

The Collaboration  
Continuum  
May 11, 2021



**F R I D M A N**  

---

**STRATEGIES**

# Introduction of Nanette Fridman

President of Fridman Strategies, Inc.

25+ years of experience with nonprofits as a professional, lay leader, consultant & coach

National speaker, trainer and facilitator

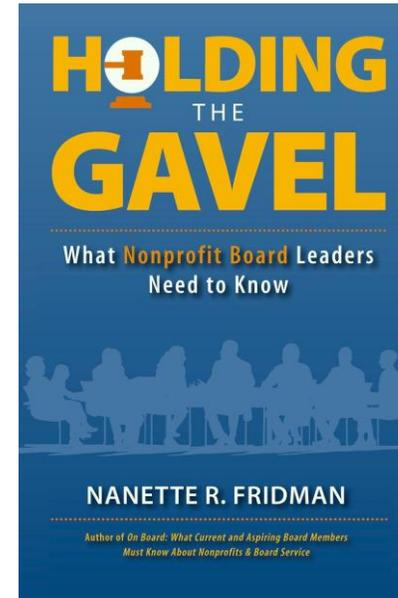
Author of two books, On Board and Holding the Gavel

BA, Tufts University

MPP, Georgetown University Public Policy Institute

JD, Georgetown University Law Center

Harry S. Truman Scholar



"If you've just been asked to join your first board or you're on ten boards, Nanette Fridman has written the book for you. On Board tells you everything you need, from A to Z and then some—and it's so readable!"  
*Peter Ledman, Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center*

# ON BOARD

WHAT CURRENT AND ASPIRING  
BOARD MEMBERS MUST KNOW ABOUT  
**NONPROFITS & BOARD SERVICE**

**NANETTE R. FRIDMAN**  
Foreword by Aaron Philip Dworkin  
President, After-School All-Stars National Network

# In the Chat

- Name
- Organization
- Role
- One word that comes to mind when you think of collaboration

# Goals

- Give an overview of the collaboration continuum
- Identify factors for success & tensions in collaborating
- Outline the developmental stages of collaboration with a focus on inspiration and planning

# Definition of Collaboration



col·lab·o·ra·tion

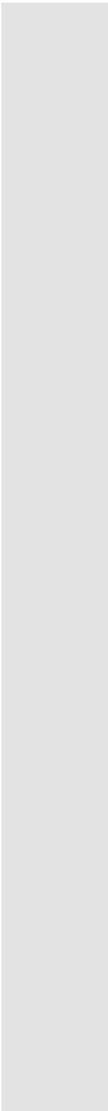
*noun.*

the action of working with someone to produce or create something.



## Straw Poll

---

- Have you collaborated in the past?
  - Are currently collaborating?
  - Are you considering collaborating in the future?
- 



Collaborations during economic collapse of 2008 were reactive, often out of fear and desperation



Successful nonprofit collaborations are driven by **mission attainment** not financial crisis



Want to look at potential collaborations **proactively** in a strategic way



Ideally comes out of **strategic planning** process and is done with **runway for success**

## Nonprofit Collaboration



# CORONAVIRUS

# COVID's Impact on Nonprofits' Mergers

“Over more than two decades of helping hundreds of nonprofits merge, La Piana Consulting has observed the prevalence of mergers to be 1 percent or less of the sector in any given year. It is remarkable that **23 percent of the organizations responding to our survey are now considering such partnerships.** One of them said they had been thinking about a merger with another group for years, and ‘COVID-19 has finally pushed us to begin those discussions.’ Another respondent described it in job terms: ‘In order to keep staff, we are exploring a partnership with another nonprofit to share [an] employee's time and cost of employment.’”

- *David LaPiana, June 2020 Stanford Social Innovation Review*



Out of adversity  
comes opportunity.

Benjamin Franklin

quote“fancy



# Why Consider Collaboration?

Economic Pressures

Changing Demographics

Market Realities

Address Challenges

Communal Pressures

Leverage Expertise

Pursue New Opportunities

Build Capacity

Greater Customer Impact

Greater Access to Funding

Increase Efficiency and  
Reduce Costs

# What Are the Options?

## Collaboration

- Administrative (Resource sharing)
- Programmatic

## Strategic Alliance

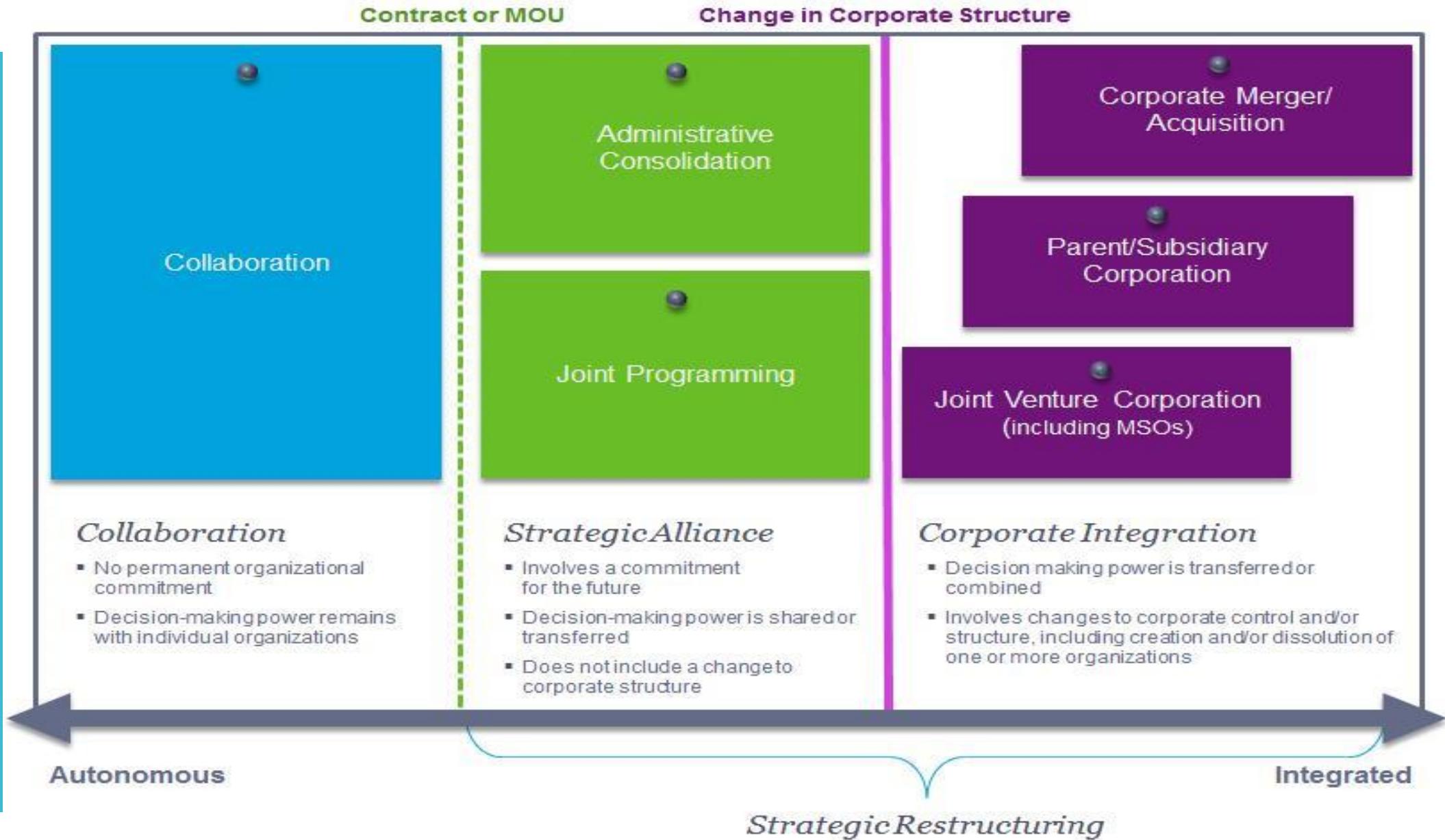
- Administrative Consolidation
- Joint Programming

## New Entity

- Joint Venture Corporation
- Management Service Organization

## Corporate Integration

- Parent/Subsidiary
- Corporate Merger/Acquisition



The Partnership Matrix from La Piana Consulting

# The Collaboration Continuum: Commitment, Change and Independence

	Level of Commitment	Level of Change	Level of Independence
Program Collaboration	Low	None	High
Administrative Collaboration	Low	Low	High
Strategic Alliance/Administrative Consolidation	Medium	Low/Medium	Medium/High
Mgmt. Support Organization/Joint Venture Corporation	High	Medium	High
Strategic Integration	High	High	Low

# Trends in Collaboration

- Programmatic Collaboration
- Sharing Facilities
- Sharing Staff
- Merger or Consolidation
- Joint Advocacy
- Joint Fundraising

A large, light blue puzzle piece is the central focus, set against a vibrant yellow background. The piece is slightly offset, casting a soft shadow to its right. Other puzzle pieces are visible at the edges of the frame, suggesting a larger assembly. The lighting is bright and even, highlighting the texture of the paper-like material.

What are Key  
Success Factors  
for  
Collaborations?



# What are Tensions in Collaborations?



## Pursued for wrong reason



## Culture

Partnerships do not fail because organizational leaders can't integrate financial systems or IT. Partnerships fail because people tend to hold on to their individual cultures and identity and fail to create a new culture. ***"Culture eats strategy for breakfast every time."***



## Emotionally charged issues

Boards

Senior staff

Buildings

Brand

# Why Partnerships Fail



# Four Developmental Stages of Collaboration

## 1. Inspiration

- ✓ Determine one's own strategic needs and what is desired from a collaboration
- ✓ Identify potential organizations to collaborate with & begin conversations
- ✓ Consider practical implementation challenges

## 2. Formalization

- ✓ Conduct due diligence and negotiations
- ✓ Enter into agreement/legal

## 3. Operation

- ✓ Implementation
- ✓ Evaluation

## 4. Institutionalization or Termination

# Focus on Inspiration/ Planning for Collaboration

1. Desired outcomes
2. Identify potential partners
3. Inventory existing resources
4. Examine other models
5. Anticipate challenges

- **Define desired outcomes**

- Why do you want to collaborate?
- What do you want to accomplish through collaboration?
- What defines success?
- What can you learn from past collaborations? Others' collaborations?

Inspiration/  
Planning for  
Collaboration  
– Step 1

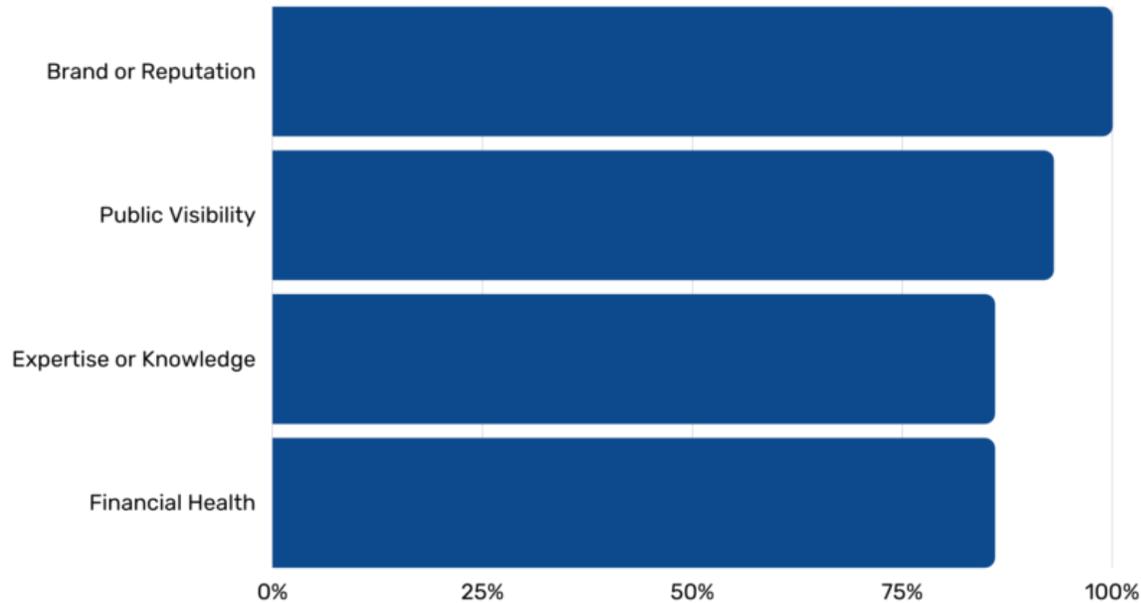
# Brainstorming Why You Might Want to Collaborate – To Innovate!

- What adaptive shifts are you thinking of making?
- What do you want to do better or more efficiently?
- What challenges do you want to address?
- What opportunity do you want to take advantage of?

- Strengthen or expand program or service quality and performance
- Gain back-office or administrative efficiencies
- Achieve greater economies of program scale
- Enter new geographies, provide new services, or reach new beneficiaries
- Address complex issues that require coordinating multiple stakeholders
- Provide an integrated continuum of services to meet beneficiaries' needs
- Better brand or visibility

What Can  
Collaborating  
Do?

## Top Internal Successes



## LaPiana Consulting Retrospective 2021 Evaluation of Impact of Strategic Restructurings Over Last 10 Years

30 organizations representing the healthcare, human services, education, environment, and agriculture subsectors.

These surveyed nonprofits report positive impacts from mergers and alliances in:

- Brand/Reputation
- Public visibility
- Expertise/knowledge
- Financial health

# Focus on Inspiration/ Planning for Collaboration

1. Desired outcomes
2. Identify potential partners
3. Inventory existing resources
4. Examine other models
5. Anticipate challenges

- **Identify partners**

- What do you want a partner for?
- Is there potential for mutual benefit?
- Do you share similar values?

Inspiration/  
Planning for  
Collaboration  
– Step 2

# Focus on Inspiration/ Planning for Collaboration

1. Desired outcomes
2. Identify potential partners
3. Inventory existing resources
4. Examine other models
5. Anticipate challenges

- **Inventory existing resources**

- What do you bring to the table? How does this help your potential partner?
- Where are your gaps?
- What does your potential partner bring? How does this help you?

Inspiration/  
Planning for  
Collaboration  
– Step 3

# Focus on Inspiration/ Planning for Collaboration

1. Desired outcomes
2. Identify potential partners
3. Inventory existing resources
4. Examine other models
5. Anticipate challenges

- **Examine other models**

- What promising practices can you identify from others whom have collaborated?
- What model may help achieve your desired outcomes?

Inspiration/  
Planning for  
Collaboration  
– Step 4

# Focus on Inspiration/ Planning for Collaboration

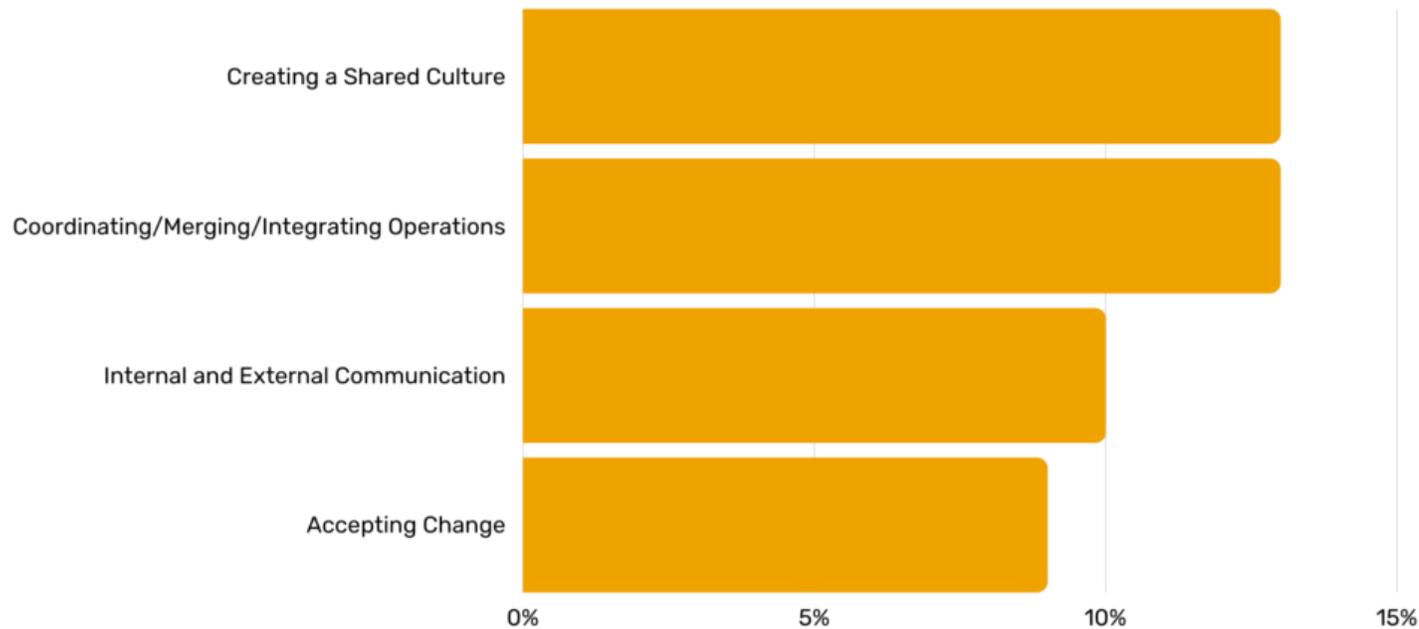
1. Desired outcomes
2. Identify potential partners
3. Inventory existing resources
4. Examine other models
5. Anticipate challenges

- **Anticipate challenges**

- What are the practical implementation challenges?
- What are the hot button emotional issues?

Inspiration/  
Planning for  
Collaboration  
– Step 5

## Top Challenges of Strategic Alliance



## LaPiana Consulting Retrospective 2021 Evaluation of Strategic Restructurings Over Last 10 Years

Reported challenges related to mergers and alliances in:

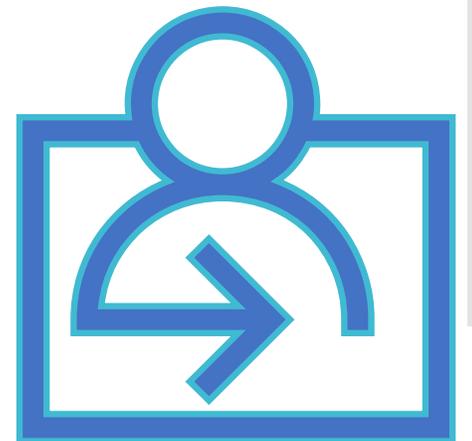
- Creating a shared culture
- Coordinating/Merging Operations
- Internal and external communications
- Accepting change

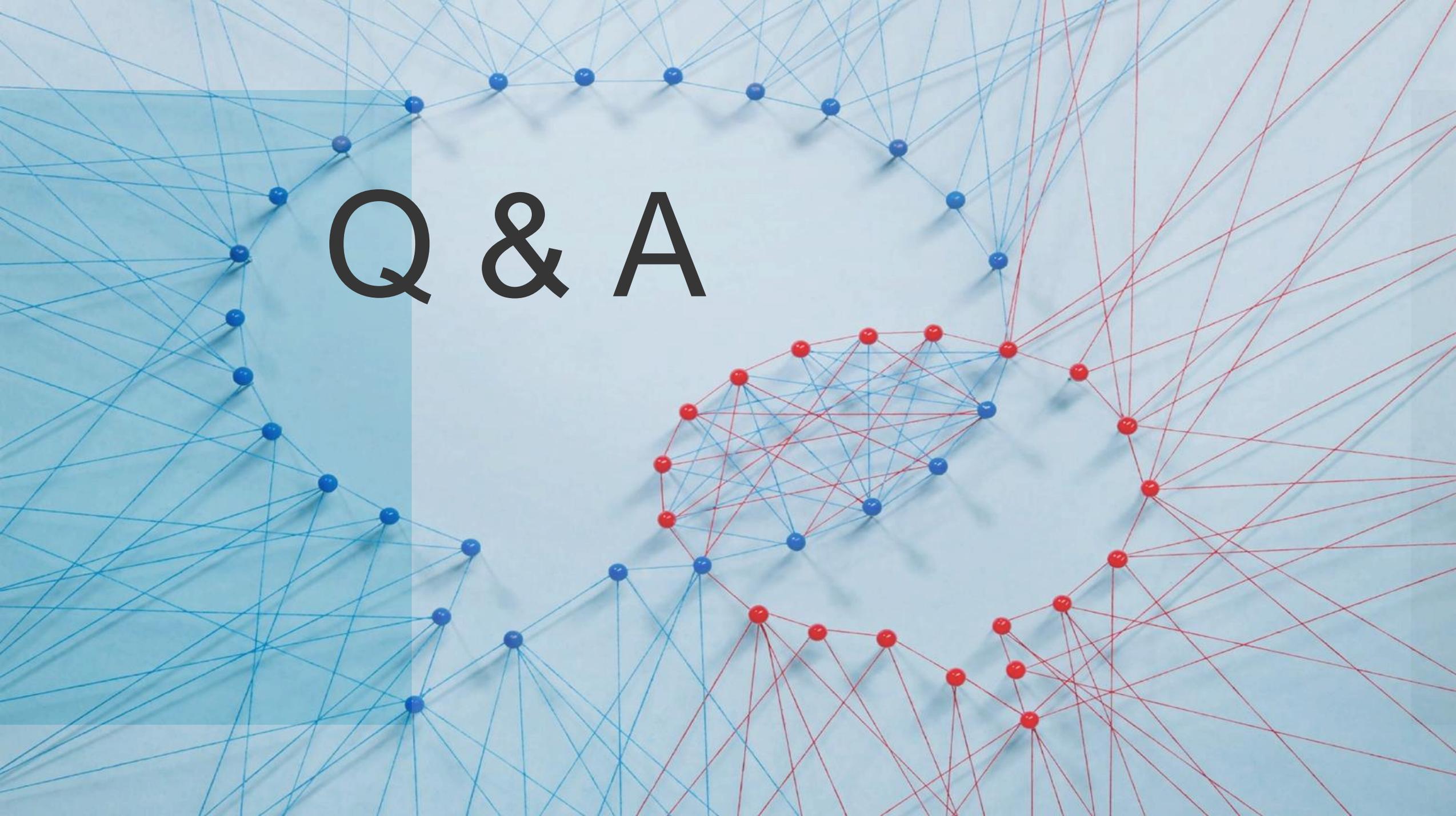
# Personal Ad Exercise for Your Board

- To explore your thinking about collaboration, develop a “personal ad” for a potential collaborative partner.
- Describe your **ideal partner** in terms of:
  - Mission
  - Constituency served
  - Types of Programs
  - Budget Size
  - What they have or do well you don't
- Describe your **organization**, including:
  - What can you offer to potential partners
  - Mission
  - Constituency served
  - Types of Program
  - Budget size
  - What you do well that a partner could leverage?
  - Goals and aspirations for collaboration and partnership
-

## Next Steps

- Be open and foster a mindset of collaboration & innovation
- Be clear on your organizations' own vision, goals and challenges, and your hopes and concerns about potential collaboration
- Create a small working group
- Define desired outcomes for collaboration
- Consider if there is mutual benefit and compatibility with a potential partner
- Inventory existing resources
- Look at collaborative models
- Anticipate implementation challenges and hot button issues
- Decide if to pursue collaboration
- Talk to potential facilitators and supporters



The background features a complex network of nodes and connections. The nodes are small, semi-transparent spheres, and the connections are thin, semi-transparent lines. The network is divided into two main color-coded regions: a blue region on the left and a red region on the right. The blue region consists of a dense, interconnected web of blue nodes and lines. The red region consists of a similar web of red nodes and lines. A few blue nodes are also present within the red region, and a few red nodes are present within the blue region, suggesting some overlap or interaction between the two groups. The overall appearance is that of a large-scale network graph, possibly representing a social network, a biological network, or a data network. The text 'Q & A' is centered in the middle of the image, overlaid on the network.

# Q & A



F R I D M A N

---

STRATEGIES

Nanette Fridman

617-504-4234

Fridmanstrategies@gmail.com

www.FridmanStrategies.com

---

*PLAN TO SUCCEED*