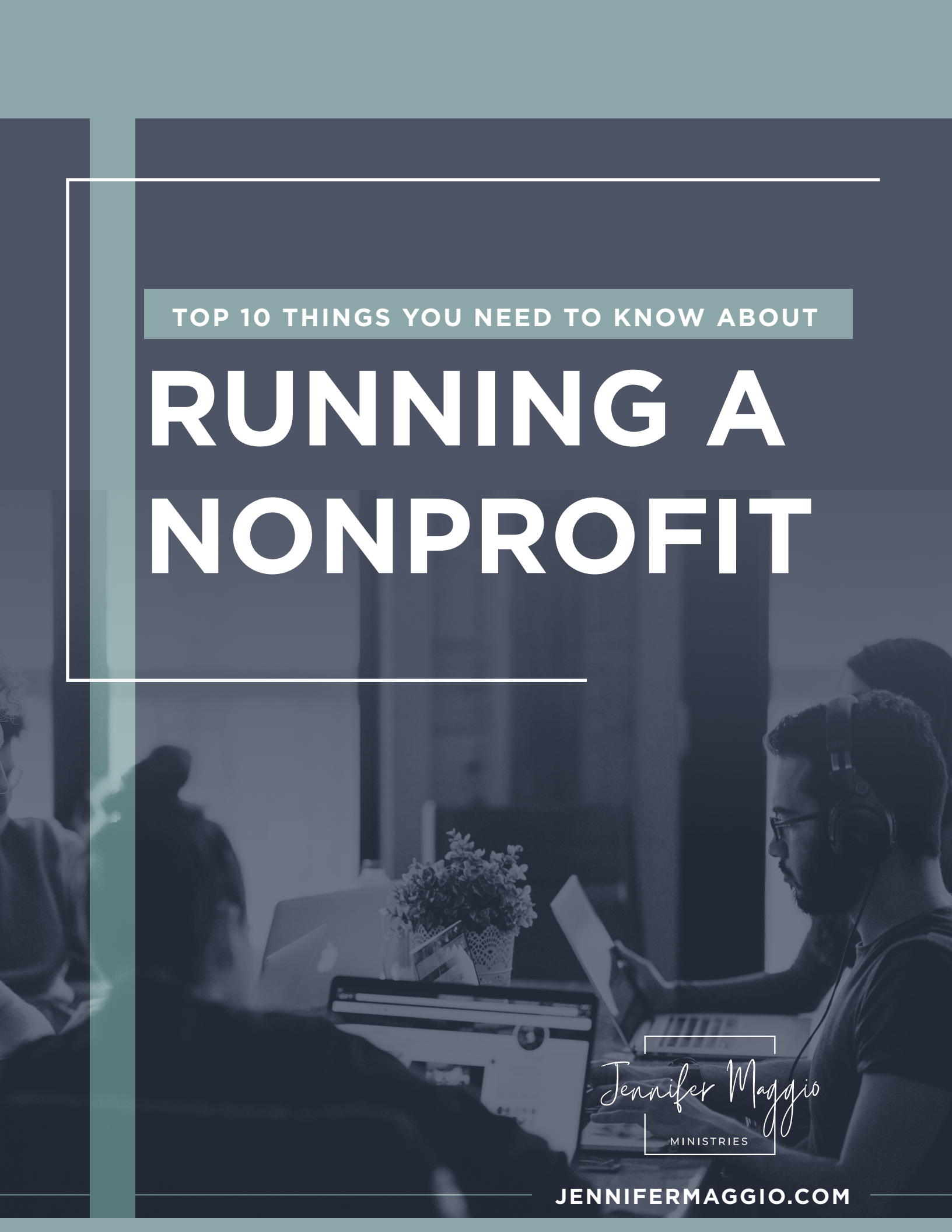




TOP 10 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

RUNNING A NONPROFIT

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RUNNING A NONPROFIT

Most nonprofit leaders don't lack passion. There isn't a more passionate group of people I know than Believers in the nonprofit sector. They certainly aren't in it for the money or retirement package. They are often in it because they feel called and commissioned by God to be in their position.

The problem in many nonprofits is a lack of key strategies for growth, effective leadership training, and ongoing support infrastructure to sustain rhythms.

I've worked in ministry for more than two decades and have helped many other nonprofit leaders serve their communities well. I have identified some [common problems](#) in the sector that I want to help you with. Between juggling staff, volunteer engagement, board members, fundraising efforts, and minimal budgets, nonprofit leaders are often exhausted and frustrated, leading to early burnout, even when their passion still burns strong for the cause.

Many nonprofits are barely keeping their doors open. *God's intention for our ministries is Kingdom territory expansion – making disciples and serving the least of these.* When I began our nonprofit ministry in 2011, I found it difficult to glean advice. I attempted to meet with many leaders, but few would give me their time. I had no money to pay business consultants and experts. My husband and I were eating Ramen noodles and clipping coupons to even afford to start the ministry. I had no platform to [fundraise](#) or ideas about the questions I should be asking or the things I didn't know! I hope the following will give you some ideas to ponder as you contemplate how to grow and sustain your nonprofit.



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1. TRANSITION FROM VISION TO ACTION ITEMS.

Too many leaders do not understand how to parlay the vision God gave them – the big God-breathed idea - into an actionable plan that gets things accomplished and changes lives. So here's what happens. There is much talk without much action. They are hearers of the vision but not doers of the vision. At some point, we've got to stop talking about it and be about it.

Key questions to assess whether you have an effective action plan:

- Can I say in one sentence what our ministry is trying to accomplish?
- Can I see in one sentence why our work is necessary?
- Do I have a 60-second, compelling elevator pitch?
- Can others around me explain our vision clearly?
- Do I (and others) understand how we get from here to there? Is the path clear?
- If someone was willing to give you \$1mm, could you explain how you'd spend it?
- Example: We want to help single moms. How? What does success look like both short & long-term?

Key steps to move from vision to action:

- Brainstorming is only step 1. It is critical, as it creates a breeding ground for creativity and passion, but it is only step 1. Know when brainstorming is over. Take notes to identify the best ideas – store the good ideas for later.
- Remember English class. Create the big vision/mission statement, goals, and action items. (Roman Numerals - I, II, III, IV, Capital Letters - A, B, C, D, Small letters - a, b, c, d). This is the central referral document. Write down the vision and make it plain; Habakkuk teaches us — plain and clear matters.
- Establish timelines.
- Evaluate S.M.A.R.T. goals. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Trackable
- Remain disciplined. You will want to quit. You will get new ideas. You will get bored. You will question your calling. Discipline combats laziness, confusion, exhaustion, and fear. When there is a plan, it is far easier to stay disciplined to follow it.

2. GET ORGANIZED.

Organization will come from the vision & the plan. The planning document (*also known as the strategic business plan*) will become the key to keeping you organized when you are pulled in many different directions.

- What must I get done today? This week? This month? What can wait?
- How does this activity relate to the action plan?

- Is there someone else who could/should be doing this?
- God never operates in haste. We often succumb to the most demanding, loudest voice in the room. We have to answer the email. We have to jump on the call. We have to fix the problem. When, frankly, much of this is a distraction.
- There are many online systems that can help you stay organized. Some prefer extremely techy, some not so much. I'm going to share some systems I use that help me or our business stay organized to give you some ideas, but I'm certainly not loyal to any of these if you find something that works better:
 - ZohoCRM – donors, volunteers, and clients
 - DropBox – document storage, separated by folder & user access
 - MailChimp – marketing campaigns
 - Google for Business – email and Google Calendar is segmented to assess monthly, quarterly, and annual tasks.
 - Zoom for webinars
 - Daily task list
 - 3-year Strategic Business Plan

3. BUILD A TEAM.

Teams do not always mean staff. Now, in most cases, eventually it will, but many people complain that they don't have enough help, due to funding, commitment level, etc., but we have to evaluate if we know what to do with a team, if we have more help. In the early days of a nonprofit launch, teams will likely mean family, friends, church members, and volunteers. Engage a team in the vision and the action plan. The more you understand what you need people to do, the easier the ask becomes. The team will start with one-time volunteers, board members, staff, focus groups, peers, experts, and donors. Ensure they know their role. And ensure you know their role. Establish a correction path. Self-correcting, employee correcting, etc.

- Do I have clearly identified roles for volunteers & staff?
- Do I know what I am looking for, e.g., skills needed?
- Do I have a plan in place to evaluate a team? To train a team?
- Develop an onboarding process for volunteers, board members, and staff. *(30-day, 60-day, 90-day, semi-annual & annual reviews, basic skills, repeat, regular "pop quizzes")*

4. KNOW WHERE THE MONEY IS COMING FROM.

A development plan is not knowing three rich people! It is not schmoozing in every networking circle in your city. Sure, there is a component of that, but a development plan will include diversifying revenue streams. DO NOT put all your eggs in any one basket. For 3 years of our

ministry, one woman was the largest donor. Fast-forward 10 years, she barely speaks to us. People are fickle. Their interests change. They get offended. Their financial situation changes.

- Grant funding, including private family foundations and corporations
- Private donor funding
- Fundraiser events
- End-of-year giving campaign
- Sales items, e.g., books & curriculum, t-shirts, candles, coffee mugs, ink pens, trinkets
- Corporations – especially those interested in marketing – have both philanthropic/charity dollars and marketing dollars. The bigger your audience, the more dollars you can raise.
- In-kind donations
- Fees-for-service/Program Fees include entrances to webinars, tickets to events, and phone consultations.

5. DEVELOP A BASIC MARKETING PLAN.

- Marketing will likely be free or low-cost in the beginning. Spend money on marketing when you can afford to. Engage a marketing firm. *(Not until the 8th year of business for us!)*
- Develop an editorial calendar & plan.
- What do I want to say to the audience? What are the key topics? What is the purpose of the advertising, e.g., fundraising versus client engagement versus event advertising?
- Use social media. (Note: I use most social media platforms, but spend most time on the one that works for us, e.g. Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Twitter, etc.).
- Use blogs.
- Create a newsletter. We use MailChimp but have also used ConstantContact.
- Create webinars.
- Free advertising can include newspapers, magazines, and community event calendars.

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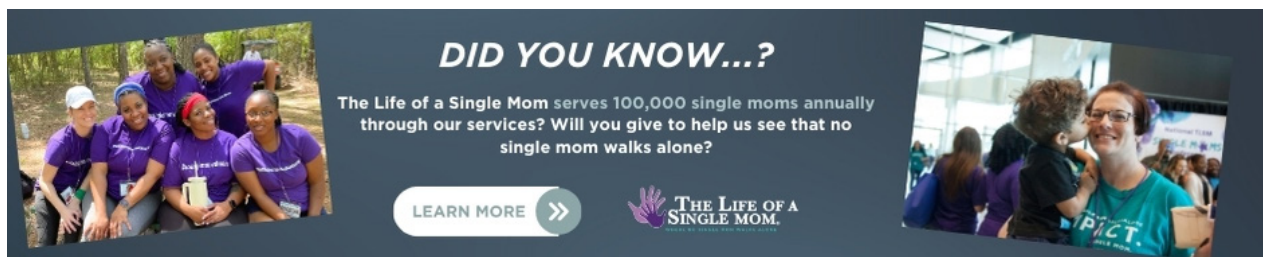
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6. CREATING A BRAND & CULTURE.

Yes, in the early years, the brand is you. People will struggle to separate the brand from you as the founder. However, developing a business with staying power means creating a brand beyond you. Is there a company culture, even if you do not have a team yet?

- Core values – Communication, Excellence, Change, Respect, and Ownership.
- What won't we do? What will we do? Develop policies around the values.
- Regular team meetings
- Team-building strategies
- Can people make decisions beyond you? Are you teaching them to think like you? Are you empowering them to make mistakes?
- What are your core capabilities? What do you do well that no one else does better? Is it laser-focused? (*Example: Coats for Single Moms' Kids*).



7. RESOURCE YOURSELF.

Where are you improving? How are you growing? Can you measure that you are further along today than you were a year ago? What meetings are you in? What podcasts, videos, webinars, and articles are you watching and reading? What skills do you need? Are you a good salesman? Are you a left- or right-brainer? Where are your blind spots? You need a cursory knowledge of everything initially. You can branch out and specialize in the future.

- Basic bookkeeping – accounts payable/receivable/taxes/payroll
- Sales
- Marketing & social media
- Graphic design
- Processes & Data Analyzation
- Human resources
- Fundraising
- Public speaking

8. RESOURCE YOUR PEOPLE.

What investment are you making in the people?

- Paid resources – webinars & skills path events
- Unpaid resources – sales training in the TLSM team, regular individual meetings & lunches, pop quizzes in the hallway

9. REST.

Know the season. Know the ebb and flow. Know when to step back. Proper rest in both the natural and supernatural realms creates an opportunity for holy revelation. First, you recognize your business doesn't rise and fall with you. Yes, you are the [leader](#). Yes, what you do matters. But ultimately, every idea is a God-idea, and every provision comes from Him.

10. PREPARE FOR WAR.

- No major feat was won without a battle. To expect that you will make a mark on the lives of people without spiritual resistance is ignorance and a lack of understanding of the whole counsel of God's word. *Nonprofits, especially those that are faith-based, will endure many challenges.* Are you prayed up? Are you leading the team in spiritual disciplines? Are you spending adequate time in the Bible and with Christian mentors? Do you have appropriate accountability in your life? [Ephesians 6:12](#), For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

MEET THE AUTHOR

JENNIFER MAGGIO

Jennifer Maggio is an award-winning author and speaker whose personal journey through homelessness, abuse, and single parenting is leaving audiences around the globe riveted. At 19, Maggio was living in government housing on food stamps and welfare as she struggled to raise two children alone. She shares with great openness her pain, mistakes, and journey to find hope in Christ. She ultimately became an 11-time Circle of Excellence winner in Corporate America, founder of a national nonprofit, author of multiple books, and national single parenting expert. Her passion for the Lord is contagious, and her story has been used to inspire thousands around the globe. For more info, visit her website at jennifermaggio.com.

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