



Bridging Research To Client Results

Debra B. Natenshon



Debra is a [national expert](#) and influential social sector thought leader who excels at guiding clients toward high performance. She successfully bridges strategy with evidence-based research and promising practices, resulting in [highly effective client engagements](#) and [well-regarded keynotes and workshops](#). Through her social purpose consultancy, [DBN & Associates, L3C](#), Debra partners with motivated leaders to define social change based on verifiable client results, and to transition away from a focus on well-intentioned activities.

For the ten years prior, 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](#) on outcome frameworks, 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.

As a result of her expertise in assisting leaders to determine and improve their client results, Debra is a highly sought after consultant, advisor and speaker. She focuses on continuous improvement for a range of human service providers, umbrella organizations, funders and capacity-builders. She uses a systems approach, connecting processes and people to efficiently determine effective, nuanced pathways. In addition to individual organizations, Debra facilitates cohorts in developing shared outcome frameworks, based upon the understanding that organizations contribute more toward positive social change in collaboration than in isolation.

Debra is a [Leap Ambassador](#), an international brain trust of leaders developing resources to define and support high performance organizations. Recently, she co-authored the paper, [Small but Mighty](#) to guide small nonprofits on their journey to high performance and she collaboratively published [The Performance Imperative](#) and the [PIOSA](#). Debra is also credited with key inputs into numerous products and publications for leading organizations including: Idealware, the Center for the Study of Social Policy, Charity Navigator, the Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy, Forefront, FSG Social Impact Advisors, GuideStar, and McKinsey and Company.

In 2004, Debra founded the Chicago professional chapter of [Net Impact](#), a global network of leaders changing the world through business. Under her leadership, the Chicago chapter was awarded Professional Chapter of the Year for 2007. Debra served for several years on Net Impact's national membership committee to determine global strategy, and she continues to mentor emerging leaders.

Prior to her social sector roles, Debra worked in the private sector for [IOR Global Services](#), a cross-cultural training and consulting firm, where she designed and streamlined business processes for several Fortune 100 corporate clients. She also helped launch a technology company in the late 90s, where she successfully implemented their first corporate client in over 20 countries.

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

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