

THINK *generosity* for FOUNDATIONS



idea 03


FUND INNOVATION

When innovative organizations with *eyes on the world* link with philanthropic partners, nearly anything is possible. Money is as strong as the ideas and people it joins. Alone, it does not transform. Even large amounts may do little more than embellish the edges. As a foundation, we must be equally intentional about how to attract resources and how to use them.

Our risk is not just that we miss some dollar goal, but that we succeed in doing something too small. Philanthropy's power is to do what the market can't—to bridge to the future, enable clinicians to try new approaches, and escape the tyranny of short-term incentives. Gift investments make it possible to pursue what's risky, even outrageous.

continued

C U T L F R



This is not always the way health, educational, and other organizations think about philanthropy. Some want it to make life more comfortable, to ease the pressure of narrowing margins and sustain things as they are. They want philanthropy that *preserves* rather than *pushes*. Part of our role is to lead people inside the organization to think differently and embrace greater possibilities.

The most ambitious donor-investors want entrepreneurial partners. They don't send a gift and disappear. They're involved, aware of each attempt and setback. They know it takes iterations to arrive at a shared dream. And look for organizations where philanthropy is not on the periphery, but integrated into operations and strategy. Disconnected foundations become unattractive.

We need a new way of thinking about ourselves—foundation not as ATM, but as the nexus where world makers converge, as a garden of the future and incubator of what's emergent and fragile. We must design intersections so scintillating that people both inside and outside the organization come to hang out because it rekindles their spirit.

If we do something less and fund *things*, such as buildings and technologies, rather than bold ambitions, we'll lurch from campaign to campaign. We must set our sights on the difference we intend to make in people's lives. That puts us on a quest in which there are no discontinuities with our partners. We continuously learn and attempt together. As we do, our relationships becomes more exhilarating and dynamic. Most importantly, we make the difference for which we're here.



LET'S ASK OURSELVES:

Are we engaging partners inside the organization as intentionally as those outside the organization? Are we an integral part of clinical, operational, and strategic teams? Do we have shared spaces, goals, and measures of progress?

What bold impacts are we pursuing? Can we define our goals around transformations rather than things?