

Finding the recipe for success in partnerships

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Like a successful marriage, winning partnerships between profit and non-profit organizations require balancing the give and take and considering the needs of your counterpart.

New research from Marlene J. Le Ber, PhD candidate, and Oana Branzei, Assistant Professor of Strategy and David G. Burgoyne Faculty Fellow at the Richard Ivey School of Business, investigates factors that contribute to successful partnerships between profit and non-profit organizations, known as cross-sector partnerships.

While cross-sector partnerships for such initiatives have advantages because they leverage the strengths of each party, incompatibilities might also jeopardize the relationship.

Exploring four partnerships in Canadian health care involving large publicly traded companies and hospitals or hospital-based research institutes, the researchers discovered some ingredients for a successful mix.

These include seeking the “right” partner with a shared vision and continuously assessing the relationship’s progress and redefining each party’s role as the relationship unfolds.

“It’s critical to not let the relationship slide into complacency; role adjustments are drivers of success,” says Branzei. “Role adjustments can lead to new, different or stronger connections.”

Their findings show role adjustments come naturally as partners

collaborate more intensely, but become increasingly challenging as the relationship derails.

“Partners need to actively manage their differences and interdependencies to help reverse temporary setbacks and accelerate success,” says Le Ber. “Like a marriage, partners must make patient investments in their [relationship](#). The emphasis is on fit, compatibility and constancy of purpose.”

The research opens the door to further study on how partners overcome friction, particularly when faced with difference, adversity and external pressure.

The study, “(Re)Forming Strategic Cross-Sector Partnerships: Relational Processes of Social Innovation” is published in *Business & Society*. The full study can be downloaded [here](#).

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