Is Your Tech Stack Working For You?

A People-Centered Assessment Guide for Nonprofits

By Insights4Equity

Many nonprofits are serving their communities using tech stacks that look like patchwork quilts—and it comes at a cost. But you don't need a huge budget or full IT department to build an effective tech stack. Simply start by asking: *Is our technology serving our people?*

1. YOUR NONPROFIT IS TWO BUSINESSES

Before looking at tools, it helps to have a clear sense of what your tech stack needs to support. Every nonprofit is running two businesses:

- **Business A** is delivering your mission (programs, services, impact).
- **Business B** is the resourcing (earned revenue, fundraising, volunteers) that sustains it all.

Fundraising (Business B) is at its best when programs (Business A) are well-supported. If outcomes and impact data are scattered, your fundraisers are working without their most important asset.

A people-centered tech stack enables both businesses, and that's what powers stronger fundraising and donor engagement.

2. PEOPLE FIRST, PLATFORMS SECOND

An honest tech assessment begins with understanding how your team *actually* works. Take some time to reflect:

- Where are staff spending time on manual, repetitive tasks?
- Which processes require the most "workarounds" and have people inventing their own systems to get by?
- What do new staff struggle to learn?
- Can your fundraisers quickly access data (stories, outcomes, or results), or is it a scavenger hunt across departments?

Your answers will surface the friction points that matter most and give you a better picture of your greatest technology needs.

3. MAP YOUR CURRENT STACK

Use the table below to get a comprehensive look at what you're already using. As you fill it in, consider where data needs to flow between your program (Business A) and fundraising (Business B) teams, and ask: *Is this connection working?*

Category	What You're Using	Working Well?
Donor CRM *e.g. CauseVox, Bloomerang*		
Fundraising / Campaigns *e.g. CauseVox, Classy*		
Communications *e.g. Mailchimp, Constant Contact*		
Finance & Operations *e.g. QuickBooks, Bill.com*		
Program Management *e.g. Apricot, Google Workspace*		
Data & Reporting *e.g. Excel, Tableau, dashboards*		

4. THREE QUESTIONS FOR TECH DECISIONS

Once you know what you have, these questions will help you make thoughtful decisions about every tool in your stack:

1. **Does it work for your people?** Assess adoption rates, training burden, and staff frustration. A tool nobody uses has zero ROI.
2. **Does it work with your other tools?** Siloed systems create data gaps, manual re-entry, errors, and unncessary cost. The best tech stacks look simple on the surface: accessible low-tech for staff, with a smart back end connecting the dots.
3. **Will it work as you grow?** A system that fits now might break if you grow to twice your size without strategy and intentionality—assess for scalability.

5. OPTIMIZE, INVEST, OR INTERVENE?

Not every technology problem requires a new technology solution. Before making changes to your stack, ask which path fits your situation:

OPTIMIZE Many organizations only use a small portion of their tools' capabilities. Check whether your existing tool has underutilized features you can configure or activate.

INVEST If manual workarounds are eating staff hours, data lives in silos, or your tools can't support your fundraising or program goals, consider bringing in something new.

INTERVENE Sometimes the gap isn't a missing tool, it's a missing process or training. Technology won't fix a workflow problem; if staff aren't adopting a tool or using it optimally, ask why first.

6. CALCULATE YOUR ROI

When nonprofits evaluate new technology, they focus on the price, but what's harder to see is the cost of inaction.

If one staff member spends five hours a week on manual data entry that could be automated, that's 250 hours a year—nearly six weeks of capacity. Multiply that across your team, and that's a lot of time (and money) that could instead go toward your mission.

Technology gaps also get more expensive to fix over time. When evaluating any investment, consider: what would our team do with that time back?

A Note on AI

AI can accelerate nonprofit work, but it comes with tradeoffs. Free tools often use your inputs to train their models, meaning your donor language and strategy may feed into shared systems. Before over-relying on AI, ask whether a repeatable, platform-enabled process would be safer, faster, and more sustainable. Your real stories and program data are what win over hearts and minds; AI can't replicate that.

YOUR NEXT STEPS

Assessing your tech stack doesn't have to happen all at once. Start by asking your team:

- Which of our current tools are genuinely working for staff? Where are our biggest friction points?
- Where and when is data not flowing between our program and fundraising teams?
- If we could recover 20% of our team's time and capacity, what would we do with it?

Ready to go deeper? We'd love to help.
Reach out to start a conversation.

www.insights4equity.com info@i4eq.com

Insights4Equity
People-centered, data-informed