MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS PROFILE

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SUMMARY

By reading this profile we hope that you can build a better understanding of whether seeking to develop management and leadership expertise seems like one of the best ways for you to use your time in order to help animals.

HOW DOES THIS WORK HELP ANIMALS?
Managers and leaders can have a multiplier effect on the impact of their colleagues at animal advocacy nonprofits or food companies.

WHO IS THIS WORK A GOOD FIT FOR?
Generalists with good communication skills and people skills, especially those who can inspire and motivate their team. Roles often require previous management and leadership experience.

HOW MUCH DO WE NEED MORE EXPERTISE IN THIS AREA?
We believe that a career in animal advocacy management and leadership roles is one of the most promising career choices for those seeking to maximise their positive impact for animals.

WHAT OPTIONS WOULD YOU HAVE IF YOU WERE TO LEAVE THIS PATH?
Other animal advocacy nonprofit roles, e.g. fundraising, campaigning, or lobbying. Possibly also roles in for-profit companies or in government.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP ROLES
It may be best to apply directly to roles in animal advocacy organisations. However, you can also gain relevant experience in the for-profit sector, through unpaid work, or through deliberate practice and training.
INTRODUCTION

In this profile, we will share insights with you from the experiences of some of the movement’s leaders (via 10 interviews) plus interesting research findings.

MEET SOME OF THE ANIMAL ADVOCACY MOVEMENT’S INSPIRING LEADERS

RICARDO LAURINO
who joined the Brazilian Vegetarian Society by volunteering as a regional coordinator, and is now the president of the institution.

ELAINE SIU
who is building up a team for The Good Food Institute in Asia, to support the development of an industry that can replace animal products with high-quality animal-free foods.

GABRIELĖ VAITKEVIČIŪTĖ
who co-founded Tušti Narvai in Lithuania 6 years ago, and has been leading the organisation as Executive Director since then.
HOW DOES THIS WORK HELP ANIMALS?

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN HELPING ANIMALS EFFECTIVELY THROUGH YOUR CAREER, YOU SHOULD PRIORITISE WORK THAT HAS HIGH POTENTIAL FOR IMPACT.

Intuitively, management and leadership (M&L) expertise is highly important when it is applied to work at effective animal advocacy nonprofits. Managers and leaders can have a multiplier effect on the impact of their colleagues, such as by motivating, inspiring, and supporting them.

Even if they have distributed or shared leadership, the quality of M&L will likely affect the overall impact of animal advocacy organisations. Researchers have also found that M&L makes a significant difference for organisations.

Here’s a quick rundown of the ways M&L skills can be used:

- Animal advocacy nonprofits (the main focus of this skills profile),
- Entrepreneurship — founding either a new effective non-profit or a new animal-free food technology company,
- Roles in government and policy (AAC skills profile forthcoming),
- M&L roles at for-profit companies developing and selling animal-free food technologies,
- Corporate roles that allow individuals to earn high salaries and donate to animal advocacy nonprofits ("earning to give"; see also our skills profile on fundraising).
IS IT RIGHT FOR YOU?

THE INFORMATION IN THIS SECTION IS INTENDED TO HELP YOU ASSESS WHETHER YOU WILL HAVE GOOD **PERSONAL FIT** WITH M&L ROLES. YOUR “PERSONAL FIT” WITH A ROLE OR CAREER PATH IS HOW WELL-SUITED YOU ARE TO IT AND YOUR CHANCES OF REALLY EXCELLING AT IT. WE THINK THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS IN **IMPACT-FOCUSED CAREER STRATEGY**.

If you already have substantial M&L expertise and are reading this profile to decide whether you should seek to apply your expertise to animal advocacy, you might like to skip this section.
WHAT DO MANAGERS AND LEADERS DO?

Notable themes that emerged from our interviews with animal advocacy managers and leaders about what they do include:

- Lots of calls or meetings. This usually involved a meeting at least once per week with each team member, sometimes with one day of the week designated specifically for meetings and check-ins.
- Planning and strategising.
- Administrative work and operations.
- Hiring and onboarding new employees.

They also noted that:

- In M&L roles, you have to face your worst weaknesses, which can be uncomfortable.
- It’s worth knowing if you love more hands-on jobs. The more you manage, the more you get towards leadership, the less you get to do those sorts of tasks.
- They worked between 7 and 10 hours each day. Some mentioned that the hours might be longer if you count further communications with staff outside usual hours. Some noted that the hours worked per day varied according to the time of year.

On average, the time spent managing others was estimated at around 55% of their time. Of course, managers and leaders don’t just manage and lead — they often have more direct responsibilities too.

Previous research has found that leaders of organisations have to change tasks very regularly. Our interviewees found this too, though scheduling time for focused, “deep work” could help.

Articles that can be found online seem to mention early starts, lots of emails and meetings, and firefighting tasks. But this didn’t seem very representative of our interviewees’ routines. Additionally, it’s important to take care of yourself and take steps to avoid burnout.
WHAT MAKES GREAT MANAGERS AND LEADERS?

Though our interviewees noted that there is no one-size-fits-all approach, they believed that great managers and leaders:

- Have the ability to trust and empower their team members and avoid micromanaging them.
- Have the ability to listen to and understand their colleagues.
- Are kind and supportive.
- Have strong communication skills and people skills.
- Are self-reflective and able to update in the light of feedback.
- Have charisma and are likeable.
- Lead by example, as role models.
- Do not seek the limelight.
- Are organised.
- Are able to “see things to fruition” without getting distracted.

Researchers have argued that great managers and leaders should seek to develop “transformational leadership.” This involves:

- Charisma.
- The ability to inspire and motivate your team.
- The ability to challenge assumptions, take risks, and get feedback from your team.
- Listening and attending to the needs of your team.

Research suggests that people who are extraverted, agreeable, conscientious, and open are more likely to be “transformational” leaders, while neurotic people are less likely to be. These effects are small, so people who are introverted, disagreeable, or neurotic could still be excellent managers and leaders, they’re just slightly less likely to be so. Emotional intelligence and empathy also probably help.

Popular management books, podcasts, and online courses can provide tips; see our list of management and leadership resources for self-development here.
HOW CAN YOU ASSESS WHETHER THIS IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

- Look honestly at your previous success in related work that uses the skills described above.
- Be proactive in trying to identify and explore small M&L opportunities. Are there interns or new staff that you could manage, design tasks for, mentor, or otherwise support?
- Consider seeking out extra-curricular or voluntary M&L responsibilities.
- Consider seeking out experiences that, while not technically involving management, help you to develop M&L expertise (see the section below).
- Try to understand the roles and work of managers and leaders better by reading or listening to materials about them.
- Ask yourself: why are you interested in M&L? If it’s for the power and spotlight, then you might not make a good manager or leader.
- Ask managers and leaders about your uncertainties.
- If you think that you are plausibly a good candidate, you could apply for roles at effective animal advocacy nonprofits. This can provide useful feedback.
WHAT IS MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN ANIMAL ADVOCACY LIKE IN PRACTICE?

A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE LANDSCAPE OF THE ANIMAL ADVOCACY MOVEMENT MIGHT HELP YOU UNDERSTAND SOME PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF WHETHER YOU ARE WELL-SUITED TO WORK IN THIS AREA.

It's also important for understanding how your strengths compare to other members of the animal advocacy movement who might plausibly do similar roles. This determines your comparative advantage — the job or path that is highest-impact for you, taking into account the possibility of coordination with others in the animal advocacy movement. This is something we might be able to talk through with you if you apply for a one-to-one careers advice call with us.

HOW MUCH DOES THE MOVEMENT NEED MORE EXPERTISE IN THIS AREA?

We are moderately confident that M&L is one of the top 5 areas where the movement most urgently needs more expertise.

Here are some of the reasons why:

- In our survey of animal advocacy nonprofits, 7 respondents out of 12 selected “management” as one of the skills that their organisation most needed. 3 respondents selected “leadership and management” as one of the bottlenecks that they “identify most” with in their organisation. Several selected M&L or “senior” roles as being “the hardest to fill.”
- This issue has been emphasised to us in informal conversations with experienced animal advocates.
- In a 2019 survey of effective altruism organisations by the Centre for Effective Altruism, “management” was rated as the most needed skill or ability.

We hope to conduct more systematic research of the needs of animal advocacy organisations in the near future.
WHICH COUNTRIES ARE MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP ROLES BASED IN?

In our **spot-check** of 27 animal advocacy nonprofits, 42% of M&L roles were based in the US, 8% were based in other English-speaking countries, and the other 50% were based in countries where English is not the first language. Roles were identified in 20 countries in total. Many roles were remote, though few seemed to be very flexible in terms of country. This research is not perfect though and there may be more roles outside the US than these results suggest. Some readers may also find our profile on “Growing the animal advocacy community in countries where it is small or new” helpful.

Pei Su is Chief Executive Officer and co-founder of ACTAsia, a nonprofit that has provided humane education for over 100,000 children in China.

IS THERE A GENDER GAP?

Open Philanthropy found in 2019 that men seem to be overrepresented in M&L roles in farmed animal nonprofits; around 70% of staff were female, compared to around 40% of CEOs and directors on boards. This reflects a trend found in other sectors.

In our **spot-check** of 27 animal advocacy nonprofits, 70% of the full-time, paid employees were women, while 64% of the full-time, paid M&L roles were held by women, providing further evidence that women are underrepresented in M&L roles, relative to other role types.

However, this may be due to greater self-confidence among men and to bias. In fact, some research suggests that women make better managers and leaders, on average. We hope that female potential managers and leaders reading this profile will be encouraged by this. We’d also encourage them to check out WANBAM (Women and Non-Binary Altruism Mentorship).
WHAT OPTIONS WOULD YOU HAVE IF YOU WERE TO LEAVE THIS PATH?

SINCE DEVELOPING M&L EXPERTISE REQUIRES BUILDING UP GENERALIST SKILLS, IF YOU WERE TO FOCUS ON THIS BUT THEN DECIDE THAT YOU ARE NO LONGER INTERESTED IN PURSUING THE PATH, THE CAREER CAPITAL (SKILLS, CONNECTIONS, AND CREDENTIALS) THAT YOU GAIN WOULD LIKELY BE APPLICABLE TO A NUMBER OF AREAS WITHIN ANIMAL ADVOCACY.

it seems likely that efforts to build M&L expertise would help you to build good communications skills and people skills. These skills could be useful in fundraising, campaigning, government, policy, or lobbying.

One cost of focusing on developing M&L expertise would be that you develop less expertise in specific skills and role types than you might otherwise have had. M&L expertise can certainly be applied outside nonprofits, though it’s probably more useful to just focus on for-profit or public experience if you’re confident that you will work in these areas longer-term.

Jakub Stencel has had a number of leadership roles at Otwarte Klatki and is now Anima International’s Director of Development.
INTERESTED IN MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP ROLES TO HELP ANIMALS?

IF YOU NEED TO DO SOME CAREER PLANNING, 80,000 HOURS' “TIPS ON MAKING CAREER PLANS” WILL LIKELY BE HELPFUL.

If you’re considering whether you’d like to focus on developing M&L expertise, or bringing your existing M&L expertise to support the animal advocacy movement, we might be able to help you talk through your options. You can apply for a one-to-one careers advice call with us here.
HOW TO PREPARE FOR MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP ROLES

SO FAR, THIS PROFILE HAS FOCUSED ON INFORMATION TO HELP YOU DECIDE WHETHER YOU SHOULD SEEK TO DEVELOP M&L EXPERTISE. THE INFORMATION BELOW IS MORE FOCUSED ON HELPING YOU DECIDE WHAT YOU COULD DO NEXT IF YOU DECIDE THAT YOU DO WANT TO FOCUS ON THIS.
WHAT ARE THE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS?

Our spot-check of advertised animal advocacy nonprofit opportunities suggests that you need several years of experience in related fields. Experience specifically in nonprofits is sometimes preferred or required, as are university degrees. Note that sometimes formal entry requirements are not as “required” as the job advert implies. Of course, beyond the formal entry requirements, you’ll also want to ensure that M&L is right for you (see the relevant section above).

SHOULD YOU SEEK TO DEVELOP MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP EXPERTISE INSIDE OR OUTSIDE OF THE ANIMAL ADVOCACY MOVEMENT?

REASONS TO GAIN EXPERIENCE INSIDE THE MOVEMENT:

- Animal advocacy roles are more comparable to each other than to M&L roles in the for-profit or public sectors. Working in an entry-level animal advocacy role, you might not build up an excellent understanding of M&L best-practice, but you will probably more efficiently learn what the needs of animal advocates are. A key task of managers in for-profit companies is to keep employees engaged and motivated. However, in animal advocacy
organisations, motivation and emotions run high, so resolving the tensions this creates becomes more of a priority. Avoiding burnout might also be a higher priority.

- Animal advocacy roles probably help you to build domain-specific knowledge and the mindset needed to have a high impact for animals.
- If you work outside the animal advocacy context, it could be easy to forget your motivations for engaging with animal advocacy in the first place.
- Experience from outside the movement doesn’t seem to have helped our interviewees much, in comparison to those interviewees who just started animal advocacy roles earlier.
- You can directly contribute to the movement for longer if you work your way up from the inside.

**REASONS TO GAIN EXPERIENCE OUTSIDE THE MOVEMENT:**

- You can donate while building up experience. This is important, since nonprofit organisations mostly run on donations.
- Most of our interviewees thought that M&L experience was more important than experience in the animal advocacy or animal-free food movements.
- Having diverse perspectives and experiences in the movement might increase its effectiveness. Developing M&L expertise in an external context could help you to bring different perspectives to your later animal advocacy work.
- Entry-level roles at animal advocacy organisations might be quite “replaceable,” because the organisations have lots of job applicants but not much money.
- If you’re worried about forgetting your motivations for engaging with animal advocacy while you work outside the movement, you could take steps to reduce this, like doing some volunteering.
- Experience in a leadership role at an advocacy nonprofit might not sound as impressive to someone in the for-profit sector as work at a prestigious company (say, Google, or McKinsey). For some career paths, such as in government and policy (our skills profile on this is forthcoming), having worked for an animal advocacy nonprofit might actually set you back.

Our overall impression from these interviews was that, if you are confident that you want to work in M&L roles in effective animal advocacy organisations, your time is probably better spent applying to animal advocacy roles sooner, rather than later.
WHAT SORTS OF EXPERIENCE ARE MOST USEFUL FOR DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP EXPERTISE?

WHICH EXPERIENCE IS MOST TRANSFERABLE TO MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP ROLES IN ANIMAL ADVOCACY ORGANISATIONS?

When looking at building M&L experience in for-profit and public sector organisations, remember:

- Many animal advocacy organisations are small.
- Many animal advocacy organisations have some or all of their staff working remotely.
- It’s also worth considering whether experience from other nonprofits might be more applicable, e.g. if you’re focusing on M&L roles in fundraising.

Of course, if you’re planning to apply your M&L expertise to a different career path within the animal advocacy space, such as at an animal-free food technology startup, then there may be different factors to consider.
The experience that you gain doesn’t necessarily need to be formal, paid experience to be useful: extra-curricular activities, volunteering, and hobbies where you can be proactive and take on additional M&L responsibilities could be great practice.

**WHAT ARE THE QUICKEST WAYS TO DEVELOP MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP EXPERTISE?**

Whether taking on roles inside or outside the animal advocacy movement, it seems unlikely that you’ll be able to walk straight into an M&L role, unless you have previous M&L experience from another context. So, if you’re considering work in another sector in order to develop M&L experience, it’s worth considering how long it will take you to take on M&L responsibilities. For some sectors, 2 to 3 years seems a reasonable expectation.

It would be helpful to seek out information on staff turnover, expansion rates, and promotion opportunities at specific organisations before you join them.

It’s still important that you have good personal fit with the roles that you apply to if you’re looking for roles outside animal advocacy, so that you can get promoted and gain the M&L experience that you’re looking for.

**DELIBERATE PRACTICE AND TRAINING**

Research suggests that M&L expertise can be taught through training programmes and deliberate practice.

We’ve created a list of management and leadership resources for self-development. If you decide that you want to focus on developing M&L expertise, we encourage you to look at the list and select one or two resources to get started with.

We think that reading resources on M&L will be a much better use of your time if you already have some M&L responsibilities; this will provide you with opportunities to practice your learnings and gain feedback. An online course could still provide useful signalling to your colleagues of your willingness and readiness to take on M&L responsibilities, but in general, we’d recommend focusing on securing M&L roles first.
Our interviewees encouraged:

- Being proactive and taking on opportunities to test out M&L responsibilities, including project management.
- Learning from other managers and leaders in effective animal advocacy organisations.
- Reading relevant resources.
- Attending workshops and courses.
- Meditation or other activities that might help you to connect with individuals better.

USEFUL RESOURCES

- The longer, more detailed version of this skills profile.
- The interview findings spreadsheet for this skills profile.
- Our list of management and leadership resources for self-development.
- One-to-one careers advice calls with us.
- Mentorship through WANBAM (Women and Non-Binary Altruism Mentorship) or Encompass’s Global Majority Caucus, which “empowers advocates of the global majority [i.e. people of colour] by cultivating our innate leadership potential, providing resources and support, and building a stronger community.”
- The effective animal advocacy community directory.
- Interviews with various leaders in the animal advocacy movement on the Sentience Institute podcast.
- 80,000 Hours’ advice on “how to get a job.”

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN HELPING ANIMALS!

Thank you for reading this skills profile. We hope this has been helpful for shaping your future steps. We wish you the best of luck in your animal advocacy career planning.

If you’ve found this skills profile useful, you can support our work by donating to Animal Advocacy Careers. Your contributions will support us to help animals.