



Today we'd like to introduce you to Ted Trevens.

**Thanks for sharing your story with us Ted. So, let's start at the beginning and we can move on from there.**

My story begins with a deep and long-standing belief in social justice that grew from my experiences working directly with women experiencing homeless, individuals with AIDS and victims of domestic violence. The realities I saw as an employee at small nonprofits that focused on these issues shaped the role I would later play.

From the start of my career I saw many good-hearted people with strong ideals establish organizations without realizing all the legal and administrative complexities associated with running a nonprofit. Working across a myriad of social justice issues, I saw all of the same challenges facing organizations: fundraising, financial management, board development, planning. My entrepreneurial, problem-solving side recognized that I could create an organization able to meet these needs so the people on the frontlines could focus on their important work.

Ten years after I began as an employee of nonprofit organizations, MBA from Boston College in hand, I started the company I had envisioned, Dynamic Solution Associates (DSA). As DSA grew I developed a framework for nonprofit success with the goal of helping nonprofits adopt private sector methods to improve their effectiveness. My team and I have worked to implement our model for more than 85 clients, ranging from small start-up organizations to multi-million dollar international groups.

**We're always bombarded by how great it is to pursue your passion, etc – but we've spoken with enough people to know that it's not always easy. Overall, would you say things have been easy for you?**

As with any start-up there were challenges we faced along the way. I began with no capital, my living room doubling as our first office. As we grew we set aside a separate office in a new apartment and finally, after five years, moved into an "official" office. As a small business we found that the balance between work and business development is crucial. We are constantly busy, but over the years we learned that the busiest stretches are usually the most important time for business development.

# *BostonVoyager* Arlington's Ted Trevens of Dynamic Solution Associates

Our staff's belief in the mission of our clients, whether that means supporting people with ALS, providing food to those struggling to make ends meet, or bringing access to eye care to international populations, is what drives us and helps us navigate the bumps in the road.

## **So let's switch gears a bit and go into the Dynamic Solution Associates story. Tell us more about the business.**

DSA is a consulting firm that specializes in working with nonprofit organizations. We provide a full suite of services to help nonprofits reach their full potential. After working in the fields of hunger, homelessness, AIDS, and healthcare, I observed that the challenging issues for organizations were similar. By creating a knowledge-based built of best practices I could help organizations become financially stronger, grow sustainably and better serve their constituents.

DSA began in 1999 and over the years our services have expanded to include web-design, graphic design, and digital strategy, including social media as well as photography and videography. We are currently adding fundraising software development to our resources. We are a team built of experts who know how to ensure a nonprofit organization is running efficiently and effectively. Some clients use the full scope of our services while others just hire us to complete a specific task (like writing a grant).

I am proud of how adaptive we have been. When we first started email was not ubiquitous, the internet was in its infancy and 80% of what we did was grant writing. That was what our clients needed at the time, when there was a lot more private foundation funding available. However, as banks and their foundations consolidated the pool of grant money available was greatly reduced and the value of having a strong individual donor base became much more



important. We honed our expertise on individual and major donor strategies, while developing effective web based giving strategies and tools. More recently we have moved to online team-based fundraising, and developing digital action plans that increase nonprofit's online visibility through social media, search engine optimization, and web design.

**We pass on much of the impactful knowledge from our experiences working with clients through our blog.**  
[www.dsaboston.com/blog](http://www.dsaboston.com/blog).

## **Has luck played a meaningful role in your life and business?**

We have had great luck to have worked with some terrific clients; these relationships have allowed us to help our clients grow into mature organizations. There is also some luck involved with fundraising campaigns "going viral;" you cannot plan for trends like the Ice Bucket Challenge but you can have proper systems in place that set you up for success when they come knocking!



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