

STUDIO Potter

Leigh Taylor Mickelson guided our organization through a multi-year strategic planning process. Leigh has an incredible depth of knowledge on nonprofits and used that knowledge to recommend a multi step process for our board and staff to assess the health of our organization, clarify our goals and values, and put that information to use with a new mission, vision, core values and strategic plan.

In the last five years, we've had a full turnover of our top level staff and board leadership. As Leigh helpfully pointed out, we had been operating for years reactively to challenges as they arose, and now was the moment we could switch to proactively planning our future. Leigh was pivotal in guiding us through the crafting of that plan.

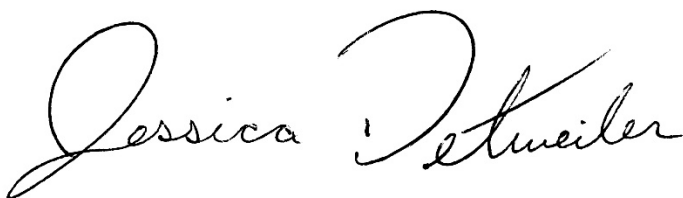
Our organization is nearly 50 years old, and in those 50 years we have not operated with a strategic plan, nor ever updated our mission. Our mission no longer reflected the scope of the work we were doing, which was holding us back. In 2019, we had moved from a print journal to an online resource offering education and grants, and our mission was still in the 70s. We have an enthusiastic board and many ideas, but we needed help organizing all the enthusiasm into language that we could apply to our new mission. After our initial consultation, Leigh suggested we approach this in a three step process.

First, a survey of our board, staff, and most engaged supporters to assess our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This survey provided us insights into our brand, how we were perceived, what we were doing well and not so well at, and importantly - what we valued most in the work we did.

Second, Leigh hosted an online "zoom" board retreat. Leigh hosted this exceptionally well, devising strategies that allowed us to get feedback from all 18 people on the zoom call, while staying on topic and keeping us on schedule. We ended the meeting with a list of goals, values and objectives that were ranked based on their relevance to our organization. This information would be key to our next step, strategic planning.

Lastly, we formed a strategic planning committee and met bi-monthly for over 6 months. Leigh's consistently offered advice, education to our staff and board on how to structure goals, workloads, projects, and more. In this committee we rewrote a mission, vision, core values, and a 5 year strategic plan that our full board voted to adopt just last week.

As a director, I cannot express enough how healthy this process has been for our organization, and we would not have been capable of coming to this point without Leigh. She is patient, knowledgeable, organized, and understands thoroughly the nuances of non-profit work. To any organization seeking consulting, from a small project to a multi-year rehaul, like ours, I cannot recommend her highly enough.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Detweiler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "D".

-Jessica Detweiler, Executive Director, Studio Potter