

# The Burden of Competing Accountabilities

The Leadership Reality: Fixed Metrics  
vs. Ambiguous Expectations

**Professional**  
(Staff Norms)

**Legal**  
(Regulators)

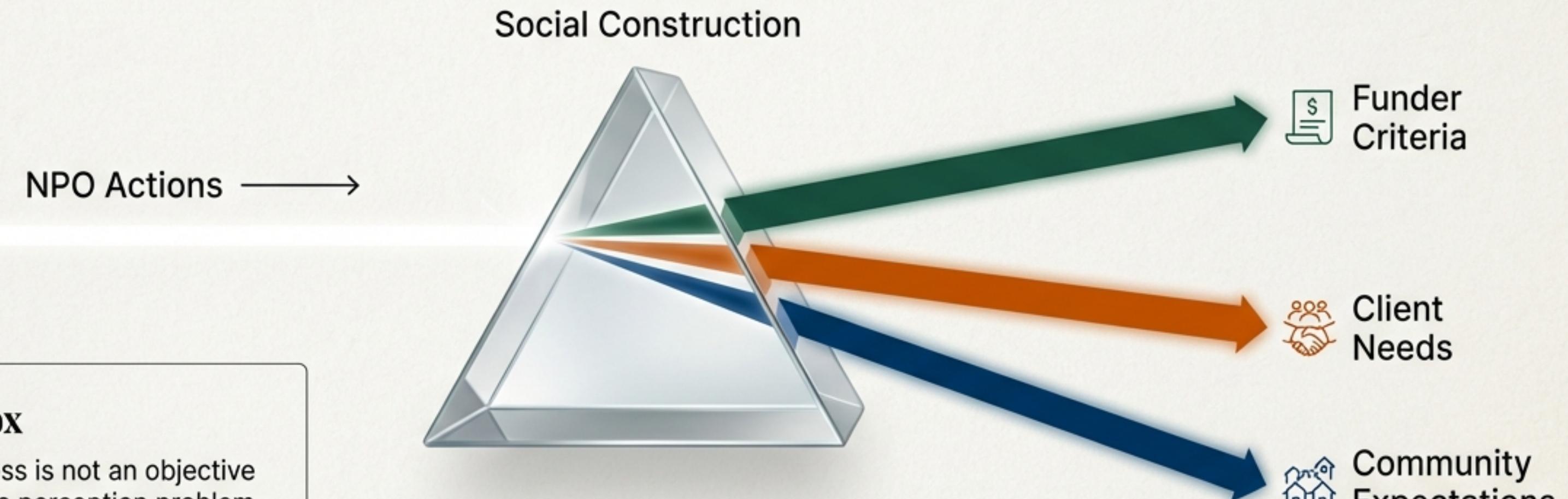
**Fiduciary**  
(IRS & Donors)

**Public Good**  
(Community & Media)

While tax forms are objective, "serving the public good" is open to interpretation (Mansbridge, 1998). Nonprofit executives have discretion, yet often feel paralyzed by the need to satisfy every distinct, conflicting demand.

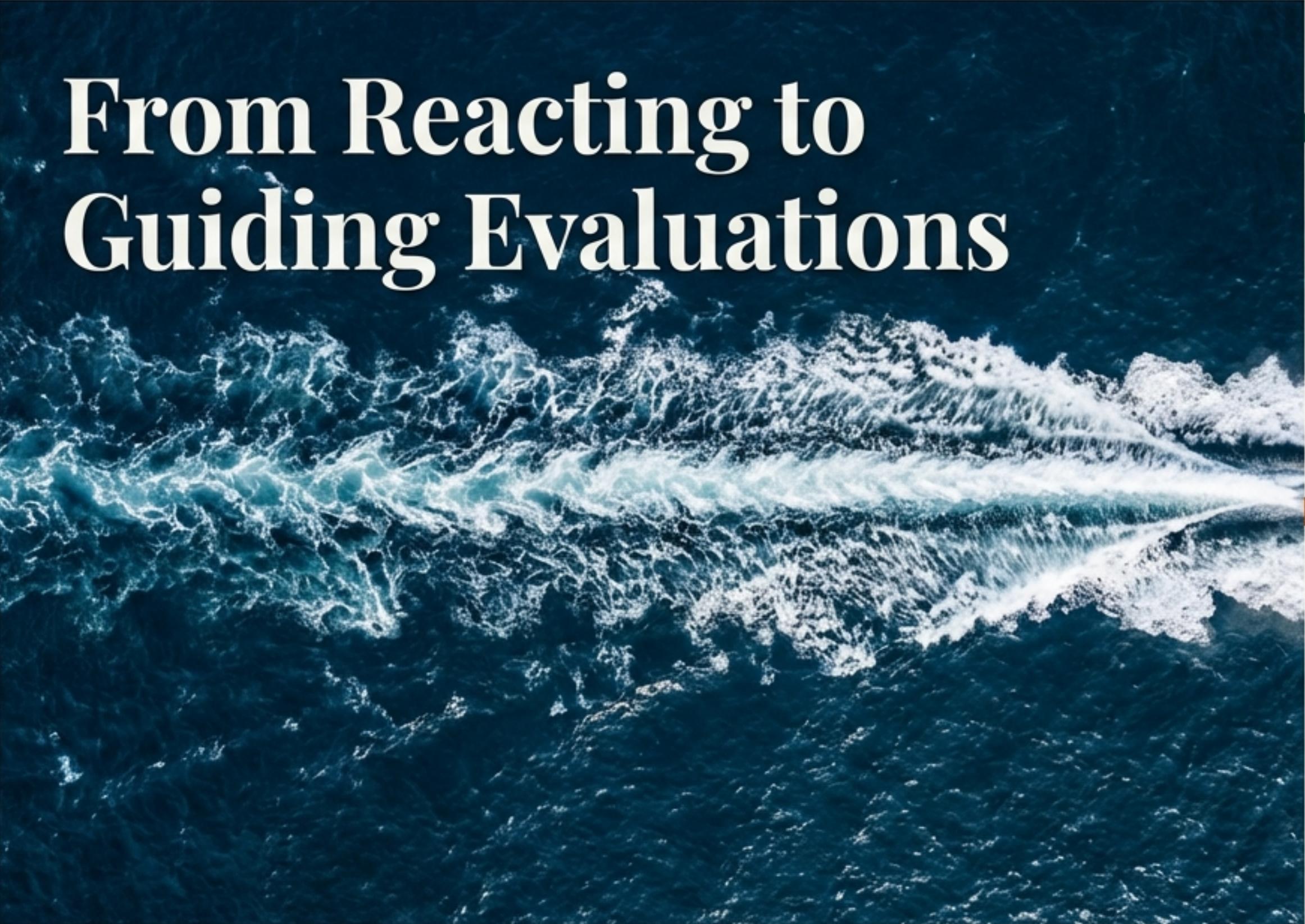
# Effectiveness is a Negotiated Outcome

The Multiple Constituency Model (Zammuto, 1984)



## Key Insight Box

**Insight:** Effectiveness is not an objective math problem. It is a perception problem. Different stakeholders use different criteria to judge success based on the information you transmit.



# From Reacting to Guiding Evaluations

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## The Passive Trap

Responsiveness. Trying to satisfy every demand leads to mission drift and paralysis.

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## The Strategic Pivot

Guiding Evaluations (Kearns, 1996). Influencing stakeholder expectations to align with the NPO's actual values and capabilities.

Don't just respond to the environment; shape the narrative.

# Consistency Reduces Uncertainty



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**The Mechanism:**  
Predictability builds trust.  
Even if stakeholders  
disagree with a specific  
decision, they respect  
the reliability of the  
rationale behind it.

The Balser & McClusky research confirms that organizations rated as "Most Effective" used a consistent, thematic rationale across all stakeholder groups.

# The Tale of Three Strategies

## Mission-Dominant

**Evaluated:** Effective

"We compromise on tactical things... but if you're talking mission things, we don't compromise."

**Action:** Rejected government grants (\$44k) that required excessive reporting to protect mission focus.

## Relationship-Builder

**Evaluated:** Effective

"If there are screw-ups... I would much rather they hear that from me."

**Action:** Proactively cultivated networks to build a "Bank of Goodwill" and preempt crises.

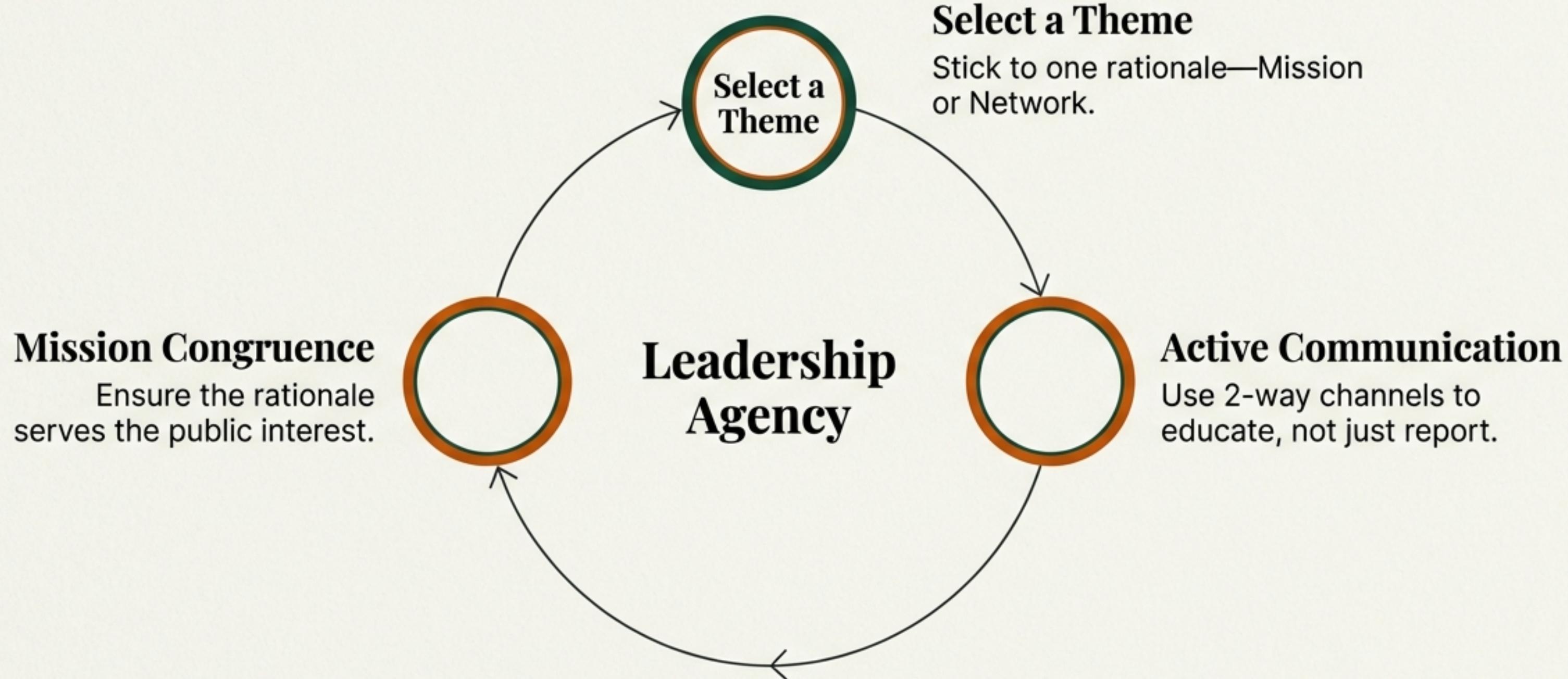
## The Fragmented

**Evaluated:** Less Effective

"Reactive & Apologetic"

**Action:** The "Picnic Incident"—held an event to please volunteers without a plan, leading to criticism and confused expectations.

# Strategies for Implementation



*Perceived effectiveness is not just what you do,  
but how consistently you explain why you do it.*