

# Closing the Professional Development Gap

The Movement to Empower and Cultivate Tomorrow's Nonprofit Leaders

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# Agenda

- Introducing Young Nonprofit Professionals Network (YNPN)
- Defining the professional development gap
- Strategies for closing the gap
  - Young professionals
  - Senior leaders
  - Funders

# What is YNPN Boston?

- Founded in 2007
- 501(c)(3) status awarded in 2014
- Connected with over 9,000 individuals across the sector
- All-volunteer run by the YNPN Boston Leadership Team
  - 15 board members
  - 44 ambassadors



# What is YNPN Boston?

**Our mission** is to develop a **stronger, higher impact** nonprofit community in Boston by engaging young talent and their organizations in professional development and human capital management practices.

**Our vision** is that one day, Boston's nonprofit community will have a continuous pipeline of diverse, highly engaged individuals who help to realize the sector's full potential for impact.



# What is YNPN National?

**YNPN National** is the umbrella organization for all YNPN chapters, supporting over 40 chapters nationwide.

YNPN **activates** emerging leaders and helps them acquire the skills and awareness they need to be effective changemakers. With these leaders, we're building a diverse and powerful social sector that can support and strengthen our communities.

Together, we're building a  
movement

**Over 50,000 members nationwide!!**



# Leadership Crisis Predicted in 2006

The Bridgespan Group forecasted a leadership deficit in the nonprofit sector:

*“By 2016, charities wouldn’t be able to recruit the 640,000 managers needed to keep pace with hiring needs caused by growth and retirements.”*

Nonprofit organizations will need to hire more than double the number of senior managers employed in 2006

Source: <https://philanthropy.com/article/Lack-of-Training-for-Young/236164>

# Another Decade, Another Crisis

Leadership crisis thwarted by the Great Recession and nonprofit organizations face different problem:

Lack of training and advancement opportunities for young, ambitious workers

*Individual impact:* frustration and disillusionment

*Organizational impact:* high turnover, incomplete succession planning, uncertain sustainability

Source: <https://philanthropy.com/article/Lack-of-Training-for-Young/236164>



# Core Issue

- Organizations are underinvesting in their young talent, often citing a lack of resources
- Young professionals often have a hard time knowing where to go for quality professional development and can have difficulties in advocating for what they need
- While there are opportunities for professional development that are geared towards young nonprofit professionals in the Boston area, these resources are limited
- This leads to a significant **professional development gap**

# Core Issue

In a survey done by Non-Profit Quarterly and YNPN National, YNPN members were **eight times more likely** to list professional development as their biggest workplace concern or as one of the trends that will affect the sector over the next five years.

In a survey of 10,000 YNPN members, 45% of those surveyed say they plan to leave not only their current jobs but the nonprofit sector altogether. 69% cited lack of career advancement as a main reason for this.

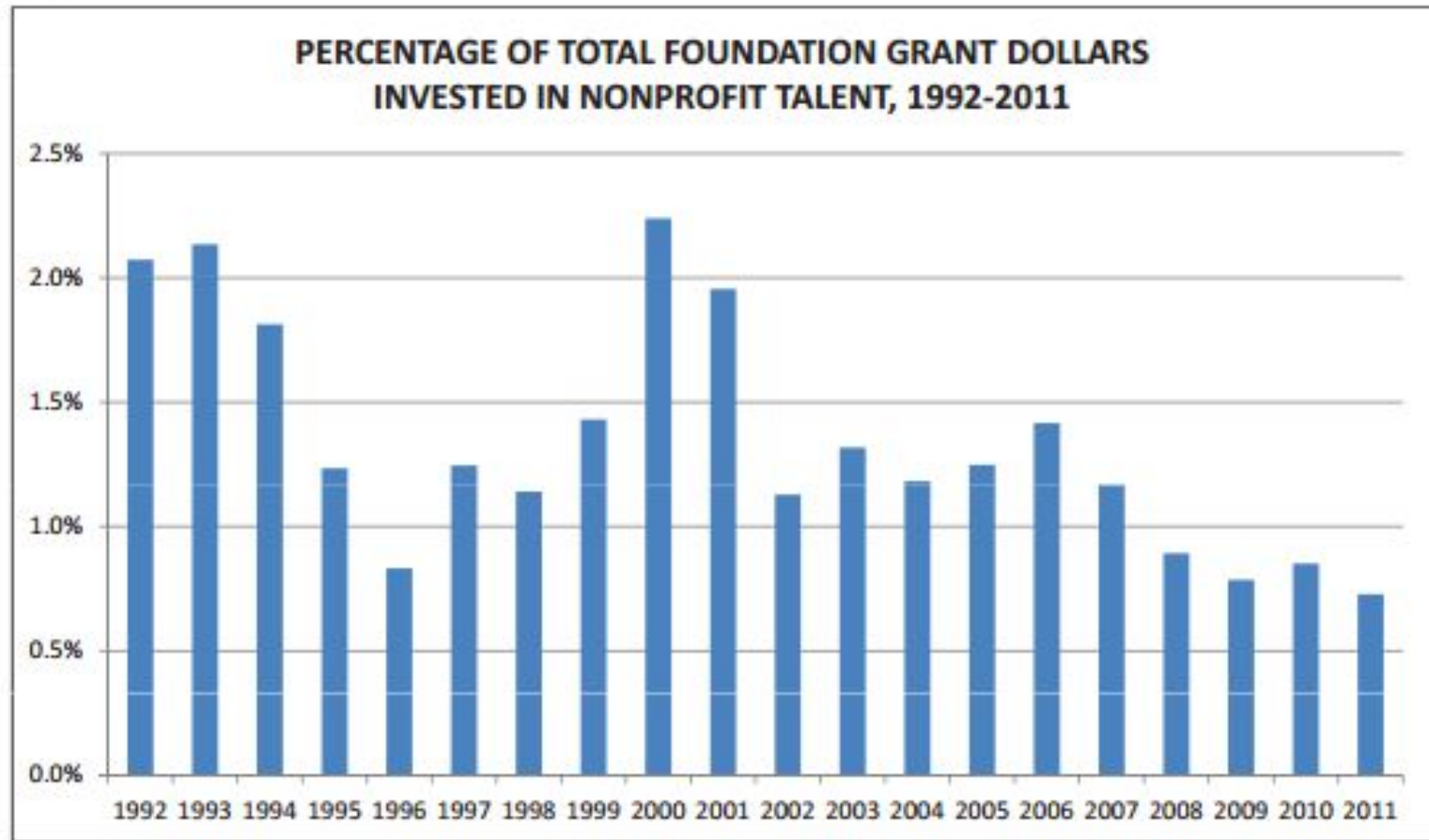


# Core Issue

Similarly, in a review of research done by YNPN National, we found that nonprofits fill **30 to 40 percent** of their senior positions internally, while for-profit companies average closer to 65 percent

In a survey conducted by YNPN, more than **half of the respondents** cited a lack of management experience as the most significant barrier to taking on an ED role.

# Core Issue



Source: The Foundation Center, 2013. Based on all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by a sample of approximately 1,000 larger foundations (including 800 of the 1,000 largest ranked by total giving). For community foundations, only discretionary grants are included. Grants to individuals are not included in the file. Copyright © 2013, The Foundation Center. All rights reserved.

# Core Issue

## Professional Development Poll



# We get it...the struggle is real!



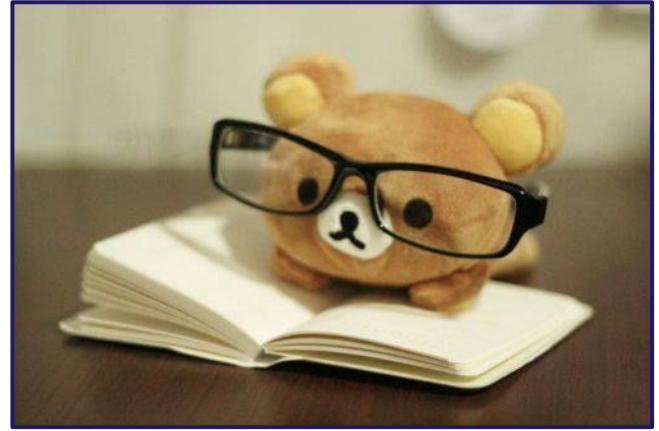


# How does YNPN Boston address this core issue?

YNPN Boston was created to fill this gap by providing **professional development training, resources, and networking opportunities for young nonprofit professionals to learn, grow, and connect.**

We also **advocate**, at forums such as this, on behalf of young nonprofit professionals, assuring that our needs are heard and prioritized.





# **YNPN Boston Survey Research**



# 2012 YNPN Boston Membership Survey

## The top five professional development (PD) needs

1. Expand network of nonprofit professionals
2. Education/mentorship about potential nonprofit career paths
3. Job search assistance
4. Additional training/experience to help earn promotion
5. Develop ability to negotiate within the workplace

# 2014 Young Nonprofit Professionals Survey

Employer PD	%
Budget for conference attendance	45%
Informal professional development	45%
Educational reimbursement	28%
Budget for professional organization membership fees	27%
Structured internal professional development program	15%
Career coaching/planning	10%
Not Applicable/No Answer	30%

# 2014 Young Nonprofit Professionals Survey

Professional Organization PD	% Want to gain	% Have gained	Gap
Find mentor	54%	4%	50%
Build professional network	73%	33%	40%
New professional connections	74%	38%	36%
New job or professional opportunity	51%	21%	30%
Learning about nonprofit topics	44%	32%	12%
Greater awareness of local nonprofits	48%	61%	-13%

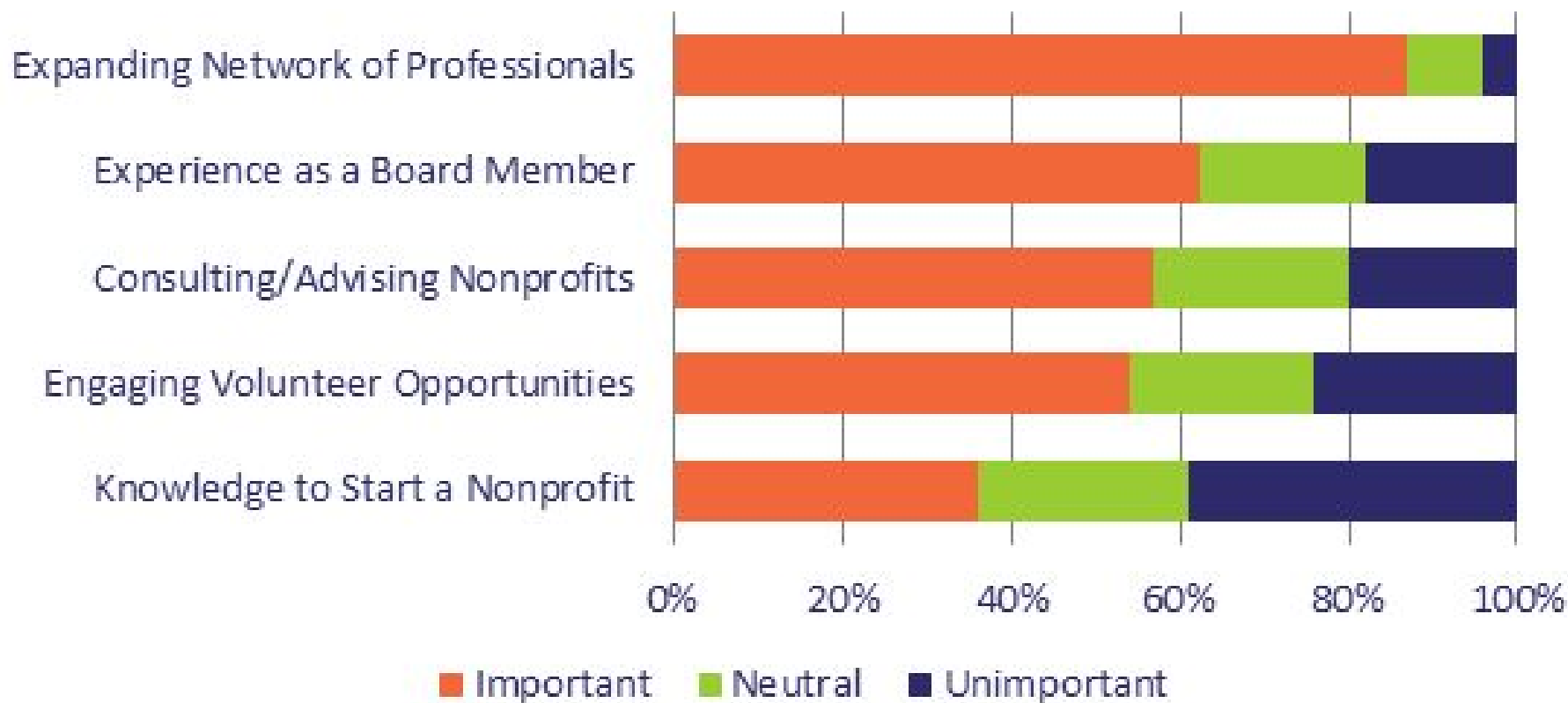
# 2015 Young Nonprofit Professionals Survey

- Objective
  - Identify the needs of young nonprofit professionals in Boston
- Approach
  - Online survey open September - October 2015
  - 265 participants (84% between 24 and 35)
- Research themes:
  - Current Employment
  - Professional Development
  - Mentorship
  - Professional Organizations
  - Sector Outlook
  - Student Loans
  - Demographics
  - YNPN Boston



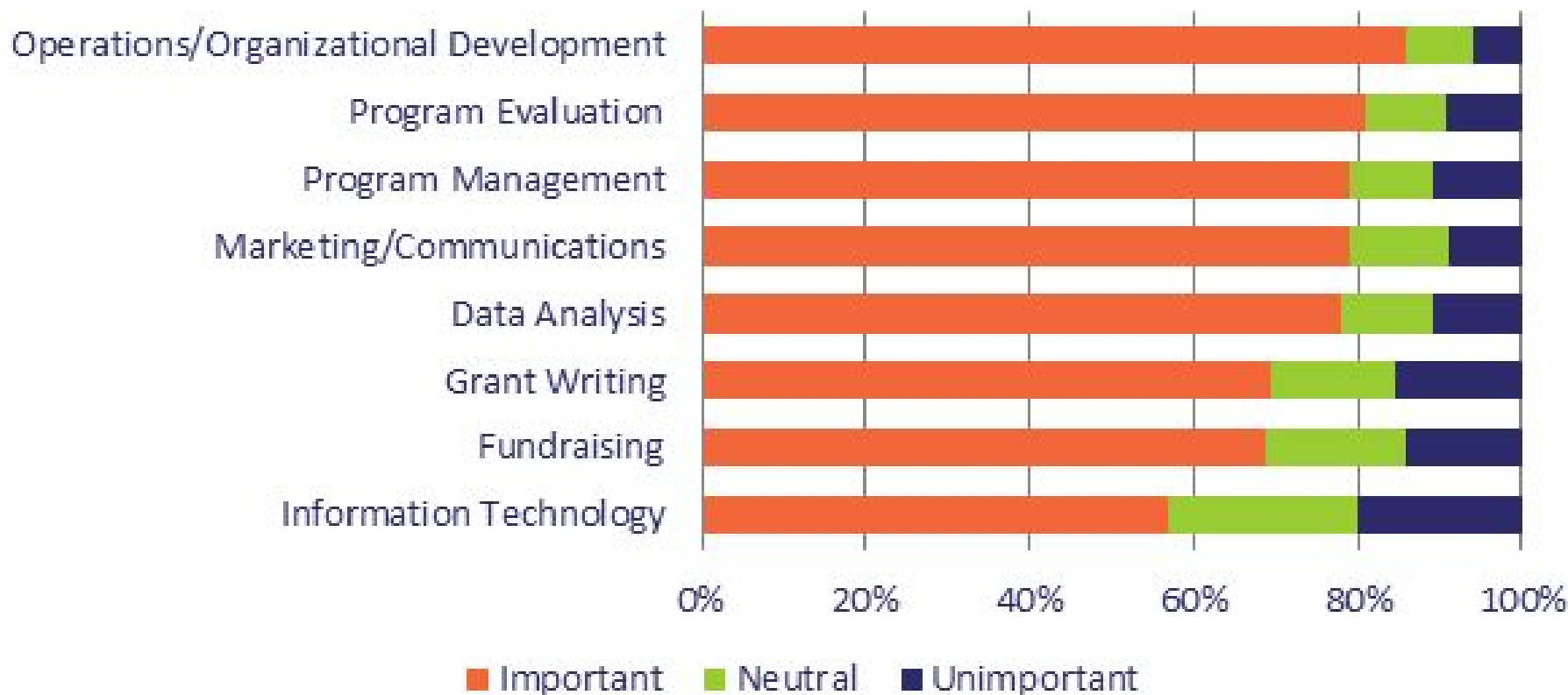
# 2015 Young Nonprofit Professionals Survey

## Importance of PD Opportunities



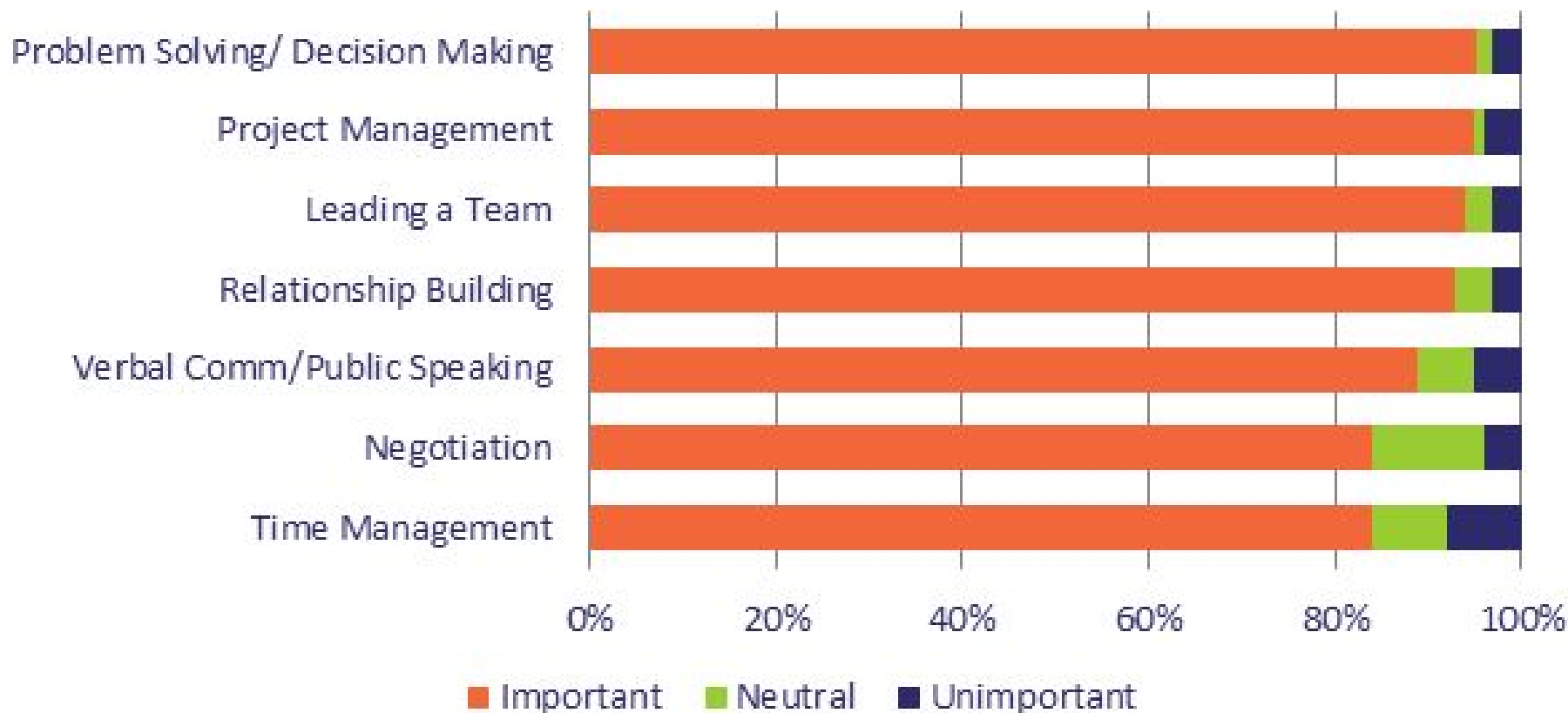
# 2015 Young Nonprofit Professionals Survey

## PD Needs - Quantifiable Skills



# 2015 Young Nonprofit Professionals Survey

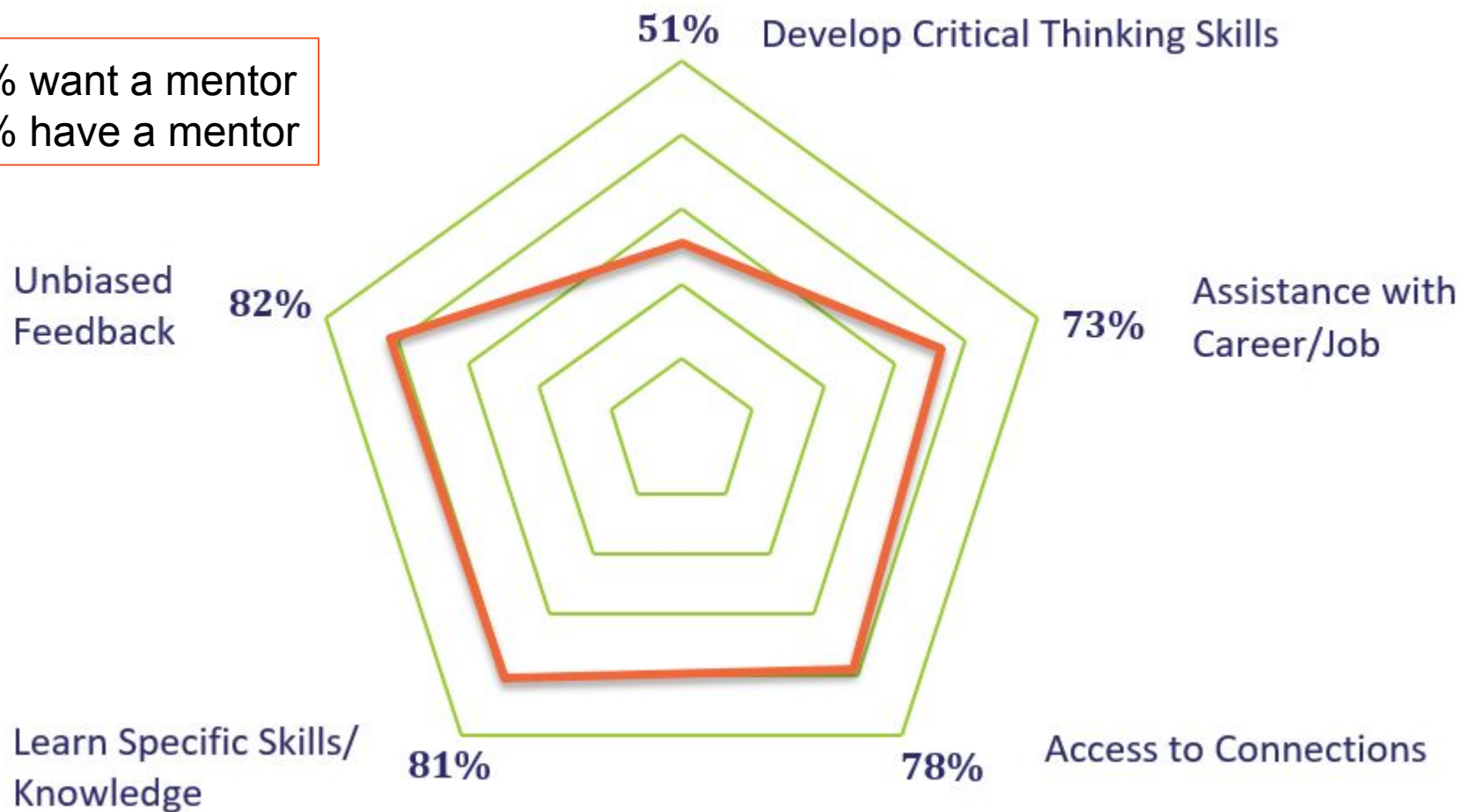
## PD Needs - Subjective Skills



# 2015 Young Nonprofit Professionals Survey

## What I Want from a Mentor

69% want a mentor  
12% have a mentor





# YNPN Boston Survey Research Trends

- 1) **Building professional network**
- 2) **Finding a mentor**
- 3) **Developing skills to advance**
  - **Hard skills:** Operations, program management, program evaluation
  - **Soft skills:** Decision-making, project management, leading a team

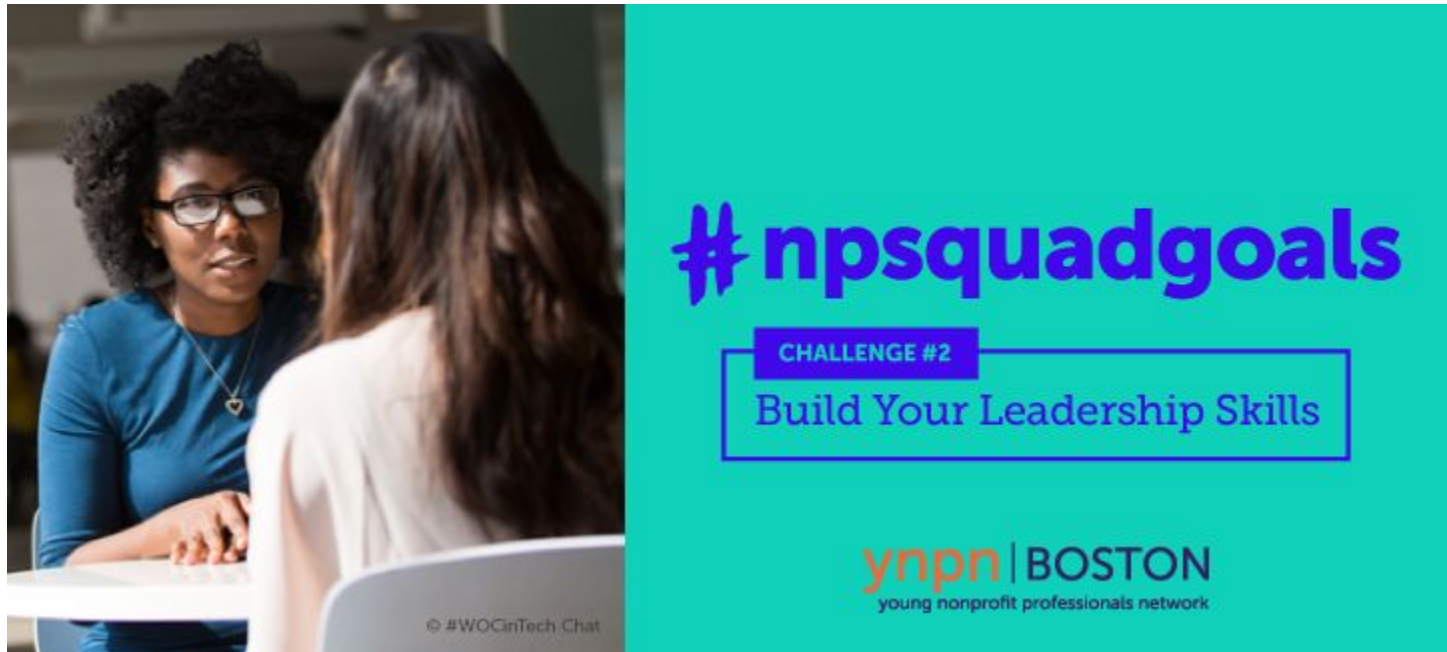
# How have the surveys influenced YNPN Boston?

- Directly influenced our role within the nonprofit community
- Guided our programming and structure



# How have the surveys influenced YNPN Boston?

## #npsquadgoals



# Let's Talk It Out

- What steps can **young professionals** take to advance their own development? What have you done or seen other professionals do?
- How can **senior leaders** promote professional development within their organizations? What have your senior leaders done or what would you like them to do?
- How can **funders** provide support for professional development in organizations and across the sector?



# Young Professionals

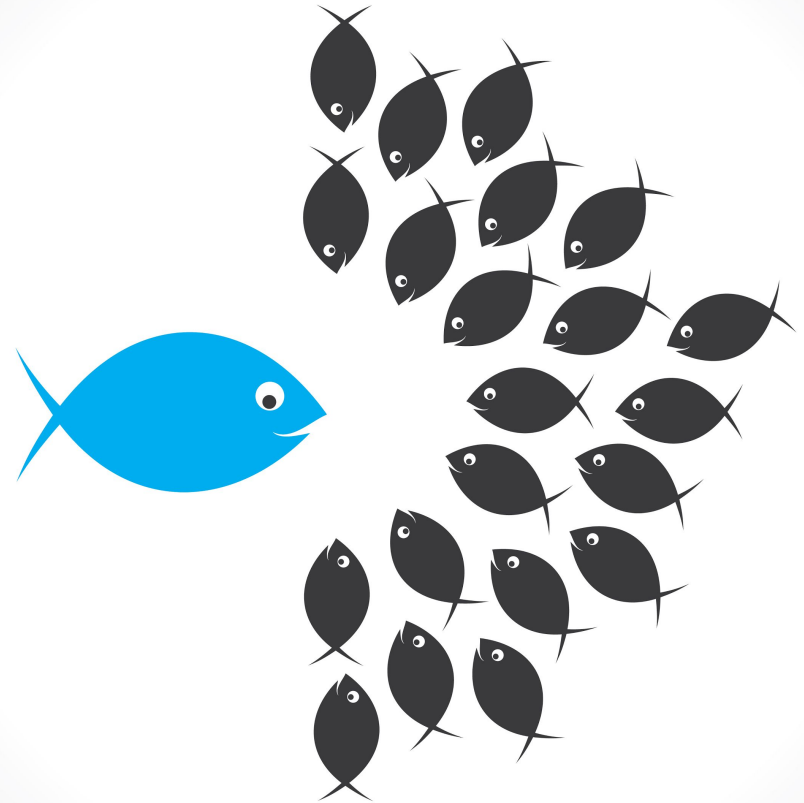
# What Can Young Professionals Do?

- Define key hard and soft skills you want to attain
- Join YNPN Boston (and other professional organizations)
- Advocate for time to meet with supervisor & make a PD plan
- Research professional development programs and opportunities (Institute for Nonprofit Practice, YNPN Boston Ambassador Program, Nonprofit Center, Third Sector, MNN)

# What Can Young Professionals Do?

- Set goals - such as our #npsquadgoals challenges; use others as accountability partners
- Get feedback from colleagues
- Say yes to opportunities and make it known you're a team player
- Build and maintain your network

# Senior Leaders





# What Can Senior Leaders Do?

- Make professional development a part of organizational culture
- Encourage organizational flexibility
- Provide resources for professional development (budget, time)
- Ensure managers and staff have regular check-ins
- Highlight this topic with orgs like MNN so it becomes the bigger nonprofit agenda
- Become an advocate on this issue

# What Can Senior Leaders Do?

- Encourage internal professional development - what can your staff share? Foster a culture of organizational learning
- Design a decision making process that involves the rest of the organization at key steps in strategy and planning. Share insight into decision making
- Talk with other leaders about these issues
- Speak to funders and make the case that PD is worth funding

# Funders



# What Can Funders Do?

- Be aware of the need for PD and talk to grantees about it
- Explore designating funds for PD and/or including PD dollars in other grants
- Recognize professional development as an investment in sustained program quality, lower rates of turnover, and organizational sustainability
- Look at the long-term view of grantee sustainability

# What Can Funders Do?

- Host networking or PD events specifically for more junior staff
- Include young nonprofit professionals and their perspectives in surveys and studies
- Attend local professional development events so you can make recommendations to grantees about how to develop specific skills

# Summary

- Leadership crisis of 2016: lack of advancement and training
- Research indicates there is a gap in professional development opportunities for young nonprofit professionals
- YNPN Boston surveys indicate young professionals need to:
  - Build professional network
  - Find mentorship
  - Develop specific hard and soft skills
- Everyone has a role to play in addressing the gap
  - Young professionals
  - Senior leaders
  - Funders

## Wrap Up

# This is a lot of information! 🧠

- You know the issue (which is the important first step)
- We recommend focusing on one or two of the strategies we reviewed
- Continue the conversation: talk with your friends in the sector, colleagues, and others about their experiences and observations around PD and young professionals

# Thank You!





# PD Resources

## YNPN Boston #npsquadgoals

[Challenge #1: Strengthen Your Network](#)

[Challenge #2: Build Your Leadership Skills](#)

[Challenge #3: Boost Your Relationship Management Game](#)

[Challenge #4: Become a Nonprofit Marketing Guru](#)

[Challenge #5: Jumpstart Your Next Job Search](#)

## Local Resources

<http://www.ynpnboston.org/> - Young Nonprofit Professionals Network of Boston

<http://massnonprofitnet.org/> - Massachusetts Nonprofit Network

<http://nonprofitcenterboston.org/> - The NonProfit Center

<http://www.nonprofitpractice.org/> - Institute for Nonprofit Practice

<https://netimpactboston.org/> - Net Impact - Board Fellows program

<http://www.aauw.org/work-smart-boston/> - Salary negotiation workshops for women

<https://generalassemb.ly/boston> - Online and in-person classes in tech, business, and design

# Sources

1. [NPQ Professional Development – No Luxury Expenditure for Nonprofits](#)
2. [YNPN Study - Good in Theory, Problem in Practice](#)
3. [Lack of Training for Young Nonprofit Workers Means Too Few Potential Leaders](#)
4. [Foundation Review: Talent Philanthropy: Investing in Nonprofit People to Advance Nonprofit Performance](#)
5. [YNPN Study - Stepping Out or Stepping Up](#)