



# DESIGN GROUP International™



## Depth Perception

17 June 2013

**Both sides of the ledger, and more!**

The role of a CFO continues to evolve, especially for nonprofits.

It was not that long ago that many nonprofits did not have them. If they did the chief duty was to control expense, to be the person who could say “no.” Now, a number of CFO positions have been created and strengthened because boards raised the expectation that someone pays attention to both sides of the ledger, so cash flow could be strengthened and fiscal strength increased.

The role needs still more development. There are some hopeful signs.

For one of them we go back to the 25 July 2011 issue of *Fortune* and the article *Bean Counters Take Charge* by [Scott Cendrowski](#) (p.27). Writing primarily for business Mr. Cendrowski shows how CEO's increasingly rely on the CFO to connect financial insight to an organization's development. In other words, it is not the precision of their financial reporting that makes for the modern CFO, but the connection they can make between precise reports and the imprecise world of leading an organization in volatile markets and among irrational people.

Stated more simply, good CFOs are thinking like good CEOs. Increasingly they become the CEO.

This leads to a larger question for people on executive teams—even if they do not become CEO's. What, if instead of leading their departments or divisions as if they were the “extra-special-silo-that-make- all-the-difference,” executives managed as if they are part of the whole, with attention to the whole, and with no greater success measure than fulfillment of the organization's mission? What if those with executive oversight for Communications, Information, Development and Human Resources developed the connection between their specialty and executive responsibility for the whole? What if they sought out and developed the intersections where their previously exclusive territories intersect? What if they began living at those intersections rather than down the lanes of exclusive organizational neighborhoods?

One of the reasons we value the work of [CLA](#) and its [Credentialed Christian Nonprofit Leader](#) program is the attention it gives to developing well-rounded executive leaders for the nonprofit space. We commend it as one place fostering the intersections of executive leadership.

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