**Nonprofit Coworking Breaks Boundaries And Builds Capacity**

**Tools For The New Workplace**

Nonprofit coworking delivers at least as much benefit to social enterprises as it provides to profit-seeking businesses. Coworking spaces like [Co-Merge](http://www.co-merge.com/) give *nonprofits* new tools and opportunities to collaborate, not just with each other, but with any members of the coworking community that share aligned values, regardless of their business models.

**Executive Business Centers Versus Coworking**

Executive *business centers* have been a fixture in business districts for many years. Members share the front desk staff and PBX systems but maintain enclosed office suites within.

Modern coworking spaces may have evolved from this model, but they are entirely different creatures. By shifting the focus to the collective and mixing the widest possible range of users, coworking facilitates connections and offers flexible responses to changing needs.

**Collaboration In A Lounge Environment**

The innovation that changes the game is the [openness](http://www.co-merge.com/coworking_for_connection/) and human contact for members, who might otherwise work at home, in coffee shops or hotel lobbies.

The most pronounced difference that comes from this attribute of openness is the ability to collaborate serendipitously with fellow coworking residents. This creates opportunities across boundaries that might have once stifled connections.

This diversity and mixed model collaboration can cross boundaries to match the interests and values of businesses and entrepreneurs with nonprofit organizations also.

That is why coworking has also become a resource for organizations that address the needs of society. Nonprofit organizations reflect the desire of directors and donors to project their values and respond to the needs of their communities.

**Nonprofit Coworking Boosts Capacity**

Organizations that exist to focus on specific needs in society have needs of their own. When nonprofits call on the resources of the coworking world, they can rapidly scale to follow the cycles and changes in need with relatively few organizational constraints.

The cost of office space and administration is a burden that falls unevenly. Sources of funding for nonprofits vary widely in the terms on which they donate. This puts an added strain on general funds; less overhead cost means greater capacity to serve the targeted need.

The cost and responsibilities of administration are painful distractions for organizations that address needs in the form of social, cultural or other important issues.

Says Stephen Heverly of the [Equinox Center](http://www.equinoxcenter.org/), “As a sustainability-focused research organization, we appreciate coworking and Co-Merge's socially responsible model of sharing space and resources, and reducing vehicle commuting.”

**Flexible Workspace For Seasonal Scale Changes And Capacity Needs**

The [1to1 Movement](http://1to1movement.org/)’s founder and executive director, Jonathan Zaidman also recognizes the value of nonprofit coworking, he says, “[1to1’s] workforce grows and shrinks dramatically throughout the year. When looking at office [space] we immediately identified co-working as the ideal situation for two reasons.”

“Our team grows and shrinks throughout the year. We have ten interns in the summer and two during the school year. We felt no need to have a 14-person office when ten of those seats would remain [unused] for nine months of the year.

“As an environmental nonprofit, we felt it unnecessary to buy all new appliances, furniture, and office supplies just for our use. The sharing economy proves to be much more sustainable from a logistics point of view, which fits into our organizational ethos just fine.”

**Flexibility And Social Responsibility Make A Great Team**

Nonprofit organizations get a real boost when they replace traditional office space with coworking memberships. The flexibility and relatively low overhead costs associated with the format releases organizations from the obligations of to manage their day to day workspace so they can focus on their mission, only paying for the services they actually use.

If the experiences of Equinox Group and The 1to1 Movement are representative, nonprofit coworking provides a pattern of operation that nonprofits will apply for many years to come.

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**Meta Description:** Nonprofit coworking supports capacity with flexibility and connects organizations that share aligned values, regardless of business models.

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