



Bridging Research To Client Results

Debra Brodsky Natenshon ([hear my name](#))



For over 20 years as an [influential social sector thought leader and respected expert](#) in organizational management, Debra guides clients on their “journey to high performance”. She is an adaptive consultant, trusted advisor, and culturally aware group facilitator. Debra bridges strategy with practice-based evidence, resulting in [highly effective engagements](#) and [well-regarded keynotes and workshops](#).

Through her [social purpose consultancy](#), founded in 2014, Debra demonstrates integrity and innovation in partnership with motivated leaders to advance their organizations and programs. 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, and organizations, she produces holistic solutions, where others may only see disparate parts. Debra is a skilled process designer and implementor, dedicated to efficient and effective results, where her clients gain clarity and confidence.

For ten years prior to founding DBN & Associates, Debra led *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: designing ongoing strategy for a multi-year foundation grant-partner cohort initiative for shared outcomes (older adults, mental health, early childhood, disabilities, basic needs); developing tools to collect and integrate client impact data for a legal aid agency; facilitating strategic planning for an inclusive education organization; creating community engagement strategies for a children’s mental health organization; supporting executive transition for a legacy institution; and leading a variety of optimization innovations for executives, Boards, and teams.

An active [Leap Ambassador](#) since 2013, Debra contributes to this international network of leaders by developing resources to define and support high performing 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 also facilitates the micro-community for consultants.

In volunteer roles, Debra serves on the Program and Advocacy Committee for [New Moms](#), as a mentor for [Women in Power](#), president for a high school band organization, and referee and judge for the [FIRST Tech Challenge](#). In 2004, she founded the Chicago professional chapter of [Net Impact](#), and under her leadership, won Professional Chapter of the Year.

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 in 2005. 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.