



Bridging Research To Client Results

Debra B. Natenshon, MS



Debra is an [influential social sector thought leader and respected expert](#) in organizational management. She guides clients on their “journey to high performance” as an adaptive consultant, trusted advisor, and culturally aware group facilitator. Debra successfully bridges strategy with practice-based evidence, resulting in [highly effective client engagements](#) and [well-regarded keynotes and workshops](#).

Through her social purpose consultancy, [DBN & Associates, L3C](#), Debra demonstrates integrity and innovation in partnership with motivated leaders to advance their organizational and programmatic results. Her core goal is supporting foundations and nonprofits to define social change based on verifiable results, rather than on well-intentioned activities. Debra works to translate the urgency of outcomes into the practice of continuous improvement. As a passionate connector of people, ideas, research, organizations and processes, she produces holistic solutions, where others may only see disparate parts.

For ten years prior to founding DBN & Associates, Debra served as CEO of The Center for What Works, a national nonprofit organization focused on outcome management research, training and consulting. She published [ground-breaking research](#), including the first [nonprofit taxonomy of outcomes](#) with the Urban Institute, launched an eLearning course with Cisco Systems Foundation, and designed nonprofit and foundation effectiveness toolkits with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

Debra works with a wide range of human service providers, umbrella organizations, funders and capacity-builders. Current engagements include: a foundation grant-partner cohort capacity-building initiative for shared outcomes (older adults, mental health, early childhood, disabilities, basic needs); designing and leading a multi-service agency’s data integration plan; outcome management and new program launch support for a domestic abuse agency; strategic plan implementation and Board development for inclusive day school education; coaching a variety of Board members and executives; needs assessment for children’s mental/behavioral/emotional health services.

An active [Leap Ambassador](#) since 2013, Debra contributes to this international network of leaders developing resources to define and support high performance organizations. She co-authored [Small but Mighty](#) to guide small nonprofits and contributed to [The Performance Imperative](#) framework and the [Performance Practice](#) self-assessment tool. Debra facilitates the consultant’s micro-community.

In volunteer roles, Debra currently serves on the Program and Advocacy Committee for [New Moms](#), as a referee for the [FIRST Tech Challenge](#), and as co-president for a high school band organization. In 2004, she founded the Chicago professional chapter of [Net Impact](#), and under her leadership, won Professional Chapter of the Year. Debra served on Net Impact’s membership committee to determine global strategy and continues to mentor emerging leaders.

Debra started her career internationally, teaching English in Japan. She then worked in the private sector for [IOR Global Services](#), a cross-cultural training and consulting firm, where she designed and streamlined business processes for Fortune 100 companies. Debra helped launch a technology start-up in the late 90s, successfully training and implementing their first corporate client in over 20 countries.

She earned a Master of Science in Organizational Management with a focus on the social sector. Debra has studied, lived and worked in England, Japan, India, Israel, and Argentina, and she integrates her evolving knowledge of the world to learn, leverage and contribute.

Debra is based in Chicago and gains balance and joy from her husband and three sons.