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volume 41 · number 1

Nonprofit World

Advancement Through Sharing

Four Tips to Build Trust through Writing

PLUS: Why on Earth Would a Major Donor Agree to Meet with You? · Best Practices to Budget (& Spend) for Marketing · Do You Have the Right People on Your Board? · Optimize Google Ads to Bring More Traffic to Your Website · The Surprising Science of Meetings · What Type of Language Professional Do You Need? · Bring Yourself Fully to Your Nonprofit Role · The Deeper Way to Onboard New Employees · The Two Missing Parts of Team-Building · What Can You Learn from E-Mail Lists? ... and more

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SOCIETY for NONPROFITS
Advancing the nonprofit world together

NONPROFIT WORLD
Editor **Jill Muehrcke**

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FEATURE ARTICLE

Are you careful about what you put in your e-mails and other writings? A case study shows how differently people interpret words during times of stress. You need to choose your language with special care when communicating about a change that's coming. Change worries people and reduces their ability to retain information. To be sure your message doesn't get lost, use the advice in **"Four Tips to Build Trust through Writing" (page 10)**.

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SOCIETY *for* NONPROFITS
Advancing the nonprofit world together

NONPROFIT WORLD
is published by the Society for Nonprofits.

An Unexpected Light

> "Change is ruthless to anyone who hides."

Only 13% of workers are engaged in their work, according to a recent Gallup poll. With such numbers, how do we get anything done? The answer, according to David Harder: We do it on autopilot, in an unthinking, uncaring trance.

If 87% of workers are disengaged, as Harder tells us in *The Workplace Engagement Solution* (careerpress.com), "the odds are high that we will meet only one person out of 10 who impacts us like an unexpected gift, a singular light that brightens our day." And isn't that light what we want our employees to shine out on our organization's behalf?

The solution is to give employees the skills to connect to their best selves and deepest visions. When you've helped them know their *own* purpose, they'll be eager to share in a *communal* purpose. "Awaken & Engage Your Employees" (page 24) offers tools for developing the life-infusing skills so sorely needed.

It's vital to teach everyone the value of active listening. Knowing how to listen connects people. As they get to know one another heart-to-heart, they look forward to helping, supporting, and mentoring each other, which will turn your organization's culture into something entirely new. For guidelines, see "Connect with People in Ways You Never Thought Possible" (page 25).

The importance of listening and focusing mindfully, one on one, can't be overstated. Marcy Heim reinforces the lesson in her insightful "Bring Yourself Fully to Your Nonprofit Role" (page 12). When it's your turn to talk, do so in a direct, clear, and inspirational way. To motivate people, appeal to their emotions, not their brains (turn to "Professor or Poet?" on page 24 and "Great Leaders Are Strategic Communicators" on page 26).

To connect deeply with others, you need to know how to ask good questions. "The Six Wise Counselors" (page 27) explains how to choose the best questions – and why it's so essential to help others in your organization learn to do so, too.

Although everyone needs to embrace a common purpose, that doesn't mean you should staff your organization with those who think alike. If you want breakthrough results, it's crucial to work with people who have different skills and worldviews.

That means you need to learn – and teach those around you – the ground rules of constructive conflict. The authors of *The Innovation Code* define constructive conflict as "conflict with empathy." (See "Embrace Dynamic Discord" on page 26.) You don't usually think of empathy as something you bring to an argument, but for the results to be useful, people can't be competing for their opinions to come out on top. Generative arguing entails seeing the value of other people's perspectives, imagining the world as they do, and appreciating the insights those experiences provide. This type of dissent leads to the greatest understanding and most pathbreaking change possible.

Even with a great diversity of people, you can create a tightly knit team if you focus on day-to-day coaching (check out "Coach People to Success" on page 25 and "The Two Missing Parts of Team Building" on page 20). The goal is to craft a culture in which it's natural for people to help those around them as well as to ask for assistance when they need it themselves.

In the old-style workplace, asking for help was discouraged, even punished. But now it's universally accepted that reaching out to others is a sign of strength and will benefit everyone. "If we are flying below the radar, no one will know we are there," Harder points out. Change is ruthless, he notes, to anyone who hides. And isn't it common sense that someone who refuses to help or be helped is disengaged?

We give people courage when we teach them to look each other in the eye and connect at the most profound level. That's the way to help everyone in your organization feel the heart-driven, life-infusing excitement that will lead, every day, to those moments of unexpected light.

Jill Muehrcke, muehrcke@charter.net

Five Things to Do Next Monday

Here are a few concrete things you can do right now to begin transforming your organization.

1. **Be sure you're prepared** for your next meeting. Look over the tips in "The Surprising Science of Meetings" (page 18).
2. **Choose one or two things** in "Bring Yourself Fully to Your Nonprofit Role" (page 12) to increase your energy, productivity, and focus. Add it to your to-do list so you don't forget.
3. **Give the checklist** on page 21 to members of all your organization's teams, and have them evaluate their peers.
4. **Plan a meeting** with board and organizational leaders to answer the questions and follow the steps outlined in "Do You Have the Right People on Your Board?" (page 8).
5. **Share the suggestions for ways to feel awe** ("That's Awesome!" on page 26) with others, and plan to do one of the bonding exercises together.

What Can You Learn from E-Mail Lists?

Is it a good idea to sign up for a variety of e-mail lists?

Q I've recently heard several nonprofit leaders say that they subscribe to a wide variety of nonprofit e-mail lists. They say that doing so has helped them in raising funds. Do you think this is a good idea? If so, how do I decide what lists to sign up for?

A I agree that it's a good practice to sign up for other nonprofits' e-mail lists. Personally, I love seeing what other organizations are up to, which is why I subscribe to a lot of lists. It's a way to find out about the latest trends in e-mail fundraising and to spark my own creativity. I keep an inspiration file of great ideas from other nonprofits that I can adapt for my own fundraising efforts.

As far as which lists to choose, it's useful to sign up for a wide range – not only good ones but also ones that aren't so well done. With the bad ones, you'll be able to see immediately why some messages work and others don't, and you'll realize what you need to avoid doing. You'll find that the good ones send brief, clear, to-the-point messages that make it plain how you can help – and make it easy to do so. It's simple to sign up for their e-mails, blogs, social media, and online newsletters. It's also easy to manage your preferences and to unsubscribe. The not-so-good ones tend to use a lot of unnecessary words that bury their message. It's often surprisingly hard to see how to donate to their cause – something that should be at the forefront of every message.

Here's a list of nonprofit e-mail lists I currently subscribe to. They're among the best out there and should fire up your own imagination, resourcefulness, and fundraising success:

Human Rights Watch	hrw.org
Unicef USA Fund	unicefusa.org
Oxfam America	oxfamamerica.org
Union Gospel Mission Vancouver	ugm.ca
Smithsonian National Zoo	nationalzoo.si.edu
The Nature Conservancy	nature.org
Beagle Freedom Project	bfp.org
OpenMedia	openmedia.org
Digital Democracy	digital-democracy.org
Environmental Defense Fund	edf.org
UltraViolet	weareultraviolet.org
Storycenter	storycenter.org

– Vanessa Chase Lockshin, president, The Storytelling Nonprofit, thestorytellingnonprofit.com

Will Purchase of Founder's Books Create Private Inurement?

How can you avoid inurement in the eyes of the IRS?

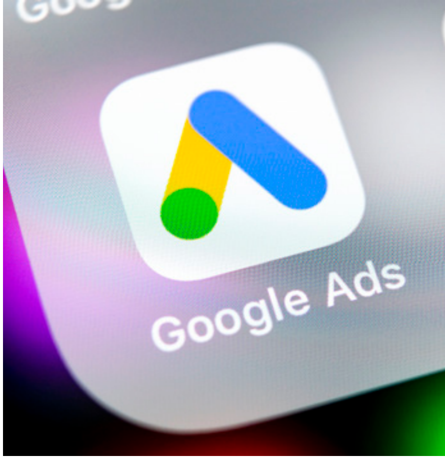
Q I'm the founder of a new 501(c)(3) nonprofit offering classes and services to help people better themselves, in both career and life. I'll be one of a seven-member board. I'll also be the executive director, initially being paid $300/month.

I have written some books over the last 15 years that will help the students succeed, and the board wants to include two of them in the learning programs. My understanding is that as long as the nonprofit buys the books below market value, determines that no equivalent books exist, purchases only what's needed for the actual number of students enrolled, and I myself am not a part of the vote, there should be no "inurement" in the eyes of the IRS. Is that correct?

A You're right to be concerned about the IRS looking for private inurement from a nonprofit purchasing the founder's books. The IRS fought for years with L. Ron Hubbard about his book *Dianetics*, which was the basis for the Church of Scientology. It doesn't sound as though you're in the same position (yet), and I agree that you should treat the purchase as you would any other potential excess benefit transaction. (See "Avoiding the Snares of Intermediate Sanctions," Vol. 14, No. 6, NonprofitWorld.org.) While private inurement isn't exactly the same as an excess benefit, the excess benefit rules were created to give the IRS an intermediate sanction to avoid having to remove the exempt status of the organization because of inurement.

In addition to the points you mention, you also need to consider whether the nonprofit's use of your books will turn you into a best selling author from unrelated purchasers. That could be considered private inurement. But I would worry about that only if it ever seemed to be happening. There are a lot of things you can do to minimize the risk of IRS trouble at that time. In the meantime, you seem to be on the right track.

– Don Kramer, Nonprofit Issues, nonprofitissues.com



Optimize Google Ads to Bring More Traffic to Your Website

Bring your message straight to the people who are searching for nonprofits like yours.

By Patrick Wicker

Running ads that appear in Google search results can be a bonanza for your organization. When people search Google for terms related to your nonprofit's mission, your ads will capture their interest. Clear calls-to-action will improve your ad performance, so think carefully about what your ads ask users to do.

Through the Google for Nonprofits program, organizations may apply for a Google Ad Grant – an in-kind program that awards $10,000 a month of online advertising to qualifying 501(c)(3) organizations to use on the Google Ads advertising platform.

Here, we'll explain what you need to know to run a successful Google Ads campaign.

Before You Start Your Google Ads Campaign

Any monthly Ad Grant "dollars" that go unused won't accumulate, roll over, or be refunded, so getting the most out of your budget is key. Google requires certain qualifications to keep your ads active. So someone on your staff – or an outside marketing firm – will need to keep your Google Ads campaign targeted and current. Google also requires your ads to meet certain performance goals such as clicks and conversions.

Get Website Approval

Your organization's website must be approved by Google's Ad Grants to ensure that your organization is abiding by its rules. Your site must have a description of your organization and mission and describe how donations are used (such as with an annual report). Commercial activity must not be the main purpose of your website. In other words, your site can have ads but only if they're related to your mission. Websites may not host Google AdSense ads or affiliate advertising links.

> "Ads in Google search results can be a bonanza for your organization."

Pick Good Keywords to Target

Google offers a Keyword Planner that can help you choose keywords that are relevant to your mission and your ad's purpose (mightycitizen.com/insights/tools-and-training). Some key lessons:

Use phrases instead of single words. It's easier to target phrases to attract a niche audience. Displaying your ads to people who simply search the word "volunteer," for example, won't work because "volunteer" is a highly competitive keyword and it doesn't distinguish your organization. Many single keywords are prohibited, but some are still allowed. Choose carefully.

Don't plan on bidding on "branded" terms that aren't your own. For example, if your organization recruits volunteers to help senior citizens, you can't bid on "Volunteer at Meals on Wheels" to attract more ad clicks when your organization isn't affiliated with Meals on Wheels. Make sure the keywords accurately reflect your nonprofit's mission in order to be approved.

Be Aware of Spending Caps

As of January 2018, Google eliminated the $2 cap on AdWords smart bidding if you use Google's Maximize Conversions bidding strategy. To take advantage of the Maximize Conversations bidding strategy, you must set up conversion tracking on your website. Keep in mind, the $2 maximum keyword bid still applies to all other bidding methods.

Use Geotargeting & Sitelinks

It's a good idea to use geotargeting (targeting a specific geographic area). Doing so will take your ad dollars further by showing your ad only to people in specific locations. Geotargeting also gives your organization more detailed insights into your demographics, allowing you to adjust your location-based ad bidding. You can target it in a variety of ways: city, state, zip code, and country.

You'll also get more bang for your buck by enabling sitelink extensions (letting a single Google ad take people to many different pages on your site). Sitelink extensions will likely boost your click-through rate (CTR), too.

Keep Building Ads

Don't just create a Google Ads campaign and forget about it. Keep building ads to keep those click-through rates high.

After the first 90 days, Ad Grants accounts must maintain a 5% click-through rate each month *at the account level* (not the individual ad level). If your account falls below that threshold for two consecutive months, your account may be deactivated. Your keyword quality scores have the greatest impact on this statistic, so you should make it a habit to pause or delete keywords that aren't performing well on a regular basis. You can find those low-performing keywords by filtering keywords that have high impressions with zero or minimal clicks within the past month and pause or delete any that fit that criterion.

Google Ad Grants are meant to improve the overall performance of Pay Per Click (PPC) ads placed using the Ad Grants program. The net effect is that you'll be better able to promote action from your audience using innovative advertising tools to reach people where they are.

Patrick Wicker is digital marketing manager at Mighty Citizen (mightycitizen.com). Mighty Citizen transforms mission-driven organizations through branding, marketing, and digital communications. Their team helps nonprofits and foundations increase their impact and revenue by creating deeper connections with their audiences. A complete guide to Google ad grants is available on their website.

Your Website Is the Key

Online giving is the choice for today's donors. It all starts with having the right website to encourage donations. You'll find the advice you need in articles such as these at NonprofitWorld.org:

Simple Tips to Nail Your Online Fundraising (Vol. 38, No. 1)

The Five Biggest Website Mistakes Nonprofits Make – and How to Avoid Them (Vol. 29, No. 5)

Using E-Mail & the Web to Acquire & Cultivate Donors (Vol. 21, No. 1)

The Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Evolution (Vol. 30, No. 6)

Planning for Digital Longevity (Vol. 34, No. 1)

Wow People with Your Digital Material (Vol. 34, No. 2)

Top 10 Things Donors Want from Your Website (Vol. 38, No. 4)

Increase Donations with Google Ad Grants (Vol. 39, No. 3)

How to Measure Online Fundraising Success (Vol. 26, No. 1)

please get in touch...

We would love to hear your response to anything in **Nonprofit World**, your comments about any aspect of the nonprofit sector, and your concerns about your daily work. Please get in touch in any of the following ways:

Drop us a note at: Letters to the Editor, Nonprofit World, P.O. Box 44173, Madison, Wisconsin 53744-4173.

E-mail to: muehrcke@charter.net

Please include your name, organization, address, phone number, and e-mail address. If you'd like your comments to appear anonymously, please let us know. We look forward to hearing from you!

WHAT'S UP ONLINE?

Would you like to discuss some of the issues addressed in ***Nonprofit World*** with other nonprofit professionals? Do you have questions to ask or expertise of your own to share?

Society for Nonprofits is actively engaged on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Find us on your favorite social media platform by visiting **social.snpo.org**

If you have any questions, contact Jason Chmura at jchmura@NonprofitWorld.org

Why on Earth Would a Major Donor Agree to Meet with You?

Here are four easy ways to get that all-important appointment with a major-gift prospect.

By Gail Perry

Don't you just love asking potential donors for appointments? Or do you hate it?

Sometimes you want to ask current donors to move from giving a little to giving much more. At other times, you want to contact a philanthropist who hasn't yet given to your organization. Either way, you know you need to meet to make the ask. And that means, first of all, getting an appointment.

If you dislike this step in the major-gift process, you're not alone. People often tell me that trying to get an appointment can be the worst part of fundraising. Folks say they feel pushy and inauthentic. Or presumptuous ("Why would they want to meet with little old me?")

Four Easy Ways to Approach a Prospect

Listen, my friend. Your cause is too urgent for you to hold back. So let's reframe this step and make it easy – even seamless – for you. Here are four easy ways to approach a potential donor. And two of them are even suggestions for approaching a totally *cold* major-donor prospect. (Yes, you can!)

1. If you happen to run into your prospect, ask for a quick visit.

You run into your donor at the grocery store, the golf course, the coffee shop, or an organizational event. You say,

> *"I've been thinking of calling you. I have an idea I'd like to run by you."*

Why would your donor agree to meet? The answer could be for one, some, or all of the following reasons.

She is curious about your idea.

She loves your cause.

Her experience is that you're a charming, nice person to spend time with.

> Your cause is too urgent for you to hold back.

She's flattered that you want her perspective.

She has been thinking about donating more money to your cause, and this gives her the opportunity.

2. Call your donor on the phone.

You say,

> *"You've been a donor all this time. I'd love to know why you're interested in our organization. I'd love to hear your story."*

Why would your donor agree to meet?

He is thrilled and amazed that someone even noticed that he's been donating for a long time.

He would love to share his story.

Your organization has deeply impacted his life.

He feels a personal connection to your cause.

3. You meet a major-gift prospect, for the first time, at one of your organization's events.

You say,

> *"Mr. Jones, it's so nice to meet you! How did you come to be here at our event?"*
>
> You generate a conversation. You find out his hot buttons about your cause. Then you ask,
>
> *"Would you like to have an insider's tour of our organization and see the work we do in your area of interest?"*

Why would this donor agree to meet?

He wants to hear more about his area of interest.

He's grateful for your invitation and excited to learn more about your organization.

He has a perspective that he wants to share with you.

4. You meet a cold prospect who is a mega philanthropist in your community.

And you say,

> *"Ms. Fletcher, thank you for all you do for our community. My organization is xxxxx nonprofit. We're thinking about launching a new initiative to do xxxxx in our community. I would so appreciate it if I could run it by you and get your perspective. I would really value your opinion."*

Why would this donor agree to meet?

You flattered her by asking for her input and advice.

> Let them think that *they* are going to be doing the talking.

She does have some opinions and a perspective she wants to share with you.

She may be curious about what you're up to.

As a community leader, she likes to know what's going on!

It's All about Perspective

All these scenarios can work for you if you have the right attitude. Think positive! If you want to change the world, you need a lot of people on your bandwagon.

Treat your prospects politely, let them set up the time and place for the meeting, and let them think that *they* are going to be doing the talking. (And when you get together, *do* listen more than you talk.) Consider the situation from their perspective.

Remember this above all: Your prospect may be wildly passionate about your cause – and you don't know it! How can you find out? You have to ask.

More Relationship-Forging Tips

Boost donor relations with these articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

Debunking the Myth of Bill Gates: Finding Major Donors (Vol. 16, No. 2)

How to Foster a Positive Funding Relationship (Vol. 32, No. 4)

What's the Best Way to Recognize a Major Donor? (Vol. 31, No. 2)

Top 10 Trends: How Major Donors Are Changing & What to Do about It (Vol. 31, No. 4)

How to Impress the Wired Wealthy (Vol. 30, No. 3)

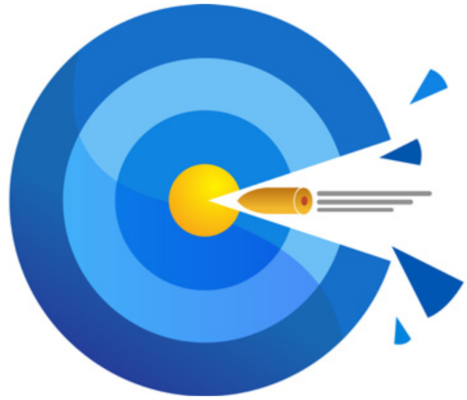
Turning the Direct Ask into Gold (Vol. 30, No. 1)

The Word You Hear Most Often in Fundraising (Vol. 28, No. 4)

Gail Perry Group inspires nonprofits around the world with cutting-edge fundraising strategies and new tools to make fundraising more successful and more fun. Find smart strategies to help you raise tons of money at gailperrygroup.com.

Do You Have the Right People on Your Board?

Is there a magic bullet for finding the right board members?



By Terrie Temkin

To recruit the "right" people for your board, you must take a strategic approach. You must be intentional every step of the way. Begin by developing a plan. Do so by following the steps below. Then work the plan. While it will take time and energy, the result will be worth it.

Follow These Steps to Create a Board Recruitment Plan

Determine the organization's overall needs in the coming years if it is to realize its vision. Meet with organizational and board leaders to answer these questions:

What does the organization want to accomplish?

What big projects does the organization intend to undertake?

Define the skill sets, characteristics, and connections required to successfully meet these needs.

Determine the ideal composition of the board, based on the organization's needs and goals.

Specify your expectations of those you will recruit to the board. For example:

- ***passion*** for the mission
- ***attendance*** at meetings
- ***financial*** commitment
- ***involvement*** on committees.

Brainstorm the types of people who meet those expectations and who might want to take on these jobs.

Create job descriptions for the board positions you want to fill.

Figure out where you'll most likely find the type of people you're looking for. Examples: chambers of commerce, universities, hospitals, houses of worship, clubs.

Decide how you can best connect with the types of people you've identified. For instance:

Ask people you know in the field to introduce you.

Do research through social media.

Invite people to a special event for potential board directors only.

Hold a "blue ribbon committee" – a small group of community leaders who get together for a single meeting to suggest names of candidates.*

Think about what you can offer the people who agree to serve. Be sure you can answer the question, "Why is your organization worthy of their support?"

Consider ways to cultivate these individuals so they'll be responsive to your invitation.

Consider how you'll approach "the ask" to ensure that those who accept your invitation meet the responsibility at the level you require.

**Thanks to Jan Masaoka for the concept of a blue ribbon committee.*

Terrie Temkin, Ph.D. (terriet@nonprofitmanagementsolutions.com) is the founding principal of CoreStrategies for Nonprofits, Inc. and editor of You and Your Nonprofit Board: Advice and Practical Tips from the Field's Top Practitioners, Researchers and Provocateurs *(charitychannel.com).*

Build the Board of Your Dreams

Find ways to create your ideal board in every issue of *Nonprofit World.* Begin your search with articles such as these at NonprofitWorld.org.

Defining Your Board's Needs (Vol. 26, No. 1)

Reciprocal Board Agreements: What Do Board Members Give? What Do They Receive in Return? (Vol. 28, No. 1)

Where Can You Find Good Board Members? (Vol. 17, No. 5)

Secrets to Creating a Board that Makes Cash Gifts (Vol. 37, No. 2)

Eight Questions Every Board Member Needs to Answer (Vol. 22, No. 3)

Board Committees: Essential Elements of Success (Vol. 34, No. 3)

Bring a List of Names to the Next Meeting (Vol. 24, No. 5)

Build a Team, Not Just a Board (Vol. 31, No. 3)

How Your Board Members Can Raise Funds without Asking for a Dime (Vol. 19, No. 6)

Board Diversity: Your Biggest Challenge (Vol. 27, No. 3)

35 Questions that Will Transform Your Board (Vol. 24, No. 3)

Tools for Leading with Presence

These communication tools hold the keys to effective leadership.

Reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

Leading with Presence. *By Antonie T. Knoppers, Milly Obdeijn, & Steffen R. Giessner. Emerald Publishing Ltd, emeraldgrouppublishing.com. 305 pages. Softcover.*

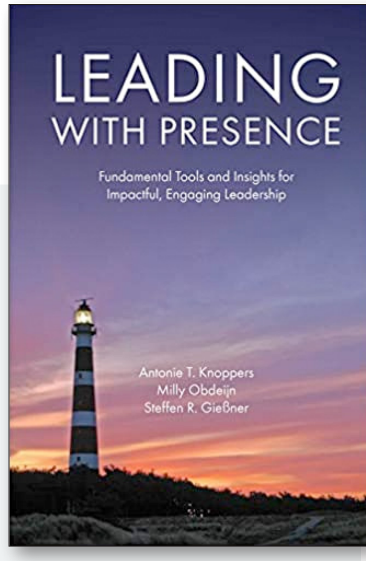
There's more to communication, of course, than just words. How you present your words is as important – or sometimes more important – than the words themselves. Voice – volume, register, tempo, emphasis, and clarity – and body language – posture, movement, and gestures – play key roles in how presentations are received. These are elements of "presence" in any setting.

Presence can reinforce your verbal message when it coincides with your words. But you can damage your intentions when your presence contradicts what you say. The authors of *Leading with Presence* combine research in psychology, performance, and body movement to explain how your presence is affected by your voice, gesture, and posture. They explore how to match these attributes with your message, and they offer exercises and warm-ups you can use to strengthen your presence. Authenticity is a core component in presence, so the exercises are intended to make your presentations more engaging and to replace any harmful habits that could undermine your messages.

Presence is critical to all your presentations – conferences, classrooms, team meetings, or interviews. Your presence includes more than how you look and sound. Being aware of your own habits will help you connect with audiences large and small.

Terrence Fernsler, MNPL, PhD, has been a nonprofit professional for over 35 years. He is currently an instructor and advisor in the James Madison University Nonprofit Studies minor program, an instructor in the Nonprofit Management and Leadership for the Master of Public Administration in the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University program, and principal of Sustainable Nonprofit Leadership Strategies.

> "You can damage your intentions when your presence contradicts what you say."



Prepare for Great Interactions

The tips in *Leading with Presence* will help you create effective presence in every interaction. A few examples:

Ground yourself. When you're grounded, you're centered, balanced, and in the moment, with your feet planted firmly against the ground. Your breathing is deep, and you're present in your body.

Practice good posture – not slumped or too stiff.

Make sure your verbal and non-verbal languages are always in alignment.

Give people your full attention, and connect with them by making good eye contact.

Understand the power of storytelling, and always have relevant stories at the ready to make your points.

Four Tips to Build Trust through Writing

When communicating about change, every word matters.

By Julie Miller

"I wish I could rewind the clock and do it differently," Bob, the executive director of a mid-sized nonprofit, lamented to his friend Rick. A week earlier he had sent out an internal memo saying that, unfortunately, things were about to change due to emerging government regulations.

The day after the memo was sent, worst-case scenarios were circulating. The gossip mill was in full swing. Fear quickly spread. Within 48 hours, Bob was inundated with e-mails from concerned workers, board members, vendors, and clients.

"What could you have done differently? You shared the information you had at the time," Rick said.

"Rick, I should have waited till I had more information, or I should have at least been upfront with people that I was in the dark myself."

"I know, but you couldn't have anticipated that people would react so badly."

"I underestimated the importance of doing more than sharing facts. My memo wasn't very warm and friendly," Bob admitted.

For two decades, Bob had focused on building a team of loyal, trusting people. Now, with one poorly written document, he was surprised to see how quickly that trust could erode.

"What genuine emotion can you share?"

> "Your every word will be scrutinized."

Bob made some blunders. You don't have to repeat his mistakes. As a leader, you can maintain trust and reduce people's stress, worry, and confusion by following these four writing tips:

1. Choose every word carefully.

This is critical. When writing about an upcoming change, realize that your every word will be scrutinized.

Bob's blunder: He used "unfortunately" in his memo. Employees obsessed about the use of this word, convinced it reflected some dire meaning.

Do This: Before you press "Send," ask yourself, "Could my reader derive some unintended meaning from my wording?" If you're not sure, get a second opinion (or third or fourth!)

2. Make a human connection.

It's been said that people will forget what you said, but they'll never forget how you make them feel. When change is imminent, people look to leaders for reassurance and empathy. Conveying a human connection through writing fosters trust in leadership.

Bob's blunder: Bob's memo came across as uncaring to employees since it lacked any expression of emotion.

Do This: Before you press "Send," ask yourself, "What expression of genuine emotion could I share with my readers to let them know I care?"

3. Be transparent.

When you don't have the full information to share, be willing to honesty explain your constraints. If you don't show transparency, you risk breaching the reader's trust. In your writing, what you leave unsaid can be as important as what you say.

Bob's blunder: Bob's memo left many questions unanswered. Bob failed to share with his readers that he was limited by the lack of information he was receiving from his source, the federal government.

Do This: Before you press "Send," ask yourself, "Have I articulated why I can't provide more detail? Have I made it clear that I'll share facts as soon as I have them – and have I given an idea of when that will be?"

4. Say it again.

To ensure your communication is received and understood, aim to increase the frequency of writing to employees about important issues. Repetition is key. Find ways to communicate important messages in different ways on a frequent basis.

Bob's blunder: Bob waited a few weeks between his first and second written communication about the changes, and this caused concern to spread wildly.

Do This: Before you press "Send," ask yourself, "Have I communicated how I'll continue to keep people updated?"

How you communicate in writing during times of change can leave a lasting impression on those within your organization and beyond. Your people are watching not just what you do but how you do it. By following these four tips, you can leave a lasting legacy within your organization – one that you won't look back on and regret.

Dr. Julie Miller is president of Business Writing that Counts (businesswritingthatcounts.com). Dr. Julie and her team are focused on helping organizations by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of employees' writing.

> "If you're not sure, get a second opinion (or third or fourth!)"

The Only Constant Is Change

The inevitability of change means you need to constantly inform people of what's to come. Be sure you handle change – and communication about change – in a way that inspires and motivates people. Here are some articles to help (NonprofitWorld.org):

Dealing with Change in A VUCA World (Vol. 37, No. 4)

How to Tap into Purpose to Motivate People (Vol. 38, No. 2)

End Excuses, Add Action (Vol. 38, No. 2)

Overcome People's Resistance with These Steps (Vol. 38, No. 3)

Communication Keys that Will Change the Way You Lead (Vol. 14, No. 2)

Top Tips to Lift Your Leadership (Vol. 38, No. 2)

Dealing with Viruses & Other Disruptions (Vol. 38, No. 2)

How to Turn Gossip into a Productivity Tool (Vol. 36, No. 1)

Organizational Culture: It's in the Walk, Not Just the Talk (Vol. 29, No. 6)

Change Is All Around You: How Can You Tame It? (Vol. 38, No. 1)

How Jargon Undermines Communication (Vol. 27, No. 2)

Bring Yourself Fully to Your Nonprofit Role

Use these research-based tips to connect to what matters most.

By Marcy Heim

Where does the day go? The week? The year? It's a common lament. If only we could slow down time!

The speed of time is directly related to our energy. Our energy level is enhanced when we're fully present in our time. Being present means you do the following:

- **Stop thinking about an upcoming prospect appointment** while you absentmindedly listen to your colleague talk.
- **Stop half-listening to your major giver** as you think about the paperwork you need to catch up on after this day of calls.
- **Don't glance continuously at your phone** from the second you wake up.
- **Don't waste your time asking "What if?"** (What if that big gift doesn't come in? What if the tax laws change? What if I'm not ready?)

When you check your cellphone first thing in the morning, you've just given away control of your time and energy to someone else. You're reacting to somebody else's priority, not your own. You've surrendered (and perhaps squandered) your emotional energy and time to someone else's comment, question, crisis, or rant.

Mind research shows that constantly reacting and splitting your attention makes you feel like time is racing. It's also exhausting.

Perhaps it's time to be more aware of what you're doing with your gifts of time and energy. Are you using them intentionally for the benefit of your organization, your relationships, and your well-being? Or do you need to make some different choices? These research-based suggestions will increase your positive energy:

1. Focus on what you want. What do you focus on most? Whatever it is, you bring more of it into your life. Are you spending time being anxious, worried, and negative? Then that's the kind of energy you'll attract. Are you focusing on affirming, visionary thoughts? If so, you'll create positive energy.

> "Unsubscribe" and "Unfriend" buttons exist for a reason.

2. Use your words wisely. Do you want your words to support, encourage, hurt, attack, educate, promote your opinion, bring you sympathy, make you look noble? You choose, but notice which remarks and conversations leave you feeling energized and which leave you drained. If all your donors viewed your words, would it foster giving, trusting relationships?

3. Clear out "clutter." Excess anything is clutter. Its mere presence drains your energy from your greatest priorities. Turn off the phone and enjoy the space. Schedule specific times to manage your e-mail and organize the piles on your desk.

4. Throw kindness around like confetti. Only 25% of Americans believe we're living in a kind society. Our brains are wired to get a hit of positive energy when we're helpful and compassionate. Regardless of how others are behaving, you can be kind and polite.

A big piece of building rapport with major donors is being likable. They'll experience less anxiety over major money decisions if they like and trust you. Kindness is a value that transcends borders, faith, race, and age. (See theworldkindnessmovement.org for more.)

5. Purge your inputs. "Unsubscribe" and "Unfriend" buttons exist for a reason. Use them.

6. Listen. Even when you're not entirely interested, don't agree, or have a million things to do, don't let yourself get distracted while you listen. Full attention is the best gift you can give another human being.

7. Give thanks. Being thankful turns your focus on what's right in your life. That spawns positive energy and creates even more to be thankful for.

8. Energy generates energy. Walk, clap, dance, wiggle throughout your day. Breathe in and think, "I am breathing in good energy."

9. Bring yourself fully to your work role each day. All of us choose how we'll show up each day. Terry Chadsey, ED of the Center for Courage and Renewal, suggests sharing something positive that captured your attention as a way to slow down and connect with your role.

> “What are you doing with your gifts of time and energy?”

10. Be proactive. Stephen Covey defines being proactive as “being responsible for our own lives.” Our behavior is a function of our decisions, not our conditions. Proactive people focus on things they can do something about. The nature of their energy in doing this is positive, enlarging, and magnifying.

Take time to think about what will push you off center, deflect you from your purpose, or get you riled up. Stay away from energy drainers.

There will be objections, concerns, and differences between your donors, you, and your organization. You and your givers benefit most when you can leap over the drama and blame. Then you can get down to helping people use their giving investments to create solutions that will lead to a good world. Invest in joy!

Marcy Heim, CFRE, PLCC, has over 35 years of fundraising and management success. Her workshops, keynotes, and coaching packages produce dramatic fundraising and team-satisfaction results. Sign up for a complimentary subscription of Artful Action, *her ezine, at marcyheim.com.*

The Nature of Time

For more on putting your time and energy to good use, see these articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

Take Back Your Time (Vol. 31, No. 2)

The Real Secret: Moving Beyond the Law of Attraction (Vol. 29, No. 4)

Six Ways to Get Out of a Rut (Vol. 24, No. 4)

The Ben Franklin Program for Focusing on What’s Important (Vol. 29, No. 1)

Never Enough Time (Vol. 26, No. 5)

Why Clutter Hurts Your Leadership & What to Do About It (Vol. 36, No. 1)

Think, Dream, and Do (Vol. 28, No. 6)

Embrace Mindfulness as a Leadership Practice (Vol. 36, No. 2)

Do You Know Where Your Goals Are? (Vol. 26, No. 5)

The Deeper Way to Onboard New Employees

New employees offer a wealth of opportunity. Don't let this chance go by.

By Cordell Riley

The days and weeks after employees start at your organization are a time of unique opportunity. Can you teach them new systems and skills? Of course you can. But have you considered all the other important goals you can reach during the onboarding period? To name just a few, you can:

- **encourage** adoption of your culture
- **get new hires to understand,** promote, and believe in your mission
- **sow the seeds** for outstanding customer service
- **cultivate the kind of spirit and energy** that customers will value and love
- **hear creative ideas** from new employees who have a fresh perspective
- **build retention** by proving that your organization is a great place to work
- **set up communication channels** with new hires that will improve operations throughout your organization.

Those are only a few of the opportunities you have. But how can you take advantage of these few precious weeks? Here are approaches that work:

Create an Onboarding & Training System

Many organizations just wing it. Still others see onboarding as little more than filling out forms, setting up e-mail accounts, and showing new employees to their desks. In both cases, people start their jobs without a deeper understanding of what's expected of them. As a result, they make mistakes that quickly become costly habits. Correcting those habits later costs far more time and energy than preventing them in the first place.

> "Set up onboarding that functions as high-level training."

Many problems can be avoided if you set up a structured onboarding system that functions as high-level training. For example:

On their first morning, new hires can watch videos and learn about your organization, its mission, and its values.

After lunch, they can be trained in the basic skills their jobs demand, watch training videos, engage in work simulations, and work alongside current employees.

After day one, they should attend regular follow-ups to address problems and reinforce basic concepts and skills.

The operative strategy is to define ahead of time the behaviors you need, and then create a concise mini-curriculum that tracks to them.

Set Up Mentoring Relationships

Genuine mentoring relationships between new hires and successful current employees will pay great dividends. Remember, mentors' goals shouldn't be to get new hires to

imitate what they do or even to adhere to organizational systems. Their purpose is to discover what new employees would like to accomplish at your organization and to help them reach those goals. In short, mentoring isn't about the mentors or strictly about your organization but about the employees who are being mentored.

> "Great training is a money-maker, not a cost."

Find Ways to De-layer & Free Up Communications

Invite new employees to brainstorming sessions where their new ideas are collected, posted, discussed – and put into action when appropriate. Also consider setting up de-layered systems – like virtual suggestion boxes on your organization's intranet – where employees at all levels can present suggestions.

Don't Skimp on Training

One thing's for certain: If you're only handing out employee handbooks, you're missing out on some great opportunities. Spending time and money to deliver great training is a money-maker, not a cost.

It pays to customize training, as much as possible, for each employee. Even "standardized" training can be enriched by creating individualized training elements for each new hire. You can evaluate people's skills and address them directly, for example, or help employees overcome anxiety about performing certain parts of their new jobs. Investing just a little time to give training extra value can go a long way toward getting new employees up to speed faster.

Reinforce Your Mission, Vision, & Strategic Plan

The onboarding period is a highly effective time to share the big picture about your organization and to get employees to buy into your most important goals and priorities. Instead of waiting for employees to discover these critical priorities, start talking about them right after new hires come on board.

Consider Creating a Career Plan for All New Employees

You won't want to do this for seasonal or short-term employees. But for employees you'd like to stay with you for the long term, consider sitting down with each of them to create individual career-development plans that spell out what they need to do to be promoted within your organization. You could say, for example, that your organization will provide technical training to help them move into their desired career path. Millennials, especially, are more likely to stay with your organization for the long term if they know the ropes and understand what it takes to build a long-term relationship with your organization.

> "Invite new employees to brainstorming sessions."

Evaluate Whether You're Acting Like a Great Employer

Take the time to benchmark your organization's climate, benefits, work-life balance, and other factors against other organizations. Unless you have the best of everything, you can't expect employees to commit their hearts and minds to working with you for the long term.

You see, retention starts with you, not with your employees. Unless you commit your efforts to becoming an "employer of choice" – an organization that people talk about and would love to work for – you're damaging your operations and, ultimately, your success.

Cordell Riley is a keynote speaker and the owner and president of Tortal Training (tortal.net), a leading training development company he founded in Charlotte, North Carolina. Tortal uses strategic engagement methodologies and specializes in developing mobile training platforms for organizations with distributed workforces.

Get Everybody on the Same Page

Be sure everyone's on board by reading articles like these from NonprofitWorld.org:

Why Feedback Is the Key to Your Success (Vol. 35, No. 3)

The Power of the Reverse "Thank You": Influencing Others Made Easier (Vol. 40, No. 4)

A Path to Stronger Programs, Greater Engagement, *and* Less Burnout? (Vol. 36, No. 1)

How to Present Training Workshops that Educate and Inspire (Vol. 29, No. 4)

Manage for Today, Mentor for Tomorrow (Vol. 23, No. 5) No. 4)

Why You Absolutely Must Train Millennials (Vol. 37, No. 3)

Grounded Visioning: A Quick Way to Create Shared Visions (Vol. 26, No. 4)

What Type of Language Professional Do You Need?

To choose the right professional, you have to understand your needs.

By Anne Connor

In today's world, you're likely to interact with people who come from different cultures and speak languages other than English. In such cases, it's often useful to engage professionals to smooth communication. For instance:

What if you want to assure that people from other cultures will find your website, your donor letters, and your e-mails easy to understand?

What if an employee requires medical attention on an overseas trip?

What if you're meeting with a potential donor who doesn't speak English?

In cases such as these, who do you call for help? There are three types of language professionals who may be useful to you. Many people blur the lines among these three, so to avoid misconceptions, let's look at the three options:

Three Types of Language Professionals & How They Differ

1. Translators help you with written material, like contracts, letters, brochures, and websites. It's true that there are many automated translation tools available, but remember that nuanced language is best translated by a human being. For instance, if you'd like to create a professional-looking brochure or web page in other languages for new target markets, the last thing you should do is trust that task to an automated translation tool instead of its flesh-and-blood counterpart.

2. Interpreters help you with spoken language in business, legal, and medical settings. Say a potential donor wants to visit your facilities. What a great impression you would make if you hired an interpreter to accompany both of you on a guided tour so that all questions and answers could be handled in each person's dominant language, putting everyone at ease. Hiring the same interpreter for a preliminary or follow-up telephone or video-conference meeting would go that extra mile toward sealing the deal and keeping this donor happy for years to come.

You may also want to hire interpreters for employee meetings that include limited-English-proficient workers. And if you hold international conferences, you'll want interpreters to ensure that all attendees understand the presenters' messages and are able to ask questions about the presentation's content.

3. Linguists analyze language (including structure, history, and more). They help translators do their jobs by developing and updating the terminology-management software that allows those translators to work more quickly and efficiently, resulting in lower costs and ensuring consistency throughout the entire translated document or website.

What They All Have in Common

One thing that translators, interpreters, and linguists all have in common is that they draw upon their extensive experience to solve linguistic "puzzles." They can be the perfect partners when you're communicating with those from other cultures and want to be sure your message gets through loud and clear.

Anne Connor is a professional translator and an active member of the American Translators Association. The American Translators Association represents over 10,000 translators and interpreters across 91 countries. Along with advancing the translation and interpreting professions, ATA promotes the education and development of language service providers and consumers alike. For more information on ATA or translation and interpreting professionals, visit www.atanet.org.

Make Your Message Ring

To assure that your communication is as fluid as possible, see articles such as these at NonprofitWorld.org:

What the Heck Are You Trying to Say? (Vol. 34, No. 2)

How Jargon Undermines Communication (Vol. 27, No. 2)

Do You Need a Translator? (Vol. 36, No. 1)

How to Fix Communication Breakdowns (Vol. 29, No. 1)

Assess Your Work Style for Better Communication (Vol. 37, No. 4)

Seven Kinds of Listeners & How to Approach Them (Vol. 39, No. 2)

To Make an Impact, Improve Your Non-Verbal Skills (Vol. 38, No. 3)

Cultural Competence: What Does It Mean for You? (Vol. 26, No. 5)

Not Connecting with All Your Audiences? Maybe You're Not Speaking Their Language (Vol. 39, No. 1)

Managers Must Become Multicultural (Vol. 20, No. 6)

We Are Made for Story (Vol. 37, No. 4)

Is Your Website Clouding Your Message? (Vol. 36, No. 3)

The Surprising Science of Meetings

Studies reveal new, more effective ways to design meetings.

By Steven G. Rogelberg

"I wish I could go to more meetings," said no one, ever.

A recent estimate suggests that employees endure a staggering 55 million meetings a day in the United States. Most leaders view poor meetings as an inevitable cost of doing business. The actual cost of meetings is estimated to be $36 billion annually.

Given that financial liability, it's remarkable to learn that over 70% of managers have never been trained on how to lead a meeting. And employees say meetings are the number-one time-waster at work.

You may be the problem.

One survey found that while 79% managers said that meetings *they* initiated were very productive, only 56% said the same about meetings initiated by others. This blindspot is where meeting problems start.

As meeting leader, you're air traffic controller & host.

People often experience meetings as interruptions, taking them away from their "real work." But they're more amenable if they see the meeting as effective. You can improve meeting effectiveness by following these rules:

- **Express** gratitude for attendees' time.
- **State** the rules of engagement. (For example, "Keep your comments succinct.")
- **Craft** a purposeful opening statement.
- **Assign** roles for participants.
- **Provide** snacks.

Is this meeting necessary?

Before holding a meeting, answer:

- **Why** are we meeting?
- **What** are the goals?

If you can't answer these questions, cancel the meeting – or postpone it till you've found the answers.

Consider Parkinson's Law, the 48-minute meeting, and "the huddle."

Parkinson's Law says that "work expands to fill the time available for its completion." Reasonable time pressure (i.e., making meetings shorter) encourages better thinking. When you schedule a meeting for one hour, it's likely to last at least 60 minutes. It's better to tell people it will be a "48-minute meeting" or something else that's not an hour.

Hold regular "team huddles" where your team meets informally. Hold these huddles somewhere other than a meeting room.

Standing meetings are likely to deliver better, quicker results than sitting ones.

Keep it small.

Amazon uses the "two-pizza rule" for calculating attendees: If you need more than two pizzas to feed everyone, the meeting is too large. As meeting size increases, so does dysfunction.

Limit attendance to just the *essential* stakeholders. You can ask those outside the meeting for their input before the meeting as well as providing minutes afterwards – a technique that keeps non-attendees in the loop while letting them do their work (which studies show they prefer anyway).

Use silence to prevent groupthink.

Research shows that "brainwriting" – having individuals quietly reflect and write down their ideas before sharing them out loud – yields more creative thinking than brainstorming does.

Remote meetings are unavoidable, but they can be made better.

When people feel like they can blend into the background, they can fall subject to social loafing – a human tendency to

"This blindspot is where meeting problems start."

reduce effort when working in a collective. Set these ground rules to promote engagement in remote meetings:

- **Ban** mute buttons when reasonable so that individuals will choose to meet in a quiet place.
- **Ask** remote participants to identify themselves before speaking.
- **Use** video conference when possible.

What's the agenda?

Studies show that having an agenda in and of itself is a minor predictor of attendees' perceptions of meeting effectiveness. Make it an *effective* agenda by doing the following:

Plan the meeting thoughtfully, as you would an event: Be intentional.

Put the most pressing issues at the beginning.

Conduct a "pre-mortem" to imagine meeting challenges ahead of time.

Reach out to attendees before the meeting to ask for agenda items, and assign ownership among attendees. Doing so will increase engagement and a sense of purpose.

Give the gift of time to attendees. Estimate your meeting time in advance but if the meeting is done early, it's done. Don't fill the time just because it's allotted on your calendar.

Steven G. Rogelberg, Ph.D., is the author of The Surprising Science of Meetings: How You Can Lead Your Team to Peak Performance *(Oxford University Press, global.oup.com), which is drawn from extensive studies, analytics, and survey interviews. The book's Tools section includes everything you need to put meeting science into practice, including sample online surveys, meeting checklists, agenda templates, and style guidelines.*

Five Meeting Science Musts

1. Start with a steward mindset.

2. Include the smallest number of people possible.

3. Schedule for the shortest time reasonable, given goals. Don't just default to one hour.

4. Be unconventional at times.

5. As a leader, evaluate your meetings periodically.

"Over 70% of managers haven't been trained on how to lead a meeting."

More on Meetings, Menus, & Managing Your Time

For more details on the concepts presented here, explore these articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

Powerful New Communication Tool for Your Meetings: Engaging Both Sides of Your Brain (Vol. 26, No. 3)

When It Comes to Time Management, It's All about Energy (Vol. 36, No. 4)

The Ben Franklin Program for Focusing on What's Important (Vol. 29, No. 1)

Serve This, Not That: Beware the Consequences of Serving the Wrong Thing (Vol. 38, No. 1)

Twelve Ways to Liven Up Your Board Meetings – And Your Board (Vol. 36, No. 3)

How to Run the Perfect Board Meeting (Vol. 36, No. 4)

The Two Missing Parts of Team-Building

The "before" and "after" of forming a team are as important as the "during."

By Stephen Rafe

There's no better way to solve problems than to harness the wisdom of a team. But too many people overlook two crucial parts of the team-building process – the meeting *before* the first team meeting and the evaluation *after* the team is under way. Here's how to close these gaps.

Coordinate a Get-Together

1. Choose the people you want to participate in the team, and meet with them. Discuss the team concept with them. You don't want to ask their "permission" to form a team, since that's a given. However, you do want to get them talking about the value of building a team and how they believe the group can be designed. In leading that discussion, take a "what's-in-it-for-you" approach in asking for their input. Having them participate in the process up front helps prevent them from becoming part of a problem later on.

Trust is a key element in a group's success. A trusting relationship comes far more readily when participants make the rules and agree with them ahead of time. Trust also comes more quickly when people get to know each other before working together.

Team Up for Best Results

For more problem-solving and team-building tips, see these articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

What Makes a Great Team? (Vol. 32, No. 6)

Increase Work-Group Productivity with Concrescent Conversation (Vol. 26, No. 3)

Find the Glue that Binds Your Team (Vol. 40, No. 4)

Eight Steps to Managing Conflict (Vol. 20, No. 4)

The Key to Building Productive Teams (Vol. 21, No. 4)

Assess Your Work Style for Better Communication (Vol. 37, No. 4)

Zen and the Art of Team Building (Vol. 20, No. 1)

Earn People's Loyalty: Here's How (Vol. 17, No. 5)

What Kind of Team Leader Are You? (Vol. 32, No. 5)

Ten Steps to Excellence (Vol. 15, No. 2)

The Five Biggest Teamwork Ills & How to Avoid Them (Vol. 40, No. 2)

As the coordinator for this initial meeting, you're the role model for how the group should interact in the future. Listen supportively and answer any procedural questions.

2. Listen to people's input. Be prepared to fill boards and flip charts with their ideas. Don't tell them anything about what *you* think. Ask questions and have them summarize the salient points in each of their answers. Advocate the K-I-S-S formula – which here means Keep It Short and Simple. Use questions such as these:

Why are we all here?

What is the core problem or opportunity we've come together to try to address?

What are our interests in this issue?

What are the components of the problem? How do we know?

What negatives have we experienced or might we experience in addressing this matter?

What positives have we experienced or might we experience?

How can we best address each component's pros and cons in small discussion groups?

What would success look like?

What should the group hope to accomplish in the time available? How should we focus, and what should we focus on?

What contributions should each group member expect to make, or be expected to make?

What behaviors are desirable, acceptable, and unacceptable? What constitutes a "good" contribution or a "bad" one?

What should the outcome ("product") be from our group? How will it be shared with other groups?

How shall we develop all these thoughts into a summary report of this meeting?

3. Have the group appoint a "scribe" and a "facilitator" for their future meetings. The scribe will keep notes. The facilitator will keep the flow going (using simplified brainstorming rules). Explain that at their first meeting on their own, the team should choose a team leader. Their choice of team leader should depend upon the desired outcome and how they will measure "success." But, no matter what the team's goals are, their leader should be someone with high moral and ethical standards. And coupled with that, the leader should be honest, fair, open, conscientious, and – ultimately – decisive.

Follow Up & Evaluate

It's important to keep tabs on how the team is doing and measure its success. To do so, have team members evaluate their own performance each time they complete a project.

Use the "Team Peer Evaluation" form below. Then use the results to celebrate what's going well and tweak whatever needs adjustment. Such ongoing measurement will allow the team to continually improve.

Stephen Rafe (stephen@rapportcommunications.net), president of Rapport Communications, has provided behavior-based counseling and coaching in all aspects of spoken, written, and non-verbal communications for more than three decades. He is the author of several books on communication, including How to Be Prepared to Think on Your Feet *(harperbusiness.com).*

Measure Your Team's Performance

Peer evaluations can have great benefits when used well. Every team should have a "relief valve" built into the appraisal system so members can't "fail" a colleague without cause. The following evaluation form may be helpful.

Team Peer Evaluation

Read the eight benchmarks below. Then, using the scale provided, evaluate the performance of each member of your team on the project. All responses will be kept confidential. When you have completed this form, return it to your team leader, who will tabulate the results and incorporate the findings into the final analysis of the team's success.

5 = very much 4 = reasonably 3 = some 2 = not much 1 = not at all

1. Met the team's deadlines for this project
2. Contributed as expected to the collecting of information for this project
3. Contributed as expected to the analysis of the information collected for this project
4. Contributed as expected to the interpretation/reporting of the information collected for this project
5. Contributed as expected to the writing for this project
6. Contributed to the editing for this project
7. Demonstrated work quality for this project
8. Contributed to the overall success of the project

Person's Name **Enter your numerical rating after each question.**

(Example) John Jones 1 4, 2 4, 3 3, 4 2, 5 1, 6 4, 7 3, 8 3

__________ 1 ____, 2 ____, 3 ____, 4 ____, 5 ____, 6 ____, 7 ____, 8 ____

__________ 1 ____, 2 ____, 3 ____, 4 ____, 5 ____, 6 ____, 7 ____, 8 ____

__________ 1 ____, 2 ____, 3 ____, 4 ____, 5 ____, 6 ____, 7 ____, 8 ____

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Comments: ______________________________

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Manage Change: These Are the Keys

Follow these steps to make a successful change.

By Allison Quigney

Your nonprofit has a steady drive to improve the world. But have you considered that *internal* change can be just as important? Adapting your organization to meet the challenges of the day is essential to maximize your impact. If you remain static in your processes, goals, and technologies, you become stagnant — and less likely to achieve your goals.

So, how can you implement effective change strategies? While there's no single, one-size-fits-all roadmap for transformation, there are several keys that work across organizations of all sizes and missions. Below, find five strategies to help your nonprofit become the most effective organization it can be.

Decide if there's a need for change. To start, conduct an audit. Take a close look at how and why your nonprofit operates, what your goals are, and whether you're meeting them. During this process, you may find that your programming is out of date. You may find your staff are hindered by inefficient or poor processes. You may find your stakeholders – the communities you serve – have changed. It may also be discovered that your donor base's interests or preferences have shifted. These reasons – and many others – are all evidence that your nonprofit is in need of change management.

> "Change is impossible without buy-in."

Instill a sense of urgency. Once you've identified the need for change, it's essential not to waste time. According to the "bible" of organizational change, *Leading Change* by John Kotter (kotterinc.com), the first step in ensuring successful organizational

"Change should come *from* employees, not happen *to* them."

change is developing a sense of urgency. Nonprofit leaders must build within their community a collective sense that change is a top priority – and perhaps even an existential one. Otherwise, the complicated process of change management may be pushed to the back burner, where it can't be realized.

Change is impossible without buy-in, and buy-in requires a cultural shift within the organization. Make sure the people that surround you, from senior leadership to the newest intern, not only understand why change is necessary, but are eager and enthusiastic to make it a reality.

Gather feedback – lots of it. Once your organization is abuzz with a communal sense of urgency, it's time to begin the work of change management in earnest. It's time to determine what needs to change, why, and how – and you can determine much of this through feedback. Feedback about change should come from all levels of your organization, not just a small group of senior leaders at the top rung of the ladder. Further, feedback should also come from *outside* the organization: Solicit critical and candid feedback from your program participants, partner organizations, clients, and others in your larger orbit. Together, these varied inputs will paint a holistic picture of how your organization should evolve.

Tackle poor processes head on. With feedback in hand, you'll have a clearer picture of which processes, goals, and technologies are working – and which aren't. Roll up your sleeves and get to work removing or reforming your biggest barriers: inefficient workstreams, siloed work, poor organizational hierarchies, and so forth. But no need to go about this blindly, or in a scattershot way. Change management implementation requires a strategic workflow as well as clear and actionable metrics to ensure that the change is actually having the desired effect.

Check regularly to ensure your new goals, processes, and technologies are working as hoped. And if they're not, don't hesitate to course correct. Simply consider it a learning experience, and then move on to a new approach. Use the process of change to develop new and improved processes for your organization. Focus on efficiency, collective strategies, and inclusivity as you create and implement changes.

Create time for reflection and consensus building. Throughout the change management process, it's normal for some team members to feel reluctant. The solution isn't to charge ahead and ignore their apprehension. That will do more damage than good, since successful change requires buy-in and should come *from* employees, not happen *to* them. Instead, when you encounter resistance, take the time to slow down the implementation process, reflect, and rebuild consensus. These delays will be well worth it in the long run, as internal opposition to change will almost certainly doom the initiative.

Change management is a challenging process, but it's an essential one. With these strategies in hand, you and your team can begin the important work of updating and evolving your organization – and, as a result, doing even more good in the world.

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Coming Up

Watch for the next article in this series, "Take a Stakeholder-Centric Approach to Research" in our next issue.

"Feedback should also come from outside."

Looking for Change

Find more articles about managing change, conquering resistance, and boosting results at NonprofitWorld.org:

The Best Leaders Are Change Agents (Vol. 34, No. 1)

End Excuses, Add Action (Vol. 38, No. 2)

Overcome People's Resistance with These Steps (Vol. 38, No. 3)

The Promise and Pitfalls of Organizational Change (Vol. 28, No. 4)

Why Feedback Is the Key to Your Success (Vol. 35, No. 3)

Do You Know Where Your Goals Are? (Vol. 26, No. 5)

Change Is All Around You: How Can You Tame It? (Vol. 38, No. 1)

Build a Winning Workplace Culture (Vol. 39, No. 3)

Surveys Provide Crucial Feedback (Vol. 22, No. 5)

Match Your Change Strategy to Your Organization's Maturity (Vol. 21, No. 5)

Professor or Poet?

The way you share your vision is as important as the vision itself. To get your point across, it's better to talk like a poet than a professor, as the authors of *Leading with Vision* (leadingwithvisionbook.com) make plain. Professors are prone to lecturing, while poets show rather than tell, creating visionary images that captivate the emotions. Here are some ways to connect emotionally with others:

Use metaphors and other descriptive words to paint a mental picture that will bring your vision to life.

Be authentic. No one will follow a leader they don't believe in.

Show passion. Role-modeling behavior starts with your enthusiasm and drive. If you're engaged, others will be.

Speak to your specific audience rather than creating one general message. Tell your story to each group or person as if you're saying it for the first time, and make it relevant to them.

Be clear about expectations. How do you want people to act as a result of your words? Why?

Show vulnerability. Use words such as "I can't do it without you."

Be supportive. If you're asking people to change, let them know you understand it will be hard, and tell them how you'll help them along the way.

Focus on the goal. That's what vision is – a clear visual goal that people can see, grasp hold of, and rally around.

> "It's better to talk like a poet than a professor."

Awaken & Engage Your Employees

David Harder calls it "the trance" or "the great disengagement." It's the reason productivity in organizations is at an all-time low. In *The Workplace Engagement Solution* (careerpress.com), he explains that few of today's workers have the life skills to cope with the escalating pace of change. The solution is to teach them how to get a handle on change – and how to change themselves. To create an engagement-driven culture, help your employees do the following (and be sure to do these things yourself):

1. Embrace self-inquiry. Develop an enthusiasm for growth and the skills for self-change throughout your organization. To thrive, Harder tells us, people must continually "reinvent, learn, unlearn, and relearn." They won't be motivated to do so unless they have a strong, personalized sense of mission, vision, and purpose.

2. Draw healthy attention to yourself. In today's fast-moving world, it's vital to make sure others see you. Open up so that everyone can see who you are. This transparency extends to disclosing what you don't know. Admitting your inadequacies will help you form the most concrete of bonds.

3. Build effective support systems. Of all the things you can do for yourself and others in your organization, the most crucial is to create highly diverse support systems. Showing people how to build such systems of support within and outside your organization will transform your culture.

> "You must continually 'reinvent, learn, unlearn, and relearn.'"

Use the following tools to put those three steps into action:

- **Encourage mentoring, one of the purest forms of high-quality support.** Mentors shine a valuable light on our blind spots and help us build personal as well as shared visions.
- **Teach people to ask questions** not only of others but of themselves. For example: "What do I most want to accomplish today? In order to do so, what help do I need? What is today's ideal blend of tactical and strategic work? How can I best take care of myself and others today?" When employees ask questions, they become more connected to their stakeholders, to each other, and to their own needs.
- **Pursue personal change,** and help others do the same, through formal and informal training, education, and continuous learning.
- **If someone seems disengaged, support that person** with tact and kindness. It's everyone's responsibility to help an unhappy colleague regain connectedness to the team and stakeholders.
- **Craft effective systems** for giving and receiving feedback.

User-Friendly Finances for Boards

Board members know their organization must be financially healthy to do the most good. But many people find financial statements hard to decipher.

That's why Melisa Galasso, an experienced CPA, wrote *Money Matters for Nonprofits* (rivergrovebooks.com). She details how board members can harness the power of financial statements by understanding basic accounting.

Nonprofit board members must understand the financials that tell the story of the organization's liquidity, cash flow, and operations, she explains. They also must be able to evaluate the organization using ratio and trend analysis. After reading this book, board members will be equipped to:

- **Identify the fiduciary responsibilities** of nonprofit board members.
- **Understand the financial statements** required for nonprofits.
- **Pinpoint the elements** of each financial statement.
- **Calculate key ratios** to evaluate the health of the organization.
- **Build beneficial relationships** with the nonprofit's auditor.
- **Recall practical examples** of best practices for board members.

In addition, the book will help board members embrace a two-way communication with their CPA. Included is a list of questions to facilitate such a dialogue.

This groundbreaking book uses stories, real-world examples, and an easy-to-understand style to take the mystery out of nonprofit accounting. It will help turn financial statements from a confusing collection of numbers into a powerful tool.

Connect with People in Ways You Never Thought Possible

Untold damage is done in the workplace because people haven't learned the skill of listening. And it truly is a skill that can be taught – and that *should* be taught throughout every organization. *How to Be a World-Class Listener* (lulu.com) provides some guidelines:

Make no judgments. Accept what the other person says with an open mind. If you're in a true listening mode, all your attention will be on the other person, not on yourself, your thoughts, or your reactions. In this mode, the judgments in your mind will disappear.

Be conscious of your body language. Crossed arms, a scowling face, or other closed-off stances aren't conducive to true listening. Relax your body and face, lean toward the other person, uncross your arms, and make eye contact.

Ask questions based on what the other person says. Don't choose questions because of what interests you; let questions flow from the statements made. Don't editorialize. Don't comment. Just ask questions. It's not about you; it's about the other person.

Ask open-ended questions, which give people the chance to express themselves fully. Closed-ended questions, which can be answered with a yes or no, limit communication. Ask, "What was the experience like for you?" rather than "Was it a good experience?"

Don't fill the silence. Of course you know better than to interrupt while another person is sharing, but do you also take care not to jump in too quickly with questions? When there's a pause in the conversation and you remain still and quiet, that's when the other person is likely to express the most meaningful things – the thoughts and feelings that will help you understand at the deepest level.

Complete before moving on. When someone is sharing an experience, idea, or emotion with you, don't move to another topic until you sense the person is finished. You can ask, "Are you finished talking about that?" or "Is there something you'd like to add?" Or simply trust your intuition. When you're completely tuned in to the other person, your instincts will rarely let you down.

One Reason for Slow Change

As they grow, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) work hard to gain authority with states and corporations. While INGOs purport to represent civil society, they often fall into the authority trap – maintaining the status quo in order to cultivate influence with policy makers. In doing so, they limit what they can accomplish.

In *The Authority Trap* (cornellpress.cornell.edu), Sarah Stroup and Wendy Wong give examples of how INGOs have fallen into this trap. INGOs tend to use one of three strategies: collaboration, competition, or condemnation. Leading INGOs, to protect their authority, increasingly select collaboration, and pull their coalitions along with them. Doing so dilutes outcomes.

The authors believe that INGOs and their allies can escape the authority trap with intentionality, and they offer suggestions for how to do so. Although they focus their study on INGOs, the strategies are just as relevant to national U.S. nonprofit organizations. By raising the issue, the authors are encouraging organizations to look at their roles in compromising social progress. This makes the book essential reading for any organization striving for meaningful change.

–reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

Coach People to Success

It's easy to ignore your best workers because they don't need much attention. Instead of focusing on them, you probably spend most of your time fixing problems. But that approach is backward, according to Trevor Throness. Tending to your best performers "is the single most important task you have as a leader," he says in *The Power of People Skills* (careerpress.com). After all, they're the foundation for your organization's success.

He sets out a number of valuable ideas that will boost morale and performance:

Get to know your high-performing workers. Show them love. Give them perks. Challenge them. Provide opportunities to grow. Praise them publicly and privately. Write them notes; give them awards. Offer autonomy and flexibility, trusting them to make their own decisions. Invite them to lunch, and solicit their opinions. Ask them what their career goals are and how you can facilitate their achievement. Provide them with plenty of personal attention so they don't feel forgotten.

Focus on people's strengths, not their weaknesses. When people discover their natural talents and build skills around them, they'll achieve far more than they ever dreamed they could.

Use different approaches with different generations, because not all age groups are motivated by the same things. Traditionalists (born 1925-1945) are motivated by loyalty to the organization. Baby boomers (1946-1964) tend to care most about their own career advancement. Generation Xers (1965-1985) are most loyal to their managers, while millennials (1986-1999) care most about their coworkers, and gen Zers (born since 1999) will be committed to anyone who takes the initiative to build relationships with them.

Praise in writing; rebuke verbally. Employees can hold on to anything you write and review it for years to come. If it's hurtful, they can nurse that hurt. If it's complimentary, it will add to their feelings of confidence, motivation, and loyalty to your organization.

Always keep in mind your three top priorities as a leader (notice that "fixing problems" isn't one of them): (1) Find the best possible players for your team. (2) Tell them clearly what to do in order to succeed in their roles. (3) Let them know how they're doing, and coach them on a regular basis.

"Not all age groups are motivated by the same things."

Great Leaders Are Strategic Communicators

To fulfill your most essential responsibilities as a leader, you must be able to communicate clearly and strategically. *Communicate Like a Leader* (bkconnection.com) offers practical advice:

Become a translator. That's your real job as a strategic leader. Sift through the metrics and details, then say, "So what this means for you . . . ." Translate the data into a story that explains why that raw information is relevant and important.

Give kudos that count. Make it clear why the person deserves the recognition you're giving. Praise the specific accomplishment, and explain what's outstanding about it. Make the recognition personal and heartfelt.

Share stories that detail how people's work made a difference and contributed to your organization's success.

Use humor and laughter to engage people. Give others permission to laugh at your mistakes without malice. Practice a little self-deprecating humor by telling funny stories on yourself. Be sure humor is used to strengthen relationships, never to hurt or demean others.

> "Translate data into a story."

Give your employees what they want most. According to several studies, there's one thing that almost all people want most in their leader – straight feedback. As often as possible, let people know how they're measuring up. Be liberal with supportive comments and encouragement, but always be honest, authentic, and helpful with your feedback.

Embrace Dynamic Discord

Most people like to surround themselves with those who are just like them. That may be comfortable, but it doesn't lead to a creative, productive environment. In *The Innovation Code* (bkconnection.com), Jeff and Staney DeGraff describe how you can form a team of people with different worldviews for maximum effectiveness – and manage the discord that's sure to result:

Answer this question: What are your greatest weaknesses? Then hire people who are strong in those areas. You want to surround yourself with people unlike you, who can push you to create things you can't on your own.

Hire people with different approaches to innovation. The DeGraffs describe four types: the Artist, who loves radical innovation; the Engineer, who constantly improves everything; the Athlete, who competes to develop the best innovation; and the Sage, who innovates through collaboration. These approaches "come together to produce a positive tension, a constructive conflict" that promotes sustainable growth. You end up with innovation that's visionary yet practical, revolutionary yet manageable, highly ambitious but without high risk.

> "Surround yourself with people unlike you."

Resist the urge to make peace. Conflict is inevitable when you put a variety of perspectives together – and that's a good thing. When an argument ensues, don't rush to stop it. It's useful to dwell in the conflict as long as it's clear that the point isn't to destroy the other side. Rather, the point is to understand everyone's different perspectives and put those views together to come up with something new.

Establish a shared purpose. Make sure everyone understands the problem you're trying to solve, the goal you're trying to reach. Ask people to state the goal in their own words. A common understanding will inspire them to work through the conflict to find a solution.

Make conflict normative. The goal is to create a long-term, sustainable environment of constructive conflict. Bring in experts on positive deviance to teach people the ground rules. They must learn not to take disagreements personally. Everyone must respond to different perspectives with empathy, patience, and respect for the other person's viewpoint.

Construct hybrid solutions. The point of constructive discord is to create a hybrid solution – one you couldn't have foreseen and one that takes you to a higher place than any individual solution. Use the conflict to raise your project to another level.

That's Awesome!

How often are you struck with awe? If you're like most people, it's probably been a while. But most likely you can remember exactly what you found awesome and how it felt.

Awe is memorable and often transformative. Studies link feelings of awe to:

- **clearer, more flexible thinking** and problem solving
- **better physical and emotional health** (less stress, anxiety, depression, heart disease, and type-2 diabetes)
- **greater creativity,** curiosity, resilience, kindness, and sense of exploration

- **more connection with** and empathy for those who share in our awesome experience.

"Researchers define awe as the feeling we get in the presence of something larger than ourselves that challenges our usual way of seeing the world," says psychologist Juliana Breines of Greater Good in Action (ggia.berkeley.edu). "A great work of art, a breathtaking vista, a moving speech, the first flowers of spring – these can all evoke awe."

You can bond people into a creative team with awe-inspiring actions such as these:

- **Sing** or listen to music together.
- **Walk** together in nature. Leave your cell phones behind. Practice being fully present and noticing things with fresh eyes, as if you're seeing them for the first time. Something as ordinary as a bird singing or the color of the sky can be transformed into something awesome. Slow down, and use all your senses. In one study, a group who gazed up at towering trees for just one minute reported feelings of awe, a sense of humility, and a greater concern for others, compared to those who looked at a building instead.
- **Visit** an art museum or museum of natural history.
- **Watch** inspiring videos together.
- **Meditate** together, using creative, awe-inspiring visualizations (for example, imagine crashing waves, soaring mountains, or the magnificent, swirling colors of a sunset).

Many such exercises can be done quickly and spontaneously when you sense that people are feeling discouraged or weighed down by the daily grind. Even just a brief moment of awe can stimulate new thinking, lift people up, inspire them, and remind them that the world can be a magical place.

The Six Wise Counselors

In "The Elephant's Child," Kipling pays homage to six wise counselors – Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How. Together, they're a formula for getting the full story, as Joseph Paris tells us in *State of Readiness* (Greenleaf Book Group, gbgpress.com).

Of these six counselors, one is special. The five others – Who, What, When, Where, How – are factual, objective, and straightforward:

What is your goal for the day?

How much time do you think it will take?

When should we get together to discuss it?

Where should we meet?

Who should be part of the meeting?

Those questions are quicky answered. But Why is different:

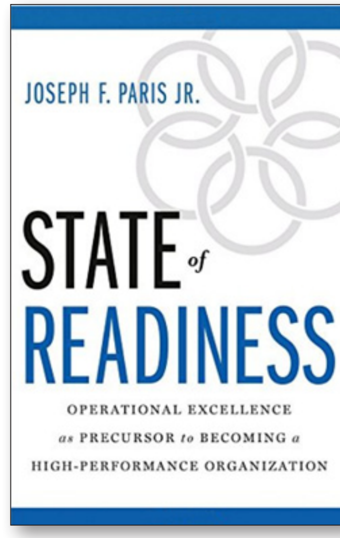
Why are we doing it this way?

Why not look at a new way of doing it?

Why do we need to meet?

Why is that important?

> "It's the word that leads to understanding."



We ask the first five to gain knowledge. But asking Why leads beyond knowledge to understanding.

"To know Why is to know the complete story in context," Paris says. People are unlikely to follow through on your organization's plans if they don't understand why they should. A lack of knowing the answer to Why is the root cause of most failed initiatives.

To communicate effectively, you always must help people understand Why. "Just because" isn't enough reason for someone to believe, commit, and follow. For them to perform at their very best, they have to know Why. "This is why Why is so difficult," Paris says, "and also why Why is so important."

To harness the wisdom of the six counselors, be sure you use them all. Integrate the six types of questions into a holistic approach. And never forget the one that begins with Why.

Beyond the Briefs

To explore issues raised in these briefs in more detail, take a look at these articles (NonprofitWorld.org):

Grounded Visioning: A Quick Way to Create Shared Visions (Vol. 26, No. 4)

Manage for Today, Mentor for Tomorrow (Vol. 23, No. 5)

Do Your Board Members Know Their Fiduciary Responsibilities? (Vol. 33, No. 1)

How to Coach People through Stress: Use Reflective Inquiry for Best Results (Vol. 38, No. 4)

Need a CPA at Little Or No Cost? Five Ways to Find Help (Vol. 28, No. 2)

Why Feedback Is the Key to Your Success (Vol. 35, No. 3)

Find Ways to Innovate – But First Move Past Inertia (Vol. 40, No. 1)

To Make an Impact, Improve Your Non-Verbal Skills (Vol. 38, No. 3)

Be a Better Leader by Being a Careful Listener (Vol. 37, No. 1)