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GIVING BACK

Starting Your Own Nonprofit - What You Need to Know.

BY TARA GOODWIN

Winston Churchill once said, “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

If you’ve thought about starting your own charitable foundation, congratulations! It can be a rewarding experience that leverages your accomplishments and passions both on and off the field. For the past decade, my company, Goodwin Consulting, has helped several professional athletes and coaches — including Bill Belichick, Tom Brady, Matt Light and others — start or sustain their own charitable foundations; or in some cases, identify established charities they could align with to eliminate the burden of managing the administrative details and state and federal requirements of a 501(c)(3) organization.

Let’s talk about what’s involved from an infrastructure perspective.

PUBLIC CHARITY VS. PRIVATE FOUNDATION?

First, you must decide whether your organization is going to be a public charity or a private foundation.

A public charity, as its name suggests, gets its funding from the public and can accept grants from the government as well as private foundations. Public charities are governed by a diversified board of directors that reflect the constituencies the charity serves.



Tara Goodwin, Principal, Goodwin Consulting. Photo by Pure Style Photography.

There are many public charities that have the word “foundation” in their title.

Bottom line: if you want to run public events, build community support and collect money from others, a public charity is the way to go. For more control over

include: checking to see if the name you’ve selected for your nonprofit is available, securing a federal tax-exempt number (EIN), filing articles of incorporation in the state of origin, creating a mission/vision statement, identifying a board of directors and creating an online presence for your charity.

Although you can take this on yourself, it will be much easier if you have the right teammates to help you. So, who should be on your team? A lawyer who specializes in helping clients apply for 501(c)(3) status, a wealth manager and an administrative professional to keep you on track. Pre-launch, you should engage a designer for a logo and web design, a PR professional to announce the news and score interviews and, if you plan to host events, an event planning specialist. As you grow, you may also choose to hire an executive director to run the day-to-day operations of the nonprofit, hire staff as needed and serve as the primary contact for all incoming requests.

Next, are three critical questions that I recommend you answer honestly before deciding to move forward:

1. WHAT AM I MOST PASSIONATE ABOUT?

You must have a deep-rooted passion for a particular cause in order to be successful. If you aren’t entirely committed to your foundation’s mission, you won’t be able to convince others to join your team. Seven years ago, Bill Belichick and Linda Holliday started a charitable foundation rooted in the Belichick family’s values — a love of sports, coaching and team building — to benefit

My goal is to recognize, support and endow those with great potential who have a need for additional help and resources. Mentorship has been ingrained in our family and we take a team approach to just about everything we do. We have been helped by so many people and we look forward to helping others however we can by relating our experiences and life lessons through a variety of athletic programs and services.

— Bill Belichick

Private foundations are funded by individual donors, families or corporations. The money is invested, and the proceeds are granted to various nonprofit organizations that align with the foundation’s mission and vision. Private foundations do not solicit funds from the public.

It’s also important to note that just because the word “foundation” appears in the title, it does not necessarily mean that the organization is a private foundation.

your own money, board of directors and the selection of organizations that will receive your money, consider the private foundation route.

WHO’S ON YOUR TEAM?

There are a number of administrative hurdles to conquer when starting a nonprofit organization. These



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2021 OFF-SEASON PLAYBOOK



Bill Belichick addresses the attendees at the 2017 BBF Hall of Fame Huddle. Photo by Russ Mezihofsky.

the athletic leaders of the future. Bill's passion for mentoring came from a rich family history — his late father, Steve, was an assistant football coach at the Naval Academy for many years; his daughter Amanda, is the head coach of the women's lacrosse team at Holy Cross; and his sons, Stephen and Brian, are assistant coaches for The Patriots. His love of coaching and commitment to sharing that knowledge helps aspiring athletes grow personally, athletically and academically. Before starting his foundation, Bill supported a variety of charities and established scholarships in his father's name at Annapolis and at his alma mater, Wesleyan University. He took those experiences and created a foundation that awards grants and scholarships to organizations, communities and students whose primary focus is on the sports of football and lacrosse.

2. HOW CAN I MAKE MY CHARITY STAND OUT FROM THE COMPETITION?

BE AN OUTLIER.

Competition for nonprofit dollars is always intense but this year's pandemic has made the challenge even more difficult; thousands of organizations have been competing for reduced dollars due to the cancellation or postponement of thousands of fundraising events across the country.

Tom Brady, an undoubtable outlier, aligned the mission of his nonprofit organization with his personal, unmatched training regimen. In 2015, the TB12 Foundation was created by Tom Brady and Alex Guerrero to educate and inspire athletes to succeed in sports and life. Based on Tom's functional strength and conditioning principals, innovative recovery practices and commitment to preventing and addressing injuries, the Foundation provides scholarships to "at-risk" individuals



and others who would not be able to access high-quality rehabilitation services or performance-enhancement training.

CREATE A SIGNATURE EVENT THAT STANDS OUT FROM THE USUAL GALAS AND GOLF TOURNAMENTS.

Former Patriots left tackle Matt Light and his wife, Susie, founded The Light Foundation in 2001 to share their love of the outdoors and help "at-risk" kids lead better, healthier lives. Admiring the generosity of the late Myra Kraft, and following his grandmother's favorite adage, "To whom much is given, much is expected," Matt was inspired to create his own nonprofit and wanted to put his personal stamp on an annual fundraising event that has grown to become one of the premier clay target shooting tournaments in the country. Now in its 16th year, *The Matt Light Celebrity Shoot-Out* attracts close to 500 participants and includes a full day of clay target shooting, fly fishing, chainsaw sculpting, archery, entertainment and more. I can tell you from working on

that event for the past decade, there's no event quite like the Shoot-Out and each year it attracts new participants and sponsors.

3. HOW MUCH TIME AND MONEY AM I WILLING TO COMMIT TO BUILDING THE INFRASTRUCTURE?

BET ON YOURSELF AND BE WILLING TO INVEST TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL LEGACY.

Assuming that you are genuinely passionate about your cause and have identified the reason your nonprofit will differ from other organizations with similar missions, it's only natural that you would plan to devote your time and invest your own money to ensure that your charity comes out of the gate strong. That initial investment will attract other strategic partners and sponsors who will embrace your mission. If you aren't willing to devote your own time, energy and sweat equity into your foundation, no one else will. I can tell you from my past experiences that Bill Belichick and Linda Holliday thoroughly read and review every single scholarship application they receive; Matt Light spends two weeks each year running his foundation's camp in Ohio and is highly involved in planning his annual event; Tom Brady supports his charity's marathon teams with in-person visits, running gear and video messages of encouragement. He also plans to play an active role when the nonprofit launches its first signature event in 2021.

Is there another way to contribute if I don't want to go this route?

Should you decide that you don't want to start your own nonprofit organization, but still want to make a meaningful impact, tune into that passion and identify a charitable organization whose mission aligns with yours that could benefit from your support. Keep in mind that support doesn't have to be financial.

One of the nonprofits I've worked with for many years is the Hockomock Area YMCA. Each year, they host an annual fundraiser, The Legends Ball, and the proceeds support their Integration Initiative which, as its name suggests, integrates children with disabilities into YMCA programs with their typically developing peers. One legend from the sports world is honored at the event, and current and former athletes from many different sports donate their presence that evening to build excitement and participant engagement. A special moment of the



The Shoot-Out has evolved into the most incredible charity event on the planet – one that has far exceeded what I had envisioned years ago. The support that we receive from our generous sponsors, donors, celebrities and volunteers year after year is why this unique event is so successful.

– Matt Light on his *Celebrity Shoot-Out*



Bill Belichick and Linda Holliday speak to the media at the 2017 BBF Hall of Fame Huddle. Photo by Russ Mezikhofsky.



Tom Brady cheers on his TB12 marathon team. Photo by Hatherine Donnelly.

evening is when the athletes are introduced and escorted to their tables by the Integration Initiative kids. Two years ago, we honored Miami Dolphins head coach Brian Flores whose brother, Christopher, was a participant in the Integration Initiative program. The generous athletes who donate their time to the event help the YMCA reach its fundraising goals year after year.

Troy Brown, former Patriots wide receiver and current New England Patriots running backs and kick returners coach, has a passion for cycling and for beating cancer. He rides to support *The Pan Mass Challenge*, one of the most well-known cancer charities in Massachusetts. When he learned that a local doctor who specialized in treating brain cancer was dying from the disease — and was a huge fan of Troy’s — he stopped by his house on a cycling training run to offer support and encouragement. One of my all-time favorite moments was seeing the expression on that man’s face when Troy and his friend Lewis rode into the driveway!

My passion is to help athletes, coaches and executives channel their passion to help others through the gift of philanthropy. If you’re interested in exploring the possibilities, please contact me.

Tara Goodwin is the founder of Goodwin Group PR, Goodwin Consulting and Crisis Interception. She has helped several current and former professional athletes, coaches and celebrities structure and promote their philanthropic endeavors and specializes in nonprofit management, publicity and crisis management. For more information, visit www.goodwin-consulting.com or email her directly at tara@goodwin-consulting.com



Rob Ninkovich, Brian Flores, Devin McCourty and Matthew Slater, 2018. Photo by Mark Stockwell.

