

MCF Consulting



Marin
Community
Foundation

MCF CONSULTING

“Consulting” is a word that comes with a lot of baggage and a ton of preconceptions. Let’s cast them aside and start fresh, because what folks need from a consulting goes beyond slide decks, best practices, and proprietary processes.

In fact, when it comes to your philanthropy, you need the exact opposite. You want rich conversations and a completely tailored approach.

MCF oversees \$3 billion in philanthropic assets

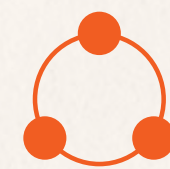
MCF manages more than 880 different funds



What you want is a relationship.

At MCF, we start every interaction with a clean slate, because every client is unique in their philanthropic ambitions. We bring our best talent to the table and we listen. We ask a bunch of questions and engage in really generative discussions. We manage the dynamics and interplay of people around the table, bringing support, empathy, wisdom, provocation, creativity, and passion in the right measures.

With every voice and perspective heard and noted, we develop strategy. Philanthropy is a super complex beast, and to make impact – measurable impact – you need strategies that understand that complexity. Which means you need people who are equal parts strategy mavens, issue area experts and philanthropic minds. All three. That’s what MCF Consulting brings, quite literally, to the table:



Philanthropic Skills

MCF has become the 6th largest community foundation in the country because our donors trust us and love working with us. With four decades under our belts we have a collective knowledge about the sector that is unmatched. We know how to leverage philanthropic vehicles to maximum effect, and when to invent new ones. We know how boards work. We understand family dynamics.



Issue Area Expertise

This isn’t just about knowing the facts. This is about understanding the systems within which the issue lies; the role that government, business and other institutions play; the people politics and the money politics. It’s about forging mutually beneficial partnerships between an often diverse set of stakeholders. It’s about being a student of the past and a predictor of the future.



Strategy Ingenuity

When the initial conversations end, you need a structured and robust plan. You need a team that understands the practice of strategy – that the journey of the strategy is as important as the destination of impact. The plan needs to reflect that beautiful interplay of rigor: quantitative & qualitative research, interviews, convenings, surveys, landscape scans, etc. – and creativity: ideation sessions, field trips, team building, etc. It also needs to identify moments of reflection versus moments of action, and provide short-term wins on the road to long term success.

When should you use our consulting services?
When you have questions like these:

- Do I need to design a strategic giving plan?
- How can I develop a meaningful mission statement?
- What is a Theory of Change and do I need one?
- How do I manage group dynamics (e.g. board or family)?
- What are the latest trends in philanthropy that I need to understand?
- How can I leverage my philanthropic dollars to make greater impact?
- How can I go deeper to understand my issue area?

The company you'll be in

We are finding we attract folks who live at the intersection of climate, environment and community. Not only because climate issues represent the greatest threat for our future, but also because we have people with a particular expertise in these fields. For example:

Our aligned missions and shared perspective led Equation Campaign to recently become a client of MCF's. Our partnership will allow more funding to get distributed more quickly to urgent movements to keep fossil fuels in the ground. And we'll be exploring opportunities for partnerships with other funders to help them expand their impact.

A longstanding relationship between Patagonia founder Yvon Chouinard and MCF President & CEO, Rhea Suh led to a formal collaboration with Holdfast Collective, the nonprofit arm of Patagonia that is dedicated to fighting the environmental crisis and defending nature. We're helping the Collective get hundreds of grants to grassroots organizations throughout the world, and doing so with the greatest intentionality and due diligence.

MCF has worked with Rewilding Argentina and Rewilding Chile for many years. Again, the shared DNA between Kris Tompkins and our team is the foundation of the work we do together. Designing donor trips to each of the areas is a priority plan in the upcoming year because to experience these environments – and the work underway – is a powerful motivator for giving.

Bottom line: we believe great consulting is equal parts art, science and psychology. Get the right people in the room, and create the right atmosphere and that's when magic can happen. And impact follows.

patagonia®

 EQUATION
CAMPAIGN

holdfast collective

FUNDACIÓN
REWILDING
CHILE
The Legacy of Tompkins Conservation

FUNDACIÓN
REWILDING
ARGENTINA

mcf



Meet Rhea

Rhea Suh
President & CEO

Rhea is a senior executive with more than 25 years of philanthropic, environmental, and public policy experience that she brings to bear in her role as the first woman and person of color to lead MCF. Prior to joining MCF in 2021, Rhea served as the third president of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), where under her leadership, the organization grew by more than \$50 million and increased its membership by more than 40 percent.

MCF Consulting is based on a fundamental belief: gather the right people in the room at the start, and great things can happen.

Before joining NRDC, Rhea served as the assistant secretary for policy, management, and budget at the U.S. Department of the Interior. She was nominated for the position by President Barack Obama and confirmed by the Senate in 2009. She led several cross-cutting initiatives at the department including establishing a successful diversity program for the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, leading the inter-agency Wildland Fire national coordinating body, and creating the first-ever national strategy for federal land acquisition.

Prior to her appointment to the Interior Department, Rhea worked at both the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, focusing on strategies dedicated to environmental conservation and clean energy in the West. Rhea earned her Bachelor's degree in environmental science from Barnard College and received a Fulbright Fellowship to Seoul, South Korea. She has served as a senior legislative assistant for Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, and earned a Master's degree in education, administration, planning, and social policy from Harvard University. Rhea spends her free time fly fishing in remote locations and enjoying time outdoors with her daughter and dog.

Some of the people at MCF that might be “right” for you.



Jason Blau
Chief Strategy Officer

Jason recently joined MCF after a 16-year tenure as a Director at Redstone Strategy. Jason helps philanthropies design, execute, and evaluate shared strategies to meet their goals. His commitment to social impact has led him to work at the nexus of social and environmental concerns, finding innovative ways to support communities and the land and water they depend on. He is often asked to help facilitate partnerships between different funders, organizations, and the diverse stakeholders they seek to serve.

A couple of examples of his work: he served as the founding Strategy Lead for the Water Funder Initiative, developing shared strategies and campaigns that increased investment, coordination, and impact across philanthropies. He also helped the Collaborative for Gender + Reproductive Equity launch a shared strategy, prioritize outcomes and geographies, and implement its vision.

Jason graduated magna cum laude from Yale University with a degree in ethics, politics, and economics. His thesis analyzed regulatory schemes to balance economic growth and environmental protection in Chile, where he spent the summer as a Bates Fellow.

Jason lives in Boulder with his wife, Diana, and two children, Noam and Eli. They spend their free time hiking and camping in the mountains.



Janelle Cavanagh
Chief Philanthropy Officer

Janelle oversees MCF’s 20-person Philanthropic Partnerships team, and is focused on engaging donors in meaningful, impactful giving. She is an accomplished philanthropic advisor, nonprofit leader, and award-winning fundraiser, whose passion and expertise lies in building enduring relationships and aligning donor passions with experiences and opportunities.

Janelle’s career began more than 25 years ago when she taught English as a Peace Corps volunteer in rural Thailand. When she returned to the United States, she earned a Master’s degree in social welfare, with an emphasis in management and planning, from the University of California at Berkeley.

Prior to MCF, Janelle was Interim Co-CEO and Vice President, Strategic Partnerships at Global Fund for Women. Here, she oversaw a team that raised up to \$71 million annually and created unique donor experiences, such as Champions for Equality. Janelle is the co-founder of the UC Berkeley Certificate in Fundraising and Volunteer Management program - to inspire and train those working in the fundraising profession. She was also the recipient of the 2017 Outstanding Fundraiser award from the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Golden Gate Chapter.

Born and raised in Marin, Janelle currently lives in Oakland with her husband and two Havanese dogs. In her spare time, she forges artistic masterpieces.



Kristin Tracz
MCF Climate Justice Consultant

Kristin is considered part of MCF, working on local, state and national aspects of our Climate Justice initiative. She has a wealth of experience leading her own strategy consultancy for the past few years, partnering with non-profits, foundations, and academic institutions to support collaborations that builds climate resilience. She also has extensive experience with private foundations, non-profit advocacy partners and community stakeholders.

Prior to establishing her own consultancy, Kristin spent 7 years at the Walton Family Foundation, most recently as a senior program officer. Here she managed the grantmaking team and \$30M/yr in investments in people and places to support healthy soils, clean water and a restored and resilient Mississippi River system from headwaters to the Louisiana coast. She also built a coalition of business voices, environmental advocates, community members and scientists to maximize the investment of settlement dollars stemming from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

She has also as a program officer for several family foundations and community development organizations.

Kristin received her BA in Political and Social Thought from University of Virginia and an MEM in Environmental Management from Yale. She is a board member of The Water Collaborative and a trustee of Awesome Foundation.



“Dedicated people in a well-run organization committed to making philanthropy the pleasure that it should be.”

MCF Donor



CONTACT US

Let's talk.



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