

▣ Ways to Boost Giving Detailed in New Study

A report by Indiana University researchers addresses the fact that giving has remained static for decades. “Growing Philanthropy in the United States” (www.indiana.edu/~iunews/GrowingPhilanthropy.pdf) provides action steps to increase philanthropy, including the following:

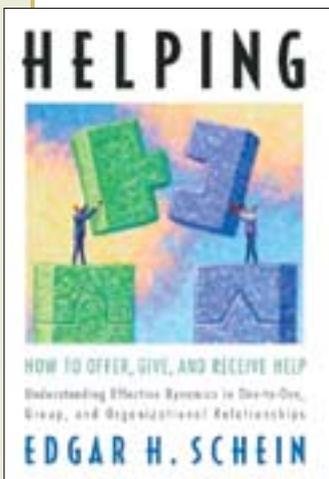
- **Enhance the quality of donor relationships.** Treat each donor as an individual. Move to long-term measures of fundraising performance. Focus on building supporter loyalty.
- **Develop public trust.** Enforce reporting requirements. Contest the myth that it’s possible to have “zero costs” for fundraising. Use the Web to educate the public about charity costs. Develop better performance measures and self-regulation.
- **Focus on fundraising channels with strong potential for growth.** Encourage monthly giving. Make better use of social media. Engage young people. Ask the wealthy to plan their philanthropic giving and make bequests in their wills.
- **Improve the quality of fundraising.** Redesign training, certification, and academic qualifications for fundraisers. Create a “sales force” to disseminate fundraising education. Develop fundraising research. Educate board members about raising funds. ▣

▣ Helping: The Basis of Nonprofit Work

Much has been written about formal help, such as that provided by therapists and management consultants, yet we seem to know so little about helping in less professional settings. Edgar Schein closes this gap with *Helping: How to Offer, Give, and Receive Help* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, www.berrettkoehler.com). As he explains, the helping relationship depends on understanding and trust. You can build trust by removing any misconceptions through humble inquiry. At the same time, it’s important to lessen status differences so that the relationship is balanced.

Helping is the reason most nonprofits exist, and these rules apply in our work, both externally and internally. Leaders must be able to accept help from staff, volunteers, and supporters. To provide useful help to clients, an organization must be willing to lessen status differences and maintain trust. Learning to be better helpers and receivers will enhance relationships and improve life for us all. ▣

—reviewed by
Terrence Fernsler



▣ How Can You Increase Productivity without Big Expenses? Use the Power of Stories

We all know that telling stories is one of the best ways to teach and solidify information for people. While people are likely to forget data, they remember stories.

But what you may not realize is that using stories in your organization can yield concrete returns on your investment of time while costing you nothing. Recent research shows, for example, that organizations have reduced turnover by 30% by incorporating story-based techniques.

“No other strategy will give you results like that with no investment of capital,” says Lori Silverman (www.partnersforprogress.com, lori@partnersforprogress.com). In several recent books—*Stories Trainers Tell: 55 Ready-to-Use Stories to Make Training Stick* (with coauthor Mary B. Wacker, Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer, www.pfeiffer.com) and *Wake Me When the Data Is Over* (Jossey-Bass Publishers, www.josseybass.com)—she brings clear direction to anyone who wants to bring story work into their organization.

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Both books provide myriad tools you can adapt to your setting. They detail ways to use stories in mentoring staff, passing on leadership lessons, communicating strategic information, and shifting people’s behaviors. The real-life examples will help you appreciate stories in a whole new way and use them to produce lasting change in your organization. ▣

▣ Challenge Workers with HARD Goals

In *Hundred Percenters: Challenge Your Employees to Give It Their All and They’ll Give You Even More* (McGraw-Hill, www.mcgraw-hill.com), Mark Murphy describes research he did to discover what separates ordinary from extraordinary leaders. The secret, he found, was twofold: The best leaders create emotional bonds with employees and challenge them with what he calls HARD goals. Such goals are:

- **Heartfelt** (serving something bigger than themselves)
- **Animated** (vividly described)
- **Required** (as necessary to existence as air and water)
- **Difficult** (so hard to reach that employees will have to test all their limits). ▣



Direct Mail Fundraising Alive and Well

Predictions of the demise of letters and postcards at the hands of e-mail and social media are premature, according to a poll by the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP, www.afpnet.org). Asked how their use of direct mail is changing, a majority (61%) of respondents to AFP's Web "Quick Poll" say it hasn't changed or has increased. Only 39% say they're using less direct mail in favor of e-mails and social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

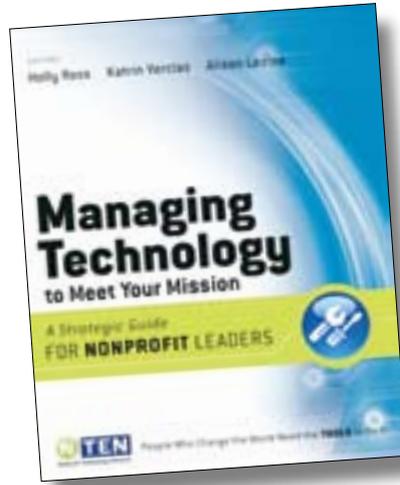
The key to fundraising success, say experts, is to integrate all these communications techniques into a unified plan so that donors can choose how they engage with your organization.

But as nonprofits continue to experiment with how best to use social media, don't give up on that backbone of fundraising—direct mail. □

Integrating Technology into Your Mission

To fulfill your organization's mission, it's crucial to plan for the technology you need, not let technology drive your planning. Technology use should be well thought out and evaluated for how it advances your goals.

Managing Technology to Meet Your Mission (Jossey-Bass, www.josseybass.com) explains what technology is available, what it can do for you, and how you can change your organization's structure and culture to use technology more efficiently. The best solutions start with assessing your needs, and that means knowing where you want your organization to go and finding technology that's good enough but not a drain on other resources.



Just as important is knowing what your stakeholders are doing online and how to connect with them. By integrating your message with user expectations (as well as doing a check on organizational expectations) you can merge technology with your outreach efforts, engage supporters, and allocate revenue and staff time in the best possible way. □

—reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

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A Magic Way to Involve People

Many meetings turn out to be a waste of everyone's time, as Kathleen Paris reminds us in *Bringing Your Strategic Plan to Life*. One of the best ways to engage people in strategic planning is a technique called World Café. Here are the steps:

- 1. Set up a room** like a café, with tables covered in paper, and four people at each table. Ask participants to write or draw on the paper-covered table in response to a question. (Post a different question at each table.) Questions might include, for example, "What trends are occurring, and how will they impact us?" "How can we harness social networking to meet our goals?" "What new skills will we need to make our goals a reality?" Have participants spend 15-30 minutes discussing their responses.
- 2. Ask one person to remain at the table** as a host while each of the other three people travel to different tables. Invite them to look at what the prior group wrote on the paper tablecloths and add their own comments. Again, spend 15-30 minutes in discussion.
- 3. In the third round, ask participants** to prepare a list of emerging themes and insights. Have table hosts provide a three-minute summary of these ideas.

The World Café has many advantages. Full participation is built in. Everyone's point of view is welcomed and integrated into the plan. And there's nothing like shared meaning to inspire people to do their best work. □

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