

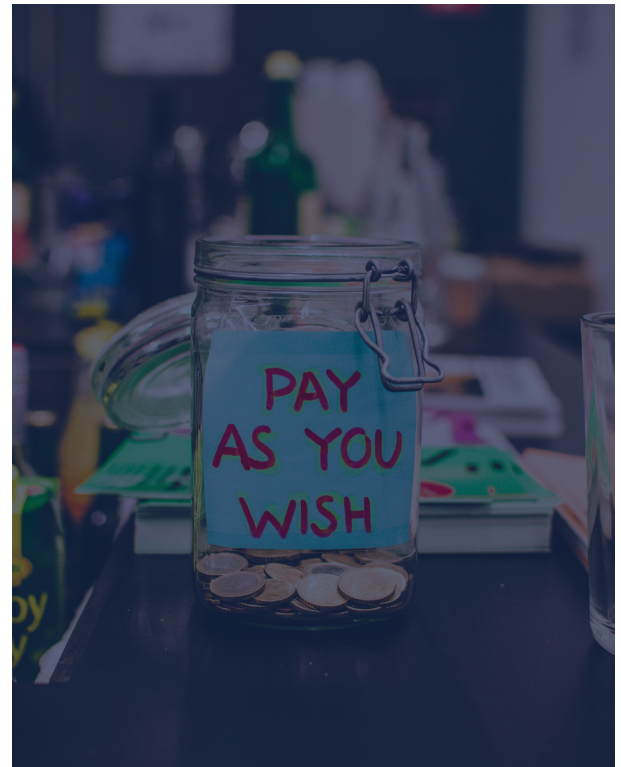
WHITE PAPER

# 6 TRENDS DRIVING NONPROFIT HIRING IN 2021

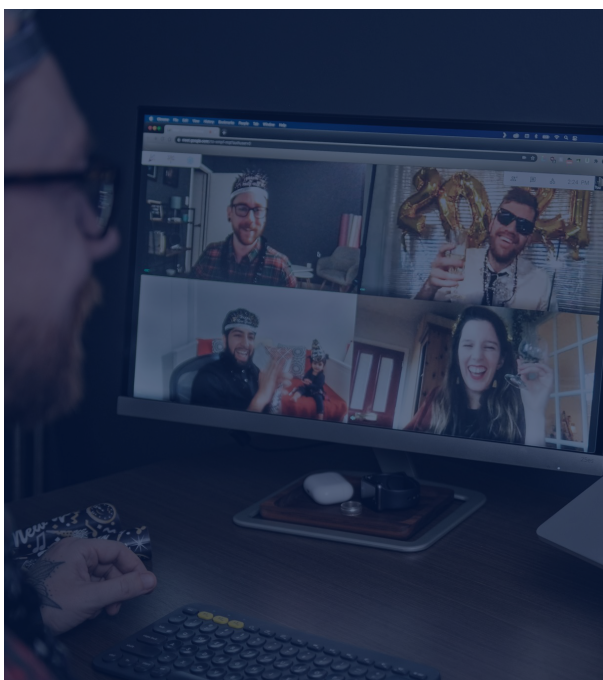
Sue Waterbury

This past year was challenging yet transformational for the nonprofit sector. With organizations facing a sudden shift to remote operations, our country experiencing a nationwide reckoning on racial equity, and a drastically changing fundraising landscape, nonprofits were forced to reexamine the operations and traits needed to carry them into the future.

Going into 2021, I expect an unusual amount of movement as organizations rethink how to maximize their impact and make resulting leadership changes. Reflecting on what we learned over the last year, below are the six key trends that will drive leadership decisions this year.



# #1 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE WILL BE A NECESSARY LEADERSHIP TRAIT



Throughout 2020, teams were rife with anxiety and fear. They navigated challenges driven by the pandemic, racial inequality, and economic uncertainty, all while addressing increased needs despite reduced resources. The most successful leaders motivated their staff by driving communication that projected empathy, trust, and respect for the hard work of their teams. In response to this communication style, their teams demonstrated higher productivity, loyalty, and motivation. As a result, social and emotional intelligence will be an essential trait for all senior hires this year.

## **#2 CFOs WILL PLAY A LARGER STRATEGIC ROLE**

Going into 2021, nonprofit leaders recognize the need for CFOs who go beyond the traditional role of accounting and budgeting and act as integral members of the executive leadership team. The value of a broader skillset was highlighted by CFOs who could swiftly secure PPP loans and insightfully forecast a range of cash flow scenarios during the pandemic. This year, CFOs must build new revenue models, leverage government and financial institution relationships, and effectively work across all areas of the organization to execute financial goals.

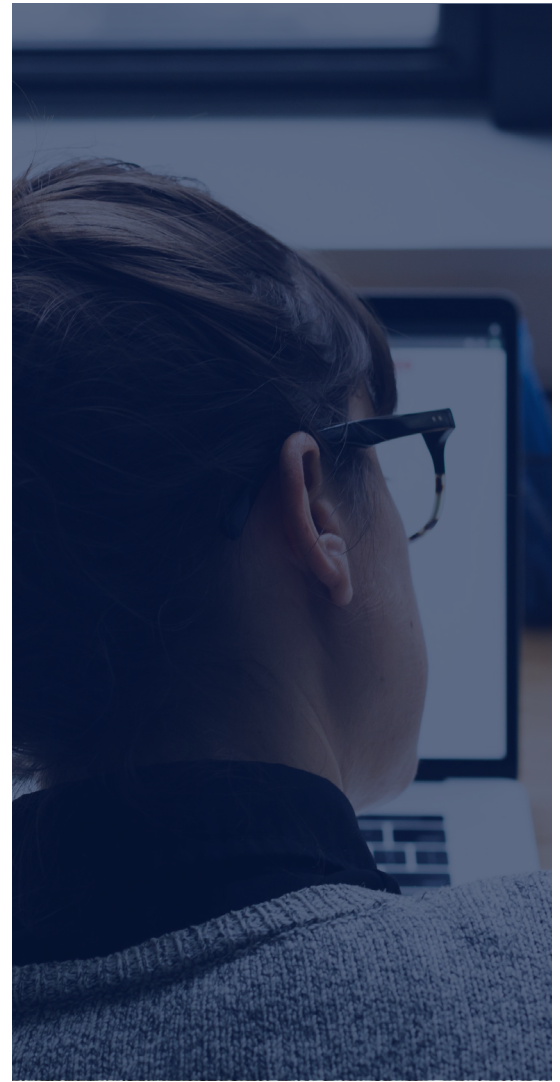
## **#3 DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION SHAPES HIRING PRIORITIES**

With today's heightened awareness of racial equity and inclusion, organizations have pledged to hire more BIPOC employees and infuse operations with an increased emphasis on equity and inclusion. This work began in 2020 and will accelerate in 2021 as funders, employees, and clients continue to demand DEI commitment and transparency from organizations. Diverse talent will be in high demand at all levels, including senior leadership roles, board of director positions, and Chief Diversity Officer roles. Organizations will be working throughout 2021 and beyond to fulfill their hiring objectives while also nurturing diverse talent from within.



# #4 FUNDRAISERS WITH MAJOR GIFT EXPERIENCE WILL BECOME ESSENTIAL

Grassroots event fundraising efforts were moved to online platforms with mixed results, sending them to the backseat until at least 2022. As a result, organizations are looking to expand and deepen their fundraising activities by creating major gift programs or doubling down on existing programs through stewardship and cultivation. These programs often have a focus on high-net-worth individuals whose ballooning wealth throughout the pandemic has led to increased giving.



# #5 IMMINENT RETIREMENTS WILL NECESSITATE SUCCESSION PLANNING

A substantial number of retirements or leadership moves planned for 2020 were put on hold as leaders remained in place to shepherd their organizations through the pandemic. However, with many organizations successfully transitioned to remote work and a vaccine rollout underway, retirements and other significant leadership changes are moving forward. Most moves are planned for the second half of the year, creating the potential for a tight talent market as the year progresses. Succession planning is paramount as these organizations consider what skills they need to create greater impact in this new landscape.

# #6 TECH-SAVVY LEADERS WILL EMBRACE NEW WAYS TO DELIVER THEIR MISSION

Stay-at-home orders pushed nonprofits to modify every aspect of their operations with technology, including fundraising, marketing, volunteer engagement, organizational management, and more. This year, technology will lead the way in shaping how organizations deliver on their mission. Artificial intelligence, livestreaming, telehealth, and digital marketing are core innovation areas to watch.

## HOW HAVE YOU BEEN IMPACTED?

It is safe to say COVID-19 has left an indelible mark on the nonprofit sector and how we will conduct business going forward. How has the pandemic changed the way you work? How has it impacted your firm's hiring plans? I would love to hear your personal insight.

As always, feel free to reach out with any questions. I look forward to working with you in 2021.

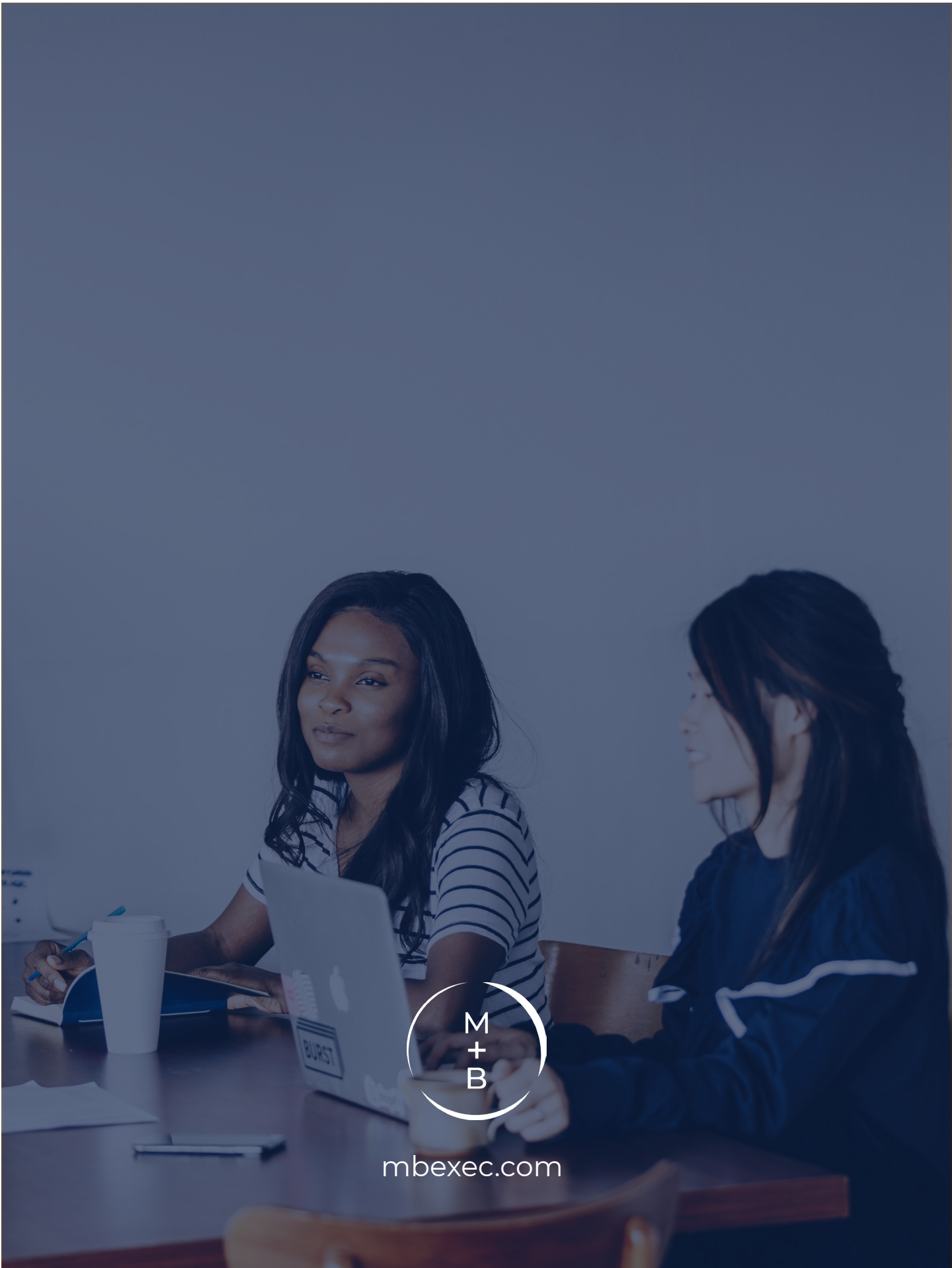


### ABOUT MCDERMOTT + BULL

McDermott + Bull is a full-service retained executive search firm with a dedicated non-profit practice that partners with mission driven organizations, their boards, and senior teams to align talent strategies with mission objectives. Clientele include the likes of the Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation, United Way of NYC, Make A Wish Metro and Western New York, The Prince's Trust, Pride Industries, Goodwill Industries, and Credit Unions.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sue Waterbury, Managing Director at McDermott + Bull, leads the national non-profit practice recruiting visionary leaders who drive growth and change. Sue spent the first part of her career in global finance with Deutsche Bank and Goldman Sachs. She received her Bachelor of Liberal Arts from Villanova University and resides in New York.



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