

betterworld

Purpose over profit: A conversation with BetterWorld co-founder, Whit Hunter



“Why not bring elegant, world-class technology to the organizations doing good in the world? That’s why we started BetterWorld.”

WHIT HUNTER | BETTERWORLD CO-FOUNDER

Q: Can you speak to the BetterWorld mission and why you founded it?

A: I used to have a sign hanging on my wall in college—handwritten poorly on printer paper—that said: Innovation for the Common Good. I've always loved the idea of companies doing good; it's what I wrote my thesis on, in fact. The idea that **capitalism—which is by far the most dominant and wide-reaching institution in our society—is not morally neutral. It can be a force for evil, for exploitation...or it can be a force for good, something that uplifts and creates the conditions for flourishing.**

In short, I always knew I wanted to build an enterprise that did good.

BetterWorld originally came out of a student project—an online auction to raise funds for the University of Virginia. We had no plans to build a business...we just wanted to make something neat and do some good. Nearing graduation, we realized that what we built as students was better than many tools on the market.

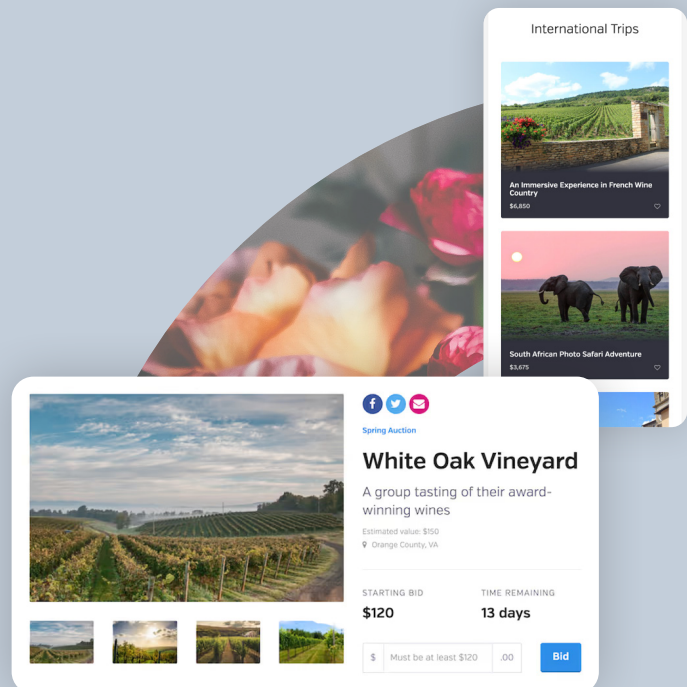
Looking deeper, we saw a massive disparity between the world-class technology I had seen in other industries (I spent a summer interning in venture capital) and the tools available for nonprofits. Why not change that? Why not bring elegant, world-class technology to the organizations doing good in the world? That's why we started BetterWorld.

Q: What influenced the decision to make BetterWorld free?

A: We wanted to have more impact. Our tools were great, but we were fitting into an industry where only the most well-funded nonprofits could access the best tools.

What if that could change? What if every organization—no matter their budget or size—could access world-class fundraising tools?

We thought that could be a good, small contribution toward making the world a better place.



Q: How does a free platform like BetterWorld benefit nonprofits?

A: We make fundraising easier—and help nonprofits raise more and save time—so they can have a greater impact and spend more time doing what they love.

At a high level, that’s really it. We come alongside you to make your life easier. We build tools that streamline events and digital fundraising. By making everything all-in-one and easy to use, we make fundraising one less thing to stress about.



Q: What words of encouragement do you have to share with nonprofits facing fundraising challenges?

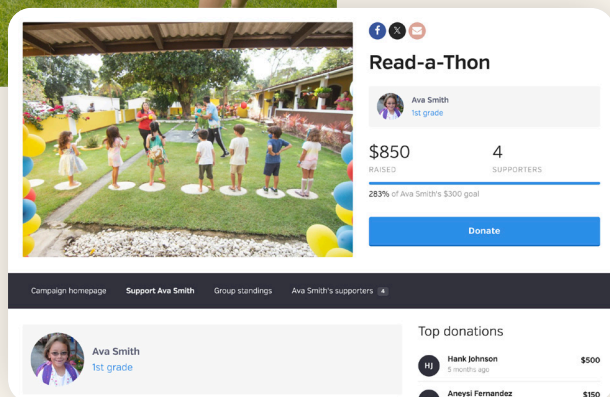
A: So...almost every nonprofit?

I don’t know. It’s hard. It’s stressful. It’s difficult and challenging work. And there are elements that will always be hard and challenging—but some things don’t have to be.

We see a lot of nonprofits stuck doing time-consuming, painful, soul-crushing admin tasks that could be automated with better tools. (Our auction tool, for example, can save you 20+ hours compared to doing a silent auction the old-fashioned way. Use that—and get 20 hours of your life back!)

It’s easy to keep doing things the way you’ve always done them. But I’d highly suggest getting into a monthly rhythm of auditing the tools and systems your organization uses. There are so many great new resources and software tools out there to make your life easier.

Get some air, invest the time, buy back time for yourself and your organization. Automate the things that can be automated.



Q: When you think about what BetterWorld has helped nonprofits accomplish, what makes you most proud?

A: I'm just grateful to play a small role in supporting the folks who are making a difference.

That's the beautiful thing about the nonprofit space. Everywhere else in the world, profit and self-interest seem to drive behavior. But in the nonprofit world—large and small—it's individuals who see a need in their community and decide to do something about it.

How cool is that?

Like the mother of a daughter with Cerebral Palsy, who started an organization creating capes for walkers—because her daughter felt self-conscious, and other children didn't know how to start a conversation. She did it for her daughter...but now they've helped thousands of other children fit in and make friends.

Being around people like that and playing a small part in their story—obsessing over how we can build tools that make their life easier—I love that.

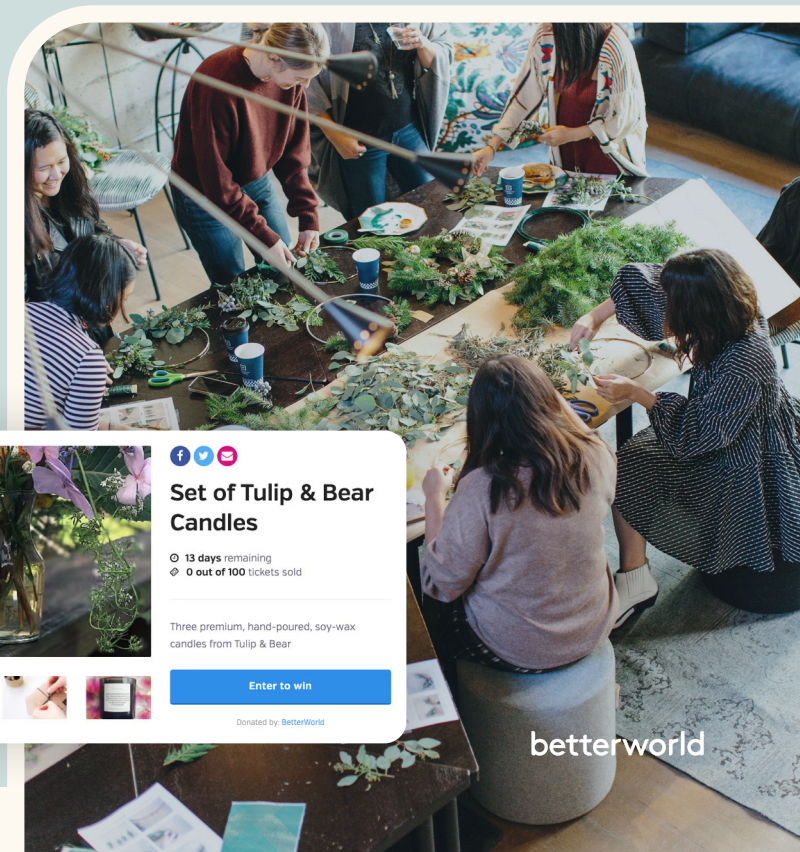
Q: What do you mean when you say, “Purpose Over Profit,” and how does that influence your work at BetterWorld?

A: Revenue is a good thing. It drives growth. We need it to expand our team and serve more organizations.

And profit—making more than we spend—is a good thing, too. It makes our work sustainable. But while profit is good, it's not the ultimate good.

The ultimate good is why we're here. It's purpose. It's serving others.

Profit? It's good—in moderation—but only in service to purpose, to fueling impact, to making the world a better place.



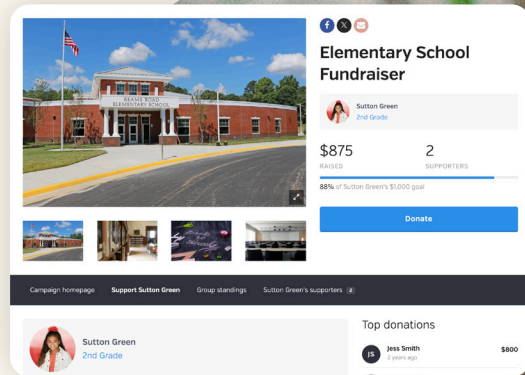
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Q: If BetterWorld had a superpower, what would it be and why?

A: Please, no. I can't give a cheesy answer here...and everything I'm coming up with feels cheesy.

I'll say this, though: If we could be known for something—where folks just had no idea how we did it—it would be creating an organizational culture that's greater than the sum of its parts.

A culture where, through the idealism of our mission, genuine care for one another, and holding our work to the highest standards, we accomplish things that would've been unimaginable alone or in the past.

**Like in the parable of the bricklayers...
Are we dutifully laying bricks?
Or are we joyfully building a cathedral?**



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