

2024 Sustainability Week Curricular Activities

MBA

PRICING STRATEGY

Faculty: Bertini, Marco

Session: How “commercial” should your nonprofit be?

While leaders of nonprofits are never short of ideas on how to achieve greater impact, many discover that soliciting donations and grants doesn't scale as well as their ambitions do—asking for money can be time consuming, unpredictable, and loaded with fine print. In response, leaders may consider a more “commercial” approach where solutions have prices and beneficiaries become customers. However, they often hesitate to pull the trigger out of fear that chasing earned income limits impact, and, over time, it can corrupt organizations into caring more about making money than they do about making a difference.

In the presentation, which draws on field research and a collaboration with Boston Consulting Group, I argue that this fear is exaggerated. Importantly, I trace its roots to a common misunderstanding among nonprofits about the meaning and measurement of “impact,” and use several examples to show that earned income can easily coexist with mission. One of these examples is [Project Maji](#), and we will have the pleasure to hear from the founder via videoconference. In addition, attendees will receive a copy of the recent Harvard Business School [case study](#) discussing Project Maji’s work in Sub-Saharan Africa.

This session will be open for all MBA students.

