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# Redefining 'Partnership' at SVP Vancouver

Posted by [Cecilia Garza](#) — April 11, 2017



We've all been there.

You have a room full of highly-skilled, intensely curious and brilliant partners. But, unless there are a few who come from the nonprofit sector, there are just some things we defer to a list of consultants for-hire. What do you do when your partners have all the skills of running a great business, but are missing a key ingredient to sustainably scale a nonprofit?

At SVP Vancouver this was the case for fundraising mentorship. They had just one partner with formal fundraising experience in the nonprofit sector. And with 14 investees, an SVP board member role and a whole slew of other SVP activities on her plate — you guessed it — she couldn't do it all. Nor should she be expected to.

That's why Vancouver decided to explore the concept of shared services. It started almost exactly a year ago when the SpencerCreo Foundation — established by SVP Partner Ken Spencer — opened a co-working space near the city center as a shared office for SVP, its investees and other nonprofits in the area. This was borne out of a need for affordable office space in a very

unaffordable city. For just \$100 per month per desk, they now have access to an incredible space to better collaborate and support each other.

Needless to say, the SpencerCreo Centre — as it's now called — was a hit, and the first of what Vancouver expects to be a series of changes that will offer more shared services.

## Filling the Fundraising Need

After an investee needs assessment indicated fundraising as a central priority, Vancouver hired Fundraising Trainer Amanda Burrows last February solely to provide services to their investees.

**>>See Vancouver's research packet + their proposal for a shared services model.<<**

Amanda assists investees from brainstorming and strategizing to coaching and implementation. Investees can look to her as a consultant on how to make fundraising events successful, evaluating a digital strategy, keeping donors engaged and inspired, and top of the list, best practices for developing a clear and measurable fundraising program.

"The whole point of this role is to build capacity," says Amanda. "It's not to be a crutch."

Since coming on board, Amanda has partnered with eight of Vancouver's investees by building a three-phased services menu: strategy development, education and training, and relationship management. Investees can opt-in to all three phases of training or select from a range of workshops.

While the strategy development training really digs into foundational policy and procedures, relationship management is the hands-on implementation component of the investee's training. This piece covers how to build an annual report that will excite donors. It even goes as far as Amanda accompanying the organization on an

“ask,” for support.

“It all needs to be scalable and meaningful,” Amanda explains. “As a fundraiser it’s really stretching me in how I disseminate information and train fund development. Typically these organizations have small teams, so what I recommend has to be relevant and sustainable for the organizations to embrace and implement.”

>>[View Amanda’s full services menu](#) + a [description](#) of her role!

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## “Skin in the Game”

Like the SpencerCreo Centre, SVP Vancouver offers Amanda’s services at a flat rate of \$150 a month, as opposed to the market rate of \$100 *per hour*. As affordable as it might be, putting a price tag on it gives investees “skin in the game” and builds accountability. An investee willing to buy in has identified fundraising training as a priority and a need, helping SVP Vancouver prioritize among the 14 Investees. SVP Vancouver is hopeful it will also incentivize investees to put their training into practice.

To further support Amanda’s position, Vancouver has added ‘shared services’ to their catalog of opportunities for co-funding. This initial pilot has six co-funders (current partners) who collectively contributed 50%. The other half is covered by the SVP general funding pool. The [co-funding program](#) offers individuals, companies and foundations a way to pool their resources with SVP, as well as take advantage of SVP’s due diligence and ongoing partner support.

Regardless of the rate for services, thoughtfully navigating the power dynamics is critical to providing shared services — especially when it comes to fund development. If there’s any tip to the wise, Amanda says that understanding confidentiality is imperative when stepping into a fundraiser role. And it’s even more so stepping into a fundraising trainer role.

## Looking Ahead

While Amanda's position is currently being piloted for one year, Vancouver's team and partnership are excited about the early response. Should this pilot prove successful, there is an appetite to continue to build on its success!

Additionally, SVP Vancouver has raised money to explore supporting IT work with the investees. That's a story for the future though.

"It's important to us that our investees feel supported and that we're providing services that are valuable to them," explains Gina Ungaro, SVP Vancouver's Manager of Communications and Engagement. "You've got smart people behind you who can back you up on your promises, and there ya go. You're able to deliver more. It's like a magical unicorn."

*Have more questions on SVP Vancouver's shared services model? Contact Executive Director Dara Parker directly at [dara@svpvancouver.org](mailto:dara@svpvancouver.org).*

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