Andrew Olsen: Hey, this is Andrew Olsen, co-host of the Rainmaker Fundraising Podcast. Our podcast is sponsored exclusively by Newport One. You can check them out at newportone.com. I'm joined today by Roy Jones. Roy is vice president of Mercy Ships and the wonderful co-host of this show with me. Roy, how are you this afternoon?

Roy Jones: Good, very good, Andrew. I think this is going to be a fun one.

Andrew Olsen: I do too. We have a wonderful guest. I'm really excited to have her here. We have with us, Sarah Olivieri, who's the founder of PivotGround, a digital agency that serves the non-profit sector. Sarah, welcome.

Sarah Olivieri: Thanks. It's a real pleasure to be here.

Andrew Olsen: I appreciate you joining us. I don't know if I did it justice by describing your firm as a digital agency that serves the non-profits. I think you're a little bit more than that, and I think you have more depth than just the digital fundraising, which I think is what people would assume when I say those words. Tell us a little bit about yourself and about PivotGround.

Sarah Olivieri: I come from a non-profit background. I've been an executive director, program director, mainly of human service organizations, especially in the autism and developmental disabilities field. Although, I was once briefly the ED of a foundation, which was very insightful and interesting to learn about. Then, for a number of years, I shifted more into marketing for for-profit businesses and non-profits. Then I decided I was going to focus exclusively on non-profits. Because of my background, I could serve them in a way that nobody else could. So we worked on digital marketing which, of course, often encompasses digital fundraising. But we also specialized in marketing for programs we call, the impact marketing.

But, like anyone who's gotten deep into marketing for-profit or non-profit realizes, is that you quickly get involved with how organizations run. Because, if an organization doesn't run well, it can't actually benefit from great marketing.

Andrew Olsen: So true.

Sarah Olivieri: Marketing led to business consulting, pretty quickly, once I really started focusing on non-profits. And that's where I loved helping that element of non-profits grow. When I was an ED, I was always interested in how can we systematize things in a way that lets us scale our impact? Not many people were talking about it back then, when I was thinking about it. But I was always uncomfortable being a consultant. I didn't just want to be there giving advice. As a marketer, I loved having skin in the game. I loved helping empower people to take something that was beyond me. And, as I had done all this in my own business journey as well, I have learned a lot of for-profit business frameworks that were really helping me grow my business in a much more effective, streamlined, efficient way.

I started teaching non-profits some of these frameworks, so it wouldn't just be about my ideas, but it would be how can we make better decisions together? How can you make better decisions on your own? And, finally, I burst what we call, the impact method, which is most of what we do now. Which is a business framework specifically for non-profits. I don't know that there's anyone, any other frameworks out there like this yet. I hope others do emerge, but it really took everything that was great about the for-profit frameworks and filled in, and changed the pieces that were just really different for non-profits, or were missing that non-profits really needed.

Today, we mostly train people in the impact method, and we help people implement it. We still do some marketing for people who are really ready to scale at that level.

Andrew Olsen: Tell us, if you can, a little bit more about the impact method. How does that experience work with a non-profit? It sounds like it's an existing framework. They enter it with you. You're teaching them how to do it, but give us a little bit more of the on-the-ground insights about it.

Sarah Olivieri: Sure. Well, I think what it does is it replaces traditional strategic planning with a whole dramatically different way of thinking about doing business. Which is that, as non-profits, we really need to be iterative, which most for-profits have realized already. We have to be growing incrementally, and we have to be ready to move a lot faster because our world moves faster. It takes a very big picture holistic element to it by looking at our organizational strategies, but then it connects it right down through to how are we taking every day actions?

In the impact method, we break our world down into 60-day cycles. Then we break those 60-day cycles into two week sprints, which comes from an agile framework of working. Which, basically, the creators of the internet created this way of working to keep up with the speed of the internet, in really simplistic terms. Then we have these two week sprints where we know exactly everyone on our team what they are doing. That is, really, how strategy meets execution in the impact method. So it's both, faster but it's more focused, and easier to manage. You get more done, but you also have less overwhelm and stress as you do it.

Andrew Olsen: That's a fairly brilliant way to approach it in this sector. I mean, Roy and I have been doing this for a lot of years, and we're so used to an organization conducting a strat planning process, writing a document, and then maybe revisiting it 10 or 11 months down the road, if you're lucky.

Roy Jones: And most of the time we're looking at longterm donor value, which basically means when we're making plans and projects in that first year, it's based upon what's going to happen over the next four. For you to talk about two week sprints, I'm sitting here, I'm saying, “Oh my goodness, my head might explode.”

Andrew Olsen: And I'm curious because I've worked inside organizations, as well, and one of the reasons why I prefer to be on the consultant side is because we can move faster. The typical infrastructure in a non-profit organization is much slower. Talk to me about the kind of organizations that gravitate to this model and how they're different than the rest of the non-profit world.

Sarah Olivieri: I think, really, it's the type of people who are in them. Any organization can benefit from this model. It's people who are sitting there going, “There has to be a better way.” Anybody who learned, in the for-profit space, that slowness is death. Slowness is like ... Non-profits are so afraid of spending money, and yet they're flushing it down the toilet by moving slowly. You move slowly, you miss opportunities. You spend too much money, actually, on people, because they're not doing enough for you in the time that they're working. It's so expensive to move slowly. So anybody who's either frustrated with that, or people who are overwhelmed. Some people are so overwhelmed it's hard for them to even believe that it will work for them, although it will. But, typically, some people are just sinking so far deep they're not in that moment. Although, some people have gotten to the bottom of that sinking experience and realized it's do or die. If I don't change the way we're going, we are going under. And people who are in that moment, are ready to take action finally to save themselves.

Andrew Olsen: I read somewhere that each year the IRS reports 50,000 non-profits go out of business.

Sarah Olivieri: Yeah, yeah.

Andrew Olsen: And, you're right, the speed of operation might have something to do with that.

Sarah Olivieri: Yeah, it's huge. I think another thing that makes it really hard for non-profits, and something that we've addressed, the other piece of the impact method is about capacity. I really believe that the secret to thriving, which, to me, means feeling successful, getting paid reasonably, having the work be manageable and making a scaled impact, is both about strategy and capacity. Because, if you don't have the ability to execute your strategy, then why even have one in the first place? So one of the things I realized, that is so different about non-profits than for-profits, is non-profits, basically, have more people.

A startup for-profit, or an entrepreneur who goes out there and says, “I'm going to start a business,” is usually just one person who's starting a business. When it's a non-profit, it's right by law, it's usually a minimum of three people. You might think, “Three is three times more than one,” but that's not actually true. Because, when we're talking about dynamics of an organization, when you have two people, that's actually three times as big. Because you have each person acting on their own, and then you have the relationship between the two, so that's two people plus one relationship.

Andrew Olsen: So the center-

Sarah Olivieri: Three people, and you've got three people acting on your own, that's three. The relationship between each pair of two, and then the relationship when all three of them are together. So the dynamic of managing people scales exponentially as you add another person in. Tiny non-profits need the human capacity structures in place that only very large corporations really need in the for-profit space. That's very, very different.

Andrew Olsen: That is really different. I want to shift us a little bit, and I want to ask you a question about something that I read in a couple of places on your website. You talk about ... And this is more in your digital realm. You talk about the need for organizations to "leverage digital," and you make the case that, that's not just about marketing and fundraising. Unpack that for us.

Sarah Olivieri: Often times we think about digital, we do think about marketing, because we're thinking, “Oh, what's our social media strategy?” Maybe you're thinking about your email marketing strategy. But, basically, the core of what makes the internet the internet is it's a tool for communication one way and, now, very significantly [inaudible 00:11:04] is all about. So as soon as we realize that digital is about communication, then we realize that those things that we're using, those tools, if you will, on the internet, are inside our organizations, as well as outside. We use email to communicate out, but then people communicate back in to email, and that goes to an individual person, even when we send out on a large scale.

Facebook, we're quickly into Facebook Messenger, and I know that statistics are terrible. How many non-profits setup Facebook pages, but ignore their Messenger app. That's just like, “We're open, but we're not going to answer the phone or the door.” That quickly is about how do we communicate from internal to external and external to internal. Then those tools are often linked. They are the one and the same, or they are connected to the tools that we're communicating internally with our team. You can't really separate digital marketing from digital communications inside your organization. And you can't really separate how we just communicate with each other from how the entire organization is running. Because the bulk of what our organizations are, are people, and we're people communicating with each other so they can collaborate.

Andrew Olsen: Very interesting. When it comes to non-profits, how does this concept of ... Again, it's not just speed, but it is moving with intention, as I hear you describe it. How does it impact the donor relationship? What do you normally see with non-profits?

Sarah Olivieri: Well, it's huge on so many levels. I mean, just to go, moving with intention. When your donors see you moving with intention, they believe that you are going somewhere. Not that you just have a beautiful place to go to, but that you are actually going somewhere. You're actually going there, and that is way more exciting than just an impossible dream. Achieving impossible dream makes other people want to be a part of that. When you start moving much faster, and with intention, people can see where you're going, and they can realize that they can participate. Even if that's participating from ... A donor perspective might be, “I'm psychologically, empathetically, joining your journey.” It could also be ... There's a number of other things that we do to create more intention and more what I call, alignment.

When we get people aligned, more of their efforts go towards the direction we're trying to go in, but it also is fantastic for the donor relationship. If we actually think about, “We want our employee teams aligned,” and not just going in the same direction, but choosing the same way to go in that direction. There's multiple ways to get somewhere. Then we get our volunteers, a group of people who are all aligned with where we're going, and the way we're going to get there, then we start looking for donors. Not just any donors, but donors who not only believe where we're going, but they believe that the way we are trying to get there is the way they also believe is the right way to get there. When we get that kind of alignment, we get so much more participation, and dedication, loyalty, trust. All those things start to fall into place.

Andrew Olsen: It really is a system that you have to feed with your digital strategy, your social media strategy, and the overall donor and support contact process, whatever that is.

Sarah Olivieri: Yeah. I really push that fundraising is a little more straightforward, in that, you do get dollars out, but for-profits can be ... Fundraising uses marketing, as does enrolling people in programs, uses marketing to do that, as does human resources, to find great staff and retain your staff, especially if you're going to pay them less, requires great marketing. All these things that we're using marketing all over the place. But for-profit companies, typically, have what they call, a marketing department, which is really their lead generation connecting people to their sales department function.

Sarah Olivieri: For-profits can be lazy with their marketing, because they're generating ... They're getting a very high return. For every marketing dollar they spend, if it's done well, they're getting many times back in sales dollars. But non-profits, a little bit in the fundraising department, they are getting dollars back, but in their other work, their return is mission. So in order to have a financially sustainable marketing effort, it has to be much more efficient than for-profit industry has to have, because they're not always getting the dollars back as a direct result of the marketing. Because of that, some for-profit marketing strategies don't make sense for non-profits, and also because of that non-profits have to be much more conscious about having everything do double duty.

I think the most successful way of doing this is what I call, a marketing engine, because it becomes a self-fulfilling system, is you take a full journey where you take, especially donors, through to the point that they're actually bringing new donors into your organization. It's not enough to just get a donation. It's not enough to just get that donor to become a recurring donor or an increase donor. You have to turn them into a loyal donor. And then, finally, turn them into a promoting donor, someone who's going to fill the bottom ... become the fuel for your fundraising engine. Because we need that kind of efficiency in a non-profit, or it's not financially sustainable.

Andrew Olsen: You said something that I want to come back to, because I think it's an often held misconception. You said that there are corporate marketing tactics that don't make sense in the non-profit. And, I think, what I often hear, and Roy probably hears it. I won't make him say, “Yes,” but he probably hears it from the board that oversees his organization from time-to-time, which is, “Why don't you just do X? Why don't you just do Y? Apple does this, Google does this, why don't you?”

Tell us a little bit ... Give us some insight. What are some of those things that you see where commercial application makes total sense, but once you translate it to the non-profit it's just insanity.

Sarah Olivieri: Well, so much of the for-profit world is around selling products, so most of the knowhow around search engine optimization does not apply to non-profits. There's one area where the majority ... And, in fact, I found a company who I trust to do SEO research for non-profits. It took me a year and a half, and I'm super tapped into the marketing world. I'm interviewing SEO experts for a year and a half to find one company who I believe could hack it in the non-profit space. SEO is like the wild, wild West, when it comes to non-profits.

Probably, to get down to, specifically, where you can detect any one strategy is ... And let's talk about fundraising for a second, because the fundraising journey and the enrollment journey, as in getting people who might be interested in your programs to take them, are slightly different. But in the fundraising journey, the reward of donating usually comes, actually, before the donation. NextAfter does a great job of talking about this. But, basically, that emotional feeling like, “I'm going to be participating.” You're like, “Yay.” Then you have to give the money. We see this very explicitly in pledge type fundraising activities. They pledge, but they didn't give the money yet.

Whereas in a for-profit situation, they give the money and they get their reward. Imagine that the whole setup around reward and then I have to get you to pay for your reward is really different than for-profit. Which, basically, carrot and stick. I'm going to give you this reward, but you have to give me the money first. That's really a dramatically different situation.

Andrew Olsen: That's really interesting. It, also, I think makes me question just our ongoing donor engagement and stewardship. To hear you put it that way, and I think you're so right that the reward comes before the gift. How sad is it that we are in an organizational culture, capitalcy, that largely misses the point of providing that really important feedback, so that you actually have a positive experience before and after.

Sarah Olivieri: Right, right. And that is key, you have to have that positive experience after, because we need you to become a recurring donor. We need you to become leveling up your donation. That's really key. I think another area that's really different is, what is a donor? What is a supporter? As opposed to, who is a customer? A customer is someone who buys from you and it's pretty straightforward. There's always the indication of a financial, a dollar, exchange. But a donor maybe ... They maybe giving of their time. They maybe a staff member who's donating. I think, often, we don't consider how ... If you know that your staff are underpaid, I want you to take the market rate for their salary and subtract what you're actually paying them, and that difference is the financial contribution that they are giving to your non-profit by working for you, and recognize them for that. And, also, recognize it in your financial statements. If you're an executive ...

So, in a for-profit world we might say, “What's it like to be an executive of a $20 million business versus a $1 million business?” Well, if you're an executive in a non-profit, and your total operating budget is 20 million, but let's say, you actually have another 10 million in, basically, unpaid salary, stuff that ... a salary that you would be paying, if you were a for-profit organization. That means you're really managing the same size equivalent as a $30 million business, not a $20 million business. There's so many ways in which we lose valuable information about how big our organizations really are, and this really ties in, I think, to fundraising. We need to really account for what it takes to gain and keep a donor.

A lot of fundraisers are really quite good at tracking the metrics, but it's so critical when you run the real numbers and you count in the volunteers, and you quickly realize then that your fundraising events maybe losing money. They very likely are once you count those volunteer hours.

Andrew Olsen: That never happens.

Sarah Olivieri: Right. But I do want to say that, in some ways, that's okay. It's okay to see negative numbers in a non-profit, as long as you're honest about it, and you understand where the full value is. Yes, I always encourage people like, “If you're doing a fundraising event, chances are ...” Because some events actually can turn a profit, “Chances are it's actually losing money from a fundraising perspective, but it maybe gaining money from an awareness perspective.” It might actually be a marketing tool that you use to bring in people who you never met before, potential new donors. If you chance that lens, you might say, “Well, it makes sense to ...” In the for-profit world we call it, a loss leader. A product you sell, that you actually take a loss on, because it turns somebody into a customer and you have a plan to sell them on so much more stuff that you will make a profit on. Then it's worth taking a loss on some of the stuff you sell.

But, if we don't run the numbers, and we don't have that mindset in a non-profit, then we won't make the plan to, what we call in the for-profit world, upsell them. Sell them on something, a donation, that does give us money at the end of the day.

Andrew Olsen: It really is interesting to hear you explain your process, because it sounds, to me, that you're helping non-profits build a structure that they can manage too, as opposed to what we normally do in trying to build this mountain, this big pyramid, donor pyramid, that we're trying to get people to point towards. But having that structure and then allowing people to function quickly, and appropriately, is getting the organization to run at full speed.

Sarah Olivieri: And, you know, it can sound overwhelming to have so many things be interconnected, but when things are interconnected, in the way they are with the impact method, is it's not just one plus one equals two. It's about creating synergies that make the whole system more robust.

Sarah Olivieri: But it is bigger than the sum of its parts, and that is so important. And when you actually do it in practice, it is easier. There are fewer things to do, because each thing that you do is impacting so many parts of your organization. It actually ... That is where you save time. You get more money. You get more fundraising return for your efforts when everyone is rowing in the same direction, in the same style. If you've ever watched a crew boat rowing along, there's somebody who calls out the rhythm, because it is faster if everybody needs to not just be rowing in the same direction. They need to be rowing at the same time, at basically the same strength, in the same way, in order to move forward at that maximum speed.

Your strategy is really where you're going, and your capacity is your ability to all go there in the same way. And as much as non-profits like to say, “Money is our biggest problem.” I just like to tell non-profits, “I have not met a single one yet where money was actually their biggest problem.” Every time it is your human capacity. You have not fully tapped what the people in your organization that are there, right now, that can do for you, right now, with just a little bit of rearranging how they're organized.

Andrew Olsen: We see the exact same things. I can't tell you the number of times we go in ... We're called in for a question of, “Well, this program is down on revenue. That program is down on revenue.” Really, it comes up to be, “Well, we're actually down on leadership, or we're down on talent, or we're down on motivating the talent.” I think you're exactly right. I mean, it tracks with everything that we see in the market.

Sarah Olivieri: It's so true, and that goes back to, if you're moving slowly, if your human capacity is not fully leveraged, you're losing so much money. You have to fix the hole in your boat before it's worth adding more money in. Otherwise, the more money you dump in, it's just going to flow out even faster. You'll become a bigger beast. And people in the for-profit industry have experienced this many, many times. If you go into the entrepreneurist support community, you'll hear so many people saying, “I thought I would just work harder, and do more, and I'd grow this bigger business, and it would finally give me the life that I wanted. And, guess what, I just got a bigger beast to manage. It just came with more hours to work and more headache. Even though I'm making more money, it doesn't feel any different then when I made less money.”

We don't want that to happen for for-profits, but we certainly don't want that to happen for the heart-driven non-profit people who are vulnerable to giving everything. My own mother became the head of a small private school that I had gone to, and when I think back, she gave so much. I think about her and the other people who helped this non-profit grow into a stable organization. It was like they opened up their veins and they just bled for them, like, “Just take it all. I love you.” But it doesn't have to be that way. I don't want non-profit leaders to have to bleed for their organizations. I think they can benefit, personally, much more than they are now.

Roy Jones: Sure.

Andrew Olsen: Love that idea, yeah. Go ahead, Roy, sorry.

Roy Jones: No, it's really interesting. As you're describing, I just keep coming back to a thought in my head, and you'll have to indulge me for a minute, but I'm a guitar player. And I remember Eric Clapton, one of the great guitar players, saying one time, “It's not music until we can improvise.” What that meant was the band knew what key they were in, and as long as they stayed in the same key, then they could do whatever they wanted, and that's when it was really fun. That's when it was really exciting. That's really what you're talking about is allowing people to, as you said, they have to have the boat in the same direction, and they have to be pulling the oars at the same time. But, as long as they've got the basic structure, or parameters, in place, they can have a lot of fun and really enjoy this work that we're in.

I'm so glad that you shared that example. That's exactly what we are doing with leveraging human capacity. You can't actually manage people. You can't control how they feel. At the end of the day, you can't control what they do. If you're a parent, you ever tried to force feed your child something they didn't want to eat, you realize that it's actually impossible to make them do that. But what we can do is, and what we should do, is we create these structures which become trellises for what we call, open systems. Human flourish in open systems. You give them the guide of, “This is where we need to get to at the end of the day, and these are the parameters which we need to operate in.” But then you must free them completely to improvise, to figure out how to do that the best, because our world is constantly changing, and more so because of the internet than it used to.

We constantly need to reinvent the how do we get there exactly? What are the exact steps we're taking? You need to free up people to really figure out ... In the business world they say, “Hack that function.” Figure out how to do it better, now. It's not about ... My job shouldn't be to answer the phone. My job should be to ensure that, when people reach out to our organization, they get a response. When that is my job, instead of mindlessly answering the phone, I can say, “Well, hey. Are we getting a ton of phone calls? Are we getting more messages by email, or Facebook? Where are people trying to reach our organization? Are they, literally, walking off the street? How can I best make sure that I'm there to answer, or that somebody is there to answer when they approach us.”

And that is a really, really different way of thinking than just, “My job is to answer the phone.” That's not a fun job to have. Nobody wants that job anyway to be like a machine, because we are not like machines, as humans.

Andrew Olsen: I'm fascinated by that idea, because it's in conflict with what I experience with a lot of organizations. Which is, especially in some of the either founder led, or where there's a very strong C-level personality. It tends to be a very command and control kind of environment. How do we break out of that construct? Obviously, like you were saying, you can't force feed them, so they have to be a desire to change. But how do we help organizations do that?

Sarah Olivieri: There's a concept that I learned from the entrepreneurial operating system, a few other people talk about this too, it's the idea that, actually, organizations really need two types of leadership. And, typically, the qualities for these two types are found in different types of people. One function of leadership is to provide visioning and innovation for the organization. And most founders are this visionary, innovator, type person. Then there's this other function called, integrating, and integrating is really about ensuring that you're moving at the right speed for your organization, and that the various functions of your organizations, that come into natural conflict, for example, fundraising and marketing for programming, come in a natural conflict all the time. Who gets space on the homepage of the website? Who gets majority control of our Facebook page?

Fundraising is like, “I need that to raise the dollars.” And enrollment is like, “Well, we need to let people know that our program is open.” So somebody needs to have the role of making sure that they're, essentially, the tie-breaker, have the big picture in mind. How do we write those founder ... They're in there, like control freaks. Well, let me tell you, most of them are visionary types. And if you give them the space to just be a visionary, and to not have to worry, and be ensured that the rest of the organization is going to run smoothly.

Sarah Olivieri: They would take that job, if it was an opportunity. And it's like, if you've lost your dog, and your dog's scared, and they don't want to come out of the hiding spot that they found. But you pull out the bacon, and you can lure your dog out of its hiding spot with the bacon. I mean-

Andrew Olsen: Bacon works for me.

Sarah Olivieri: Bacon works for most people, except the vegans. But they have vegan bacon, because bacon is so alluring. One is give them ... Don't tell them they have to leave something. Tell them there is a place that you are probably going to really want to go and give them the opportunity to go there. But I have to warn non-profits, the old structure of running that so many non-profits are in is risk adverse, and they're afraid to experiment. And this whole idea of needing visioning and innovation ... People talk about visioning and strategic planning, but they might as well not in the old model, because we have not allowed our non-profits to run experiments. We've told them when they get funding that, “We're going to give you money, but you had better succeed. Because, if you fail, you're not going to get money again.”

But that is not how we innovate. We innovate by running experiments. Should they be controlled? Yes. Should they have reasonable risk? Absolutely, they shouldn't be totally stupid, but you have to experiment to innovate. And every non-profit, I've ever come across, has a mission impossible. If what their mission was, was easy to solve, they wouldn't exist. Solving hard unsolved problems requires innovation. Innovation requires experimentation. So this whole idea of having a function of your organization that's around visioning and innovation is really tied to be willing to experiment.

Andrew Olsen: I love that.

Roy Jones: Very good. It's interesting, this whole process of being adverse to risk, just great concern. I'm just thinking about what's going on in our industry right now. We hear about fundraising being down in 2018 and some saying it's down, now, in 2019. What are you hearing? Do you find that this tempers people's willpower to take risk, to do new things? What are you seeing in the marketplace, Sarah?

Sarah Olivieri: You know, I hear different things. The marketer in me says that the numbers around whether, or not, fundraising is up or down is not necessarily great data, because so many non-profits have not really leveraged great marketing tactics. They have not built great donor journeys. They haven't done that work. So, as long as the majority of non-profits have no digital strategy, or a poor digital strategy, and they aren't leveraging ... The no digital strategy, they certainly aren't leveraging everything they could be for having incredible fundraising functions, donor generating functions. Then what is that number of donors are up or down really measuring? It could be measuring how good non-profits are at fundraising? Or it could be an indication of how generous people are at giving? But we don't really know which.

On its own, I'm like, "I'd rather non-profits look at their individual numbers, and see if they're going up." There's so much value to looking at your own data and monitoring your own data. You don't have to use it. Your data shouldn't be leading you. I think I was talking about this the other day. There's this phrase, "Data driven decision making," which I wish was replaced with, "Data informed decision making." Data driven decision making is what computers do, because that's their best option.

Sarah Olivieri: The human brain is so much more powerful than a computer. While computers are limited by data driven decisions, and AI that's coming up, will always be limited by data driven decisions. Our brains are capable of more than that and we should absolutely leverage ourselves as where we are more powerful than computers. While computers can have data driven decisions, we should have data informed decisions. The data should not lead us, but should be a tool that we use to help guide where we might go. It presents options. It's like a thermometer. If we know the average human body temperature, and we take our temperature. If it spikes up or down, we don't know, necessarily. It doesn't say, "You have the flu." It doesn't say, "You have gangrene on your foot, cut it off." It just says, "Something's up, look deeper." But that data point doesn't tell us what the problem is and I think that's how I feel around ... It's good to look at benchmarking data, but when, as an industry, maybe, we're not especially good at something, how useful is that benchmarking data?

Maybe it says, "Yeah, you probably have work to do." That's what it says to me with fundraising is, "Individual non-profit, you probably have work to do." What are your numbers? Is your fundraising down from last year? Were you measuring your fundraising accurately? Like, "No." Let's start with getting a baseline and let's think about what you can do now. Probably, the context of the world changed, and we could be fundraising as much. I doubt ... Because one thing you learn in marketing is that half of the equation of marketing, or maybe even 90% of the equation in marketing, is basic human psychology. And what motivates us, as human beings, has changed very little in thousands of years.

I highly doubt that, that feeling, that desire to belong, that desire to help others, that desire to be a part of something bigger. Is religion down? Because that's motivated by the desire to belong to something bigger than yourself. I doubt that, that has gone anywhere. It's just a matter of how we tap into that and something has probably changed in our context that means we need a new way of giving people that.

Andrew Olsen: That's deep.

Roy Jones: Completely.

Andrew Olsen: I don't think I saw that in the given USA trends.

Sarah Olivieri: I think part of that, is then compare-

Andrew Olsen: I don't believe so.

Sarah Olivieri: Donor's participation. You always need ... I talk about, especially for non-profits need, to triangulate their data. I said one thing that's really different about non-profits is that they have more people. Another thing that's really, really different about non-profits is how we measure success and efficiency. For for-profits, pretty much any for-profit can use profit margin as a pretty good indicator of how efficiently it is achieving success. And the basic measurements that any for-profit used is similar to what other for-profits will use. For a non-profit organization, success is depended upon your mission and your mission is unique, so every non-profit has to figure out their own indicators for their own level of efficiently achieving their mission. And, probably, their mission is something that is very, very hard to measure. So you're probably always looking at what three to five data points tell me the same kind of thing that a single profit margin data point would tell a for-profit?

Andrew Olsen: It's really interesting, just the whole concept of how you're using digital, not just as a platform to communicate messaging to people on the outside, but how to communicate and enhance messaging to those on the inside of an organization. That's very different. That's very profound. And, really, something pretty unique to our industry. I think it's pretty special. I know I have been challenged today just hearing how you position thinking. And it's very, very interesting to look at it from this perspective. That's refreshing.

Sarah Olivieri: What you said, it is so important that we think through problems together. I think, if the impact method does one thing the most powerfully is it creates many opportunities for people, from across our organizations, to come together and talk and think about things together. I'll give you an example from a larger organization who I am working with, right now. They have this problem. The fundraising department, which is fairly new, they need some good financial stories to tell. They need to be able to say, "When we put this much money into a program, it makes this kind of impact." They went to the finance department and the finance says, "Well, we didn't put those numbers together, because we don't have that kind of data from the programs." And the programs, they don't have that kind of data, because they didn't get really clear on what the exact mission of their specific program was. This is an organization with many different programs to achieve one mission.

The fundraising problem cannot be solved without the programming departments getting more clarity and alignment on where they're going, and getting a good sense of their own data. The finance department is relatively straightforward to connect the dots, if they had the data. It is very, very interconnected and all of the functions of our organizations need to be ... People, who are in charge of them, need to be coming together and thinking out loud, and problem solving together, or they'll never get there, or they'll take forever. If I just worked with a programming department and said, "You need some new this and that." And I tell the finance department, "Why don't you put these numbers together?" I tell the fundraising person, "Hey, maybe you should do this." It would take, probably, I don't know, 10 years to never to get that happen. Or we could just all meet together for three one-hour meetings and probably have solved the entire problem.

Andrew Olsen: I think we should end it right there, because that is perfect insight. Sarah, thank you for being with us today. How can somebody reach you, if they want to hear more, what to engage with your organization, what to take advantage of the impact method?

Sarah Olivieri: Sure. The best way is go to our website, pivotground.com. You can also look for us on Facebook or LinkedIn, but from our website you can, if you're an executive director, sign up for a free consultation with me. We can see if the impact method is the right fit for you. Lots of times people want to know, "When do I start? Is this the best next step?" So I hope that I can answer that question for you.

Andrew Olsen: Awesome. Thank you, again, appreciate you being here.

Sarah Olivieri: Thank you.