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Nonprofit World

Advancement Through Sharing

When Leaders Stall

What to do when leaders won't make a decision

original art by Sergiy Maidukov

PLUS: Cloud Communication: Keep Connected, Cut Costs, & Achieve Your Goals • Do You Have These Four Crucial Committees? • Two Surprising Ways to Broaden Your Reach Online • Mobile Marketing Can Work for You • Transform a Bad Economy into Long-Term Stability • Why Switch to a Prepaid Card Program? • Seven Steps to Hiring — and Keeping — the Right Person • What If Your Board Takes Its Beef Public?

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The Best Answer to "Why?"

"Learn to love the questions themselves."

Knowledge begins with a question. Sometimes that means querying yourself: What do I need to learn? Where can I find the teachers I need? Sometimes it means questioning authority, history, and the status quo: Why do we do things this way? Is there a better way? (Check out "Why Ask 'Why'?" on page 19.)

It hardly matters what question you ask, as long as you begin with a questing mind rather than from a place of too much certainty.

It never hurts to start with the six questions journalists are taught to answer in every newspaper article: Who? What? When? Where? How? Why?

Another good question to keep in mind is "Who says?" Can you trust the messenger? If you're not sure, then don't embrace the message until it's confirmed by people you can count on. Be especially cautious about ideas floating about on the Internet.

One of the most potent questions you can ask is the seemingly simple, "Huh?" You might be able to say it more elegantly ("Could you clarify that a bit more?" "Sorry, I don't understand." "Tell me more," . . .) but you can't say it any more succinctly.

The very fact that such a word exists is telling. It affirms the importance of clarifying what you've said and what you've heard. (Look over "Harness Your Brain for Good Decisions" on page 19.)

Teams and partnerships provide valuable spaces for asking questions and exploring answers. "Keep Your Team on the Right Path" (page 19) clarifies the importance of asking candid questions in a group environment and hiring people with a spirit of curiosity, collaboration, and the courage to dig deep for the right solutions.

Couching ideas in questions is a valuable habit to develop. A good query strips away the surface to get to the core. That's why great thinkers are great questioners.

The right kind of asking can expose faulty logic and untenable beliefs. It can help us counter our prejudices. That's critical, because as much as we may wish it weren't so, the brain is set up to form instant, biased judgments about people who are different from us, as Cordelia Fine explains in *A Mind of Its Own* (cordeliafine.com).

We can unknowingly make decisions based on how a question is phrased, Fine points out. When asked if they're happy with their lives, people report greater satisfaction than those asked if they're unhappy. When asking for feedback, then, pose your questions in the affirmative, not the negative, to avoid skewed results.

Making the best choices means weighing risks, probabilities, and payoffs. "Making a Strategic Decision in the Face of Uncertainty" and "Basic Strategies for Managing Change" (page 18) put these processes into context.

Some questions can be off-putting. Others aren't likely to garner the most effective responses. It's not helpful, for instance, to ask vague questions, controlling questions, more than one question at a time, or questions that call for a one-word or one-phrase response. For examples of the best kinds of questions, see "Six Effective Ways to Ask Questions" on page 20. You may not have the answers right now, but keep asking. (Take a look at "Ask the Bold Questions" on page 20.)

"You don't want a million answers as much as you want a few forever questions," Richard Bach has said. "The questions are diamonds you hold in the light. Study a lifetime and you see different colors from the same jewel."

Or as the poet Rainer Maria Rilke put it: Learn to love the questions themselves, and to "live the questions now."

Questioning leaves open space where your beliefs and plans can breathe and grow. That space is what allows for innovation, inspiration, and insight. For if "Why?" is one of the first questions to ask, the best answer is often "Why not?"

Jill Muehrcke
Jill@NonprofitWorld.org

Four Things to Do Next Monday

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

1. **Check that you have the board structure** detailed in "Do You Have These Four Crucial Committees?" (page 12). If not, ask your board to discuss this article at its next meeting.
2. **Consider expanding your support online** with the tactics explored on page 9.
3. **Be sure you're using all the ways** enumerated on pages 10 and 11 to show appreciation to your donors.
4. **Look over the low-cost ways to show employees they're valued** (page 20), and circle the ones you're willing to try.

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FEATURE STORY

It's a common problem: You can't move forward until the leader makes a decision. The situation can be worse than frustrating: It can derail your organization. Thankfully, there are some proven strategies you can use to address the situation (even if *you're* the leader in question). "When Leaders Stall" (page 4) gets to the root of it.

Original cover art by Sergiy Maidukov, an illustrator based in Kiev, Ukraine. He works for The Boston Globe, Esquire Ukraine, The Calgary Herald, The Architectural Review, The Stranger, Forbes Woman, Chimera, Hot Rum Cow, *and many other magazines.*

ARTICLES

DEPARTMENTS

Unsolicited manuscripts and letters to the editor are welcomed. They should be addressed to: Jill Muehrcke, Editor, *Nonprofit World,* P.O. Box 44173, Madison, WI 53744-4173 or muehrcke@charter.net or Jill@NonprofitWorld.org.

When Leaders Stall

By Stephen C. Rafe

Having trouble getting a leader to make a decision? Don't despair. Here are proven steps to move you forward (even if *you're* the leader in question).

Do you know leaders who sometimes drag their feet, stall a project, bog it down, and drown it in paperwork? Are you mystified by their behavior, confused about how to deal with them, and frustrated in getting things done? If so, you're not alone.

> "If you acquiesce, the organization may lose an opportunity."

There are ways to work with reluctant leaders and help them reach a decision so that you can move forward. First, understand why they're the way they are.

Their Concerns

It's not that decision-making is a time-consuming or overly complex task for them. Their stalling almost always reflects their concern about possibly offending someone or being criticized. They often need others' approval. Thus, they tend to avoid decisions so they won't be judged as having made the wrong move.

Their Behaviors

Quite often, leaders who stall appear cordial but non-committal. For them, comfort may be a higher motivator than accomplishment and success. They justify their behavior by convincing themselves that they're doing "what's best for everybody." Consequently, of course, their indecisiveness and inaction often harm individuals and organizations alike. As a result, what seems good for the majority over the short run is detrimental in the long term.

Their Tactics

When you first discuss problems or new opportunities with reluctant deciders, they'll likely listen to all you have to say and ask questions that encourage your further input. Their faces and body language may seem to indicate agreement. If you discuss the matter further, you may believe you have their support, or even a mandate. In their efforts to be agreeable, they may say such things as "It sounds good to me," "Sure makes sense from here," "Let's see how it goes." These sound like approval statements — marching orders to proceed. To a staller, however, these comments are intended to do nothing more than placate — to postpone a firm decision.

Thus the dialogue may degenerate into details — the purpose of which is to give the staller more time to avoid a decision. If you're not careful, you'll find yourself coming out of such conversations on a mission to gather more information. That, of course, could take days or even weeks. And when you return with whatever the leader requested, you may find yourself on a new search for yet more details involving more people. After all, stallers don't want to shoulder the responsibility themselves.

When those who practice indecisiveness fail to act, the passage of time frequently removes the need to make a decision. Especially when decisions are linked to a timetable, a leader who stalls can get off the hook by doing nothing, while appearing to be caring and supportive. Soon, time weakens everyone's recollections of what happened. Nothing dire seems to happen, so nobody realizes that, by doing nothing, the organization is dying rather than growing and thriving.

Possible Outcome

Consequently, you may find that things haven't changed. If you try to act on what you believe was a decision, reluctant leaders may appear annoyed. And since "getting along with others" — affiliation — is important in any organization, other affiliators may become annoyed with you, too, if they're aware of your efforts to press the issue. As a result, either nothing happens or you find your follow-through efforts stifled by further questions, minor criticisms, and perhaps even objections.

Who's Involved

If reluctant decision-makers puzzle and frustrate you, chances are you're an achiever — someone who wants to get things done and likes quick results. The odds are also good that you 're younger than the leader who stalls. Achievers usually are.

Your dilemma becomes finding a way to overcome the blockade without creating resentment. It's easy for an achievement-motivated person to get caught in this trap. You know that if you acquiesce, the organization may lose an opportunity. But you don't know how to move ahead without alienating people.

Before long, the opportunity may be lost. If you're not careful, you may find yourself shouldering the blame for not "getting back sooner." Stallers sometimes have a way of turning things like this around to serve their needs to appease others. Soon your exasperation can lead to rancor. Others may even begin to portray you as the villain for both your attitude and for not getting a job done.

Steps to Take

Since making a commitment is troublesome for reluctant leaders, here are some steps you can take to deal with them constructively:

- **Build a consensus of support from others** before asking for a decision. Even then, recognize that stallers (appeasers) in public may back away from positions they've agreed to privately.
- **Deal from facts.** Emotions — theirs and their concern for others' — frequently prevail in stallers. So help them address concrete details.
- **Give them some choices** but not too many. The fewer choices, the better. Help them rule out the least desirable alternatives before asking them for a final decision.
- **Show why a specific decision** is best. Have data to back it up.
- **Read their body language** and voice tones carefully. Stallers often shift moods rapidly when they feel pressed. If you see a change in posture, hear a shift in voice, or detect any transition in attitude, move both of you back to an area of comfort. Frustrated stallers can cause everyone to suffer.
- **Ask — but courteously.** "Is there a problem here that I may be missing? Can you help me out?" Or, "I know our organization would like to do what's right for everyone here. What's the best way for us to make this happen?" If you feel that won't work, try this: "I understand everyone wants to make the right decision. So what can we do in this case to move this forward?"
- **Probe for more information.** Keep asking for specifics. When leaders say, "I'm not sure it's such a good idea," ask what part they're not sure of. Don't prompt them: Let them tell you, precisely, the cause for their uncertainty. Help them get to the root of their indecision by asking for whatever information you feel is missing.
- **Give feedback.** When you believe you've managed to get a clear and firm decision, restate it and ask whether you understand correctly.
- **Present them with firm plans** and solid timetables in writing. Seek their written approval (even if you can only get them to initial the document).
- **Provide reassurance.** Commitment-averse leaders often need to be reminded and assured that they've done the right thing by making a decision — any decision. Frequent reassurances as you move forward will help keep their actions from unraveling.

What to Do Next

Is any of this fair, justified, or even worth the effort? Perhaps, and perhaps not. Only your sense of commitment to your organization's success can determine this.

When you get tired of too many non-decisions, lost opportunities, and the like, you can always risk appealing to higher authorities. You could even quit and look for another job elsewhere.

However, the problem of ineffective leadership exists in almost all nonprofit organizations today. So, before you leave, consider whether staying and working through this process might be in everyone's best interests. Doing so will sharpen your negotiating skills, help your organization achieve success, and maybe even ensure the future of your organization.

Stephen C. Rafe (stephen@rapportcommunications.net) is president of Rapport Communications (rapportcommunications.net), a consulting and coaching firm specializing in behavior-based communication (written and spoken), which he founded in 1986. Author of three HarperBusiness books on presentations and interviews, he has held executive positions in the nonprofit sector.

Moving Onward

For more on leadership, decision-making, and relationship-building, see these articles from the Society for Nonprofits' Library at www.NonprofitWorld.org/members:

How to Reach Agreement in Your Organization (Vol. 28, No. 2)

Taking Action to Manage Change (Vol. 29, No. 2)

Counteract Stress to Make the Best Decisions (Vol. 28, No. 1)

Leading from Feeling: Coaching Tools for Interpersonal & Organizational Excellence (Vol. 27, No. 1)

How Do Effective Nonprofit Leaders Communicate? (Vol. 13, No. 1)

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

Be a Better Leader by Becoming a Better Listener (Vol. 28, No. 2)

Stand Tall in the Storm: Three Strategies for Coping with Crisis (Vol. 27, No. 6)

Smart and Fast Are Not Enough: The Need for Better EQ (Vol. 29, No 1)

Cloud Communication: Keep Connected Cut Costs & Achieve Your Goals

By Mike Pugh

It's not just a way to do more with less. It's a connector and relationship-builder.

Molly Pinney, founder of the nonprofit Global Autism Project, faced a tricky dilemma: The very success and growth she and her team had worked so hard to achieve made it nearly impossible for them to stay connected.

> "You can quickly scale back down, removing services you no longer need."

With the rapid growth of her New York-based foundation, Molly found herself spending 60% of her time abroad training teachers and therapists to provide care to autistic children. Her organization was succeeding! But her demanding global schedule, which didn't fit the traditional 9-5 workday model, made it harder to keep connected to donors, partners, and staff. And contrary to the public's misconception about the term "nonprofit," Molly's organization — like yours — can't run on well wishes alone. (If only!) Molly needed a way to keep in contact with her team but didn't have the budget for a large enterprise telecommunication system.

Molly's research led her to cloud communications — Web-based, lower-cost alternatives to various communication services like phone and fax. No more expensive long-distance landline phone charges or international mobile roaming rates. No more costly analog phone and fax lines. Now Molly and her team stay connected 24/7 with "virtual" phone and fax systems, which allow them to do everything they used to do with their old telecommunication services — more, actually — anytime, from anywhere.

Just one example: With Molly's travel itinerary — Ghana, Peru, and Kenya — she can't always find a conveniently located fax machine.

> "You can grow a "virtual" staff composed of the most talented workers."

And she regularly needs to review, sign, and send important documents. The solution? Molly uses an online fax service, which lets her send, receive, edit, and sign faxes by e-mail.

If your organization is facing tightened budgets — or if you're simply growing quickly, like Molly's team, and need to expand your infrastructure to keep everyone connected — there are a number of ways cloud communication solutions can help. Here are a few examples:

Go Wherever You're Needed Without Missing a Thing

Like Molly Pinney, you might be most valuable to your organization when you're at industry events, talking with donors, networking, training volunteers — not behind your desk. But can you afford to be away from your office? What about all of that, you know, *work*? Cloud storage lets you store and access important documents online, so you can work whenever and wherever the need. If your staff is always bringing you documents to review, sign, and fax, use an online fax service (Molly uses eFax®) — and do it all from anywhere, using any WiFi device. Yep, even your mobile phone.

Hire the Best Staff Wherever They Are

Until recently, staffing your organization meant finding the best-qualified local people and setting them up with (expensive) digs in

> "You might be most valuable to your organization when you're not behind your desk."

your offices. Not anymore. Thanks to the Internet, mobile technology, and cloud communication services, you can grow a "virtual" staff composed of the most talented workers *anywhere*. A virtual phone service like eVoice® (Molly's choice), with professional greetings, toll-free numbers, and advanced call routing (even to mobile phones) means you can build a seamless staff that can communicate anytime and present a professional image to your donors, partners, clients, and the public no matter where they are — your headquarters, remote offices, or even from home.

Use the Cloud to Raise More Funds

One great cloud-based fundraising technique that an innovative nonprofit can borrow from the for-profit world is e-mail marketing. The right cloud-based e-mail-marketing program lets you easily design custom newsletters and other messages for your e-mail lists. You can segment your lists by geography, date of the most recent donation, or by other criteria — so you can design the right messages for the right people. You can also review reports of how your recipients are responding to your message — online, from anywhere — to help you improve the next one. It's fundraising without the guesswork.

Pay As You Go

That's right — many cloud communication services offer a pay-as-you-go model, usually month-to-month and without long-term contracts or set-up fees. This can be the ideal solution if your organization needs to staff up for a short-term initiative — such as a fundraising period or political campaign — and you can just as quickly scale back down, removing those cloud services you no longer need.

If your nonprofit is trying to do more with less in today's tough economy, cloud communications might be the innovative answer you've been looking for.

Mike Pugh (mike.pugh@j2.com) is vice president of marketing at j2 Global Inc. (www.j2global.com), a Los Angeles-based provider of cloud-based communications services including eFax® and eVoice®.

To the Cloud and Beyond

For more innovative communication strategies, including cloud technology, see these articles at www.NonprofitWorld.org/members:

Ten Reasons to Move to the Cloud (Vol. 32, No. 3)

Is It Time to Consider New Ways to Communicate? (Vol. 25, No. 4)

Reach New Supporters with Multichannel Tools (Vol. 29, No. 2)

"Are You Ready for the Cloud? Use This Checklist to Be Sure" in "Briefs" (Vol. 31, No. 6)

Coming Up in *Nonprofit World*

- **What's the True Value of Your Services?**
- **How to Fit into the News**
- **The Mission Myth**
- **Finding Income Where You Least Expect It**
- **Board Problems Reflected in Training Requests**
- **Four Steps to Manage Vendors & Reduce Fraud**
- **What Kind of Team Leader Are You?**
- **Create a Donation Page that Rocks**
- **What to Do If Your Grant Isn't Approved**
- **Do Your Board Members Know Their Fiduciary Responsibilities?**

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 or Jill@NonprofitWorld.org

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!

Also, we hope you'll join the discussion on the Nonprofit World Discussion Forum. Just go to www.NonprofitWorld.org, sign in as a member, and click on the Nonprofit Forum link.

What If Your Board Takes Its Beef Public? Here's a helpful exercise for any board.

Q I'm on the local board of an established and respected national organization. Our executive director was recently fired by the national administration, and the community is quite upset.

There have been some emergency meetings regarding her firing. A couple of the board members are hosting those meetings and, to put it bluntly, adding fuel to the fire in the community.

Our board president is concerned that their actions don't mesh with their duties as board members, particularly since we have an obligation to the national organization. Do you have any thoughts?

A I would have to agree with your board president and — from the tone of your question — you. Board members often form close personal relationships with the executive director. It's easy to let those friendships override an objective evaluation of that person's competency or the organization's leadership needs, especially if the board felt the person was doing a good job.

But it's one thing to question the decision internally and quite another to go public. To participate in community meetings — let alone convene them — undermines respect for the organization and can do great harm if stakeholders lose trust in the organization.

Be Sure the Board Is Fulfilling Its Responsibilities

Board members have a responsibility to provide a unified front. The board president has every right — make that a responsibility — to ask board members to circle the wagons behind the national decision.

That everyone was so taken aback makes me question a number of things:

- Were the board members aware of the executive director's job description?
- Did they know she reported to the national organization?
- Did members have a say in the measures of success to which she was held?
- Did the national organization suggest to the board that this woman be given coaching to minimize the need for termination? Or, at the very least, did the national organization give fair warning about their concerns?

> "Board members have a responsibility to provide a unified front."

> "Encourage people to talk about their shock and outrage."

- Was any local evaluation done? If so, was it done by a limited few and not shared with the board as a whole?
- Or, was this a case of malfeasance?

Answers to these questions will suggest actions for moving forward with the next executive director and the national administration.

Put Your Crisis Plan into Motion

For now, you should implement your organization's crisis communication plan to stem the damage done in the community. (See "How to Handle a Crisis," *Nonprofit World,* Vol. 12, No. 1, NonprofitWorld.org/members.)

Your organization's spokesperson might make a statement recognizing the beloved status of the recently-terminated executive director but assuring the public that this change is going to be positive for the community and explaining why. At the same time, the spokesperson should emphasize the value of rallying behind the organization during the transition.

I might suggest that the board chair call a board meeting solely for the purpose of letting board members air their anger and begin the healing process. At that meeting, encourage people to talk about their shock and outrage.

Then, urge them to talk about entering a new chapter in the organization's life. What do board members want to see as they move forward? How can they help ensure the next executive director is successful?

Ask Your Board to Perform This Exercise

Here's a helpful exercise for your board members to try:

1. **Make a list of the executive's successes** and good qualities.
2. **List qualities that had a negative impact** on the organization.
3. **Save the list of good qualities** in the record of the organization's history.
4. **Burn, bury, or flush away** the list of negatives.

Such an exercise allows the group to relegate the past to the past and ready itself to move forward unencumbered. S

Terrie Temkin, Ph.D., Founding Principal
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Two Surprising Ways to Broaden Your Reach Online

Are you taking advantage of these creative ways to gain new supporters?

By Kelley Jarrett

Online marketing can take many forms. E-mail, Web design, user-generated content, and paid searches are all ways to improve your nonprofit's reach and increase Web traffic. What you may not have considered, though, is how you can actually impact viral sharing and improve interactive marketing on your Web site.

Here are two real solutions that will deliver results.

Social Media: Action Sharing

By now, your organization probably has a Facebook page and a Twitter account. Perhaps you've even started to feed live posts and tweets to your organization's home page. That's certainly the first step toward social media nirvana.

What you might be missing is the chance to let your constituents and Web site visitors do your marketing for you. We call this action sharing.

You have actions you want people to take on your site — donate, volunteer, register for an event, join, make an inquiry, or sign up for your e-newsletter. So how can these already-engaged users help you spread the word and acquire new supporters? By sharing the action they just took with their network of friends and followers! Free (and viral) marketing instigated by you, genius!

The easiest option for action sharing is to create a simple hyperlink using an action-sharing code that lets users tweet an action. For a bigger impact, you can work with an agency to create a lightbox that pops up on screen with a visual custom message when a user takes action on your site.

Nothing.org incorporated this type of visual element into its social marketing to let users share information about their donations with their friends. That simple step greatly broadened the organization's reach. It helped Nothing.org's leaders find new supporters they otherwise didn't have access to.

Interactive Maps

How are you highlighting your organization's impact online? One of the biggest opportunities to engage users is to help them see and feel your mission's impact by interacting with your Web site.

Schools are a no-brainer for interactive apps — Kent's Hill School has done a beautiful job showcasing their campus through a virtual map that lets Web users scroll over the buildings, click to see photos, and virtually experience what campus life is like.

However, schools aren't the only organizations jumping on board with this new marketing technology. Kids and Cars have created a national map that highlights incidents where children have been injured around vehicles. It's designed to educate the public and show the impact its awareness campaigns have on reducing the number of vehicle-related injuries to children. Food banks are another type of organization beginning to utilize maps — to show meals served in the community and the volume of people they've helped with the support they receive. Is there a way you can use interactive maps to engage your supporters and prospects?

Kelley Jarrett is marketing manager, Guide Creative, of Blackbaud (blackbaud.com), a leading global provider of nonprofit software and solutions.

Where to Find More

For more ways to gain new supporters online, see these articles from the Society for Nonprofits' Library at www.NonprofitWorld.org/members:

Harnessing the Internet to Raise Funds (Vol. 31, No. 2)

What's All the Fuss about ROI? (Vol. 32, No. 2)

Online Strategies for Year-End Fundraising (Vol. 31, No. 3)

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

The Best Marketers Money Can't Buy (Vol. 32, No. 3)

How to Foster a Positive Relationship with Corporate (and Other) Donors

Receiving support is just the beginning. Here's how to create a long-lasting relationship.

By Marlynne Powell

At a fundraising workshop several years ago, someone asked, "What would cause a corporate donor to discontinue funding a nonprofit?" The speaker, an expert on corporate relations, replied, "Forget to say thank you."

Communicating gratitude after receiving corporate support is just as important as the proposal itself. The same is true for grants, individual donors, and all other types of funding.

Why? Because it's this expression of appreciation that your supporters will remember when it's time to renew funding.

Sending a thank-you letter is important. But by itself, it may not be enough.

What corporate funders will most appreciate is for you to spread the word about them. Tell the community how valuable their support is. Convey them as true partners in charitable work. Here are seven ways to achieve this goal:

> "Communicating gratitude is just as important as the proposal itself."

1. ANNUAL REPORT

Your annual report is an unparalleled opportunity to acknowledge your supporters. Include a section dedicated to donors. Mail those donors copies of the report before you send it to the public or post it on your Web site. It's a simple but powerful gesture that won't go unnoticed.

2. PRINT NEWSLETTER

Even if you have an e-newsletter, there's still great value in mailing printed copies to community members. Consider sending printed newsletters at least quarterly. Include information about the progress of your funded programs. List donors, and provide information about them to keep their names associated with your organization.

3. INTERNET-BASED E-NEWSLETTER

Use your print newsletter and your e-newsletter in different ways. Your e-newsletter can be more informational than journalistic. You can send it out through a listserv as often as you wish. It's a great way to communicate gratitude for funding immediately on receipt.

4. DONATION ACKNOWLEDGMENT CARDS

Nothing shows appreciation better than a professionally designed card or certificate stating the funder's name and the project they funded. While a letter is an initial "thank you," it can't be framed or encased for display as effectively as a donor recognition card or certificate.

5. EVENT SIGNAGE

Consider adding a contributor's logo or name to any signs or promotional items involved with a project. Suppose, for example, that you're hosting a read-a-thon. On signs throughout schools promoting the event, add the names and logos of all businesses donating money or books.

> "A letter can't be framed as effectively as a certificate."

More Ways to Communicate Gratitude & Cement Bonds

See these and other fundraising articles from the Society for Nonprofits' Library at www.NonprofitWorld.org/members:

How to Energize Your Thank-You Letter (Vol. 26, No. 2)

Relationship Marketing: Guaranteeing the Future (Vol. 14, No. 5)

33 Top Tips for Building Donor Bonds (Vol. 26, No. 1)

Making the Business-Nonprofit Partnership a Win-Win (Vol. 22, No. 1)

Deeper Donor Relationships = Increased Contributions (Vol. 26, No. 4)

The Challenge of Sustaining a Grant-Funded Program (Vol. 28, No. 6)

The Care and Nurturing of Corporate Friends (Vol. 14, No. 1)

Also see Learning Institute programs on-line: Resource Development (www.NonprofitWorld.org/LearningInstitute).

6. BANQUETS AND LUNCHEONS

Many organizations host luncheons and banquets to recognize volunteers and other significant people. Invite funders to these events, and acknowledge their support. It's a very useful and well-received way to say "thanks."

7. ONGOING MEDIA COVERAGE

Whenever media sources approach you for a story, be sure to include statements such as "With funding from . . ." or "This program is in partnership with . . ." Such acknowledgment will help publicize your funders, highlight their relationship with you, and solidify their commitment to your organization's success.

Marlynne Powell (mwalkerpowell@wayne.edu or mwpgradmailid@wayne.edu) is a graduate student in the Geography and Urban Planning Department at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. With over 10 years of nonprofit experience, she intends to use her master's degree to further the efforts of community and economic development within the nonprofit and public sectors.

creative fundraising ideas

Throw a Party with a Purpose

What's known as a "parlor gathering" has all the trappings of a party. There's food and drink, and guests are made to feel at home. Unlike a party, though, the gathering is tightly scripted. After a brief period of socializing, the host (a well-connected person who may be a board member, major donor, or volunteer) requests the guests' attention for a brief program. At the end of the program, pledge cards are distributed, and guests are invited to fill them out.

Look for presenters who are persuasive and able to convey an emotional message. The speakers must be able to answer these key questions: Why this initiative? Why now? Why are you the right people to help carry it out? What will you as a donor receive in return? (For example, "Thanks to you, the world will be different.")

The timeline might look like this:

- Appetizers and drinks, 30 minutes.
- Welcome speech by the host, 2-5 minutes.
- Welcome speech by the CEO, focusing on the organization's history and mission, 2-5 minutes.
- Testimonials by program clients and volunteers, 5 minutes.
- Inspirational talk on "How You Can Be Involved," 5 minutes.
- Host's thank-you to guests, 2-5 minutes.
- Wrap-up in which pledge cards are distributed and collected, 30 minutes.

Be sure to send thank-you notes to everyone involved. Such a party is a cost-effective way to convey your organization's impact and raise an impressive amount of money.

– adapted from *The Nonprofit Fundraising Solution,* www.amacombooks.com

Do You Have These Four Crucial Committees? All well-run nonprofits have four indispensable committees. Here's why they're so important.

By Alyson Ball

No matter the size, age, or type of your organization, there are four board committees you need to have. These committees are essential to your organization's health and your board's well-being.

Share this article with your board members today. Ask them to discuss it at an upcoming board meeting, and consider how these committees can help them do a better job providing oversight and support for your nonprofit.

If your board lacks the expertise to support the activities outlined below, decide which board skills are needed. Start recruiting board members with these skills now.

Board Development Committee

This committee preserves the quality of your board's future. Here are some of the vital things it does:

- **Determine** what skills are required on the board.
- **Recruit** new board members.
- **Orient and educate** board members. While many boards have one-time orientation sessions, better boards continuously educate their members, exposing them to the organization's work and the quality governance they're trying to achieve.

> "Re-invigorate these four committees first."

> "Share this article with your board members today."

- **Communicate** with board members to ensure that they're making productive contributions and that they're satisfied with their board experience.
- **Design, administer, interpret, and follow up** on annual board self-evaluations.

Finance Committee

The finance committee is often the most highly-functioning of all board committees. Its responsibilities include:

- **Support** development of the annual expense budget as well as the longer-term strategic plan.
- **Track** actual vs. budgeted spending.
- **Watch** monthly cash flow.
- **Interpret** the organization's overall financial health on behalf of the board.
- **Review** all the organization's financial policies.

The Audit and Investment Subcommittees help round out the board's involvement in the organization's financial affairs.

Put Your Committees to Good Use

Once you have your four committees up and running, assure their success with these and other *Nonprofit World* articles at www.NonprofitWorld.org.members:

A Board Member Self-Assessment (Vol. 15, No. 6)

Leading and Managing Governance Change (Vol. 26, No. 3)

Can Standing Committees Contribute to High-Impact Governing? (Vol. 25, No. 2)

How to Assess and Improve Your Board's Performance (Vol. 24, No. 1)

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

> "Contrary to popular thinking, even small nonprofits need personnel expertise on their boards."

Fundraising Committee

While the executive director is responsible for the organization's fundraising, well-run organizations engage the support of the board in various aspects of raising funds, such as these:

- **Oversee** development of the annual fundraising plan. Track planned vs. actual results during the year.
- **Encourage, train, and thank** other board members for their involvement in fundraising activities.
- **Explore** potential new fundraising activities as part of the strategic planning process.

Special Events Subcommittees can be established as part of this committee when appropriate.

Personnel Committee

Contrary to popular thinking, even small, young nonprofits need personnel (or human resource) expertise on their boards. Even if there's only one part-time employee working for your nonprofit, this committee helps make sure that all employment laws and regulations are followed. Other responsibilities include:

- **Ensure** that wages and benefits are comparable to compensation in other, similar organizations.
- **Create** employee handbooks and human resource policies.
- **Make certain** that each employee has a current job description, documented annual objectives, and yearly follow-up reviews that include training and career path planning.
- **Help develop** attractive benefits, pension plans, and the like.

Next Steps

If your board doesn't have a well-developed committee structure, start by assigning some board members to these committees now. If your board has committees but they're not particularly effective, re-invigorate these four committees first. They are by far the most important to the effectiveness of your board and the success of your nonprofit.

Alyson Ball (alyson@boardsthatexcel.com) is president of BoardsThatExcel.com and an adjunct faculty member at the University of Virginia School of Continuing and Professional Studies, where she teaches courses to promote best practices for nonprofit organizations and their boards. She holds a Certificate of Nonprofit Management from Duke University, an MBA in Marketing from the Wharton School, and a Bachelor of Arts from Cornell University. She invites you to read about, purchase, and download more complete "how-to" booklets for each of these four board committees at her Web site http://boardsthatexcel.com/the-market/.

look who's reading *Nonprofit World*

Amy Sample Ward
CEO, NTEN: The Nonprofit Technology Network

> **"I never keep *NONPROFIT WORLD* all to myself."**

Amy Sample Ward is the CEO of NTEN: The Nonprofit Technology Network (nten.org), a membership organization that works with a community of over 50,000 nonprofit professionals that use technology to meet their missions. She is an author, facilitator, and trainer focused on leveraging social technologies for social change. In 2013, she co-authored her second book, *Social Change Anytime Everywhere: How to implement online multichannel strategies to spark advocacy, raise money and engage your community* co-authored with Allyson Kapin.

Amy says: What I like most about ***NONPROFIT WORLD*** is the diversity of topics and voices raised. Every issue contains a full spectrum of information — fundraising, marketing, legal considerations, finance, everything we need to run our organization.

Having ***NONPROFIT WORLD*** in the office helps me support my team. We can have conversations that improve how we operate. I always share a variety of the articles with different staff. I never keep ***NONPROFIT WORLD*** all to myself.

At NTEN, we focus on helping nonprofits learn about the ever-changing landscape of technology. We need to know the best places to get information, the leading trends, and who to ask for new ideas. ***NONPROFIT WORLD*** is our go-to for all of that, and more.

NONPROFIT WORLD is a great publication, providing timely research and relevant case studies that are easy to read. It's full of information we can act on right away. The magazine is useful not only to my staff and me but to our community, which benefits from what we learn.

Legal & Nonprofit Partnering to Benefit People with Disabilities

If you haven't yet partnered with a lawyer, it may be time to do so. The benefits can be enormous.

By Bruce S. Lipsey

Many people with disabilities rely on nonprofit organizations to help them secure the benefits they need. Without that assistance, they often give up in the face of all the obstacles, forgo the process entirely, and relinquish their deserved benefits.

Today their need is greater than ever. Courts are increasingly bent against claimants. Back when Ronald Reagan was president, it was clear policy to deny claimants regularly of their benefits. Then Congress stepped in and liberalized the system. But the pendulum has swung back.

Now the average approval rate for claims is under 50%. That means more and more people are being shut out after long waits. It's common for judges to pick and pick at people's credibility, exaggerating flaws and wrinkles and using any excuse to turn them away.

Certainly there are cases that shouldn't be approved. But most nonprofit organizations are aiding claimants who have a rightful claim. In today's judicial climate, it's crucial to prepare cases properly.

That's why it's so important to partner with a legal expert. A lawyer with experience in the disability field will make your job much easier. Such a partnership will ensure that deserving people aren't disclaimed.

> "Partnering with a lawyer can help you cut through these complicated issues."

The Process

It's vital that you, your partner lawyer, and the individuals applying for benefits all understand the process. Here are the steps you'll need to navigate together:

Apply. The application is lengthy but can be completed online, which can be helpful. The information requested is fairly basic: Questions regarding day-to-day routine and limitations are included, as is a request for a list of doctors. The administration will order the applicant's records, and the applicant may also be asked to see a doctor chosen by the government. Ultimately, a decision will be reached and the applicant will be notified.

On average, the application takes two to three months to process. Most claims are denied at this level. So you should count on another two or three months for the appeal (or "reconsideration") phase. If your appeal is approved, you'll then need to request a hearing before a judge. As this could take a year, it's essential to develop the case aggressively along the way so the applicant is prepared at every level for decision making.

Undergo a medical examination. Typically, these examinations are used as an excuse to deny benefits to the applicant. But don't discourage the applicant from moving forward. The judge will weigh the opinion of the applicant's treating doctor heavily. So urge claimants to keep open, positive lines of communication with their doctor.

Provide vocational data. Once a case is brought to a hearing, the government may retain a vocational expert. Be wary of these experts. They'll most likely offer a series of hypothetical questions that the judge will use to determine employability. Once again, a strong relationship between the applicant and the treating doctor is important. The medical evidence in the case should be strong enough to force the vocational expert to address the claimant's medical background. This is another area where a lawyer can help your organization understand potential pitfalls and provide resources to shore up an individual's case as much as possible.

Work Issues

Some nonprofit organizations may not realize that it's possible for a disabled person to work even while receiving Social Security disability benefits. In fact, individuals can work a limited amount (earning up to $1,010 a month) without giving up their benefits. Additionally, a trial work program exists. This program lets people who are receiving benefits return to work with no limit to the amount they can earn for up to nine months. If they make it through the nine months, the return to work would be deemed a success, and benefits would stop. (The claimant could, however, drop back under the $1,010 amount and continue to receive SSDI benefits.)

People can earn more than the $1,010 amount and still be considered disabled if they can prove the following:

- **The employer was overpaying** in relation to the work done.
- **Substantial accommodations were made** to keep the individual at work. For example, perhaps the employer provided an assistant for the individual or bought medical equipment that allowed the individual to travel to work.

There are regulations in place that define these work issues more specifically. Again, partnering with a lawyer can help you cut through these complicated issues.

Why Partner with an Attorney?

You probably won't need an attorney during the application phase, but it makes sense to hire counsel when an applicant reaches the reconsideration phase. At this point the Social Security Administration has made its decision not to pay, and a lawyer knows how to move through the long, involved appeal process. Giving people access to counsel during this stressful time is one of the greatest gifts your organization can give.

> "The government is sending a clear message — "We're not going to make this process easy."

Legal representation is also helpful if the applicant is late in filing an appeal. Several legal criteria can be used to open up a late appeal. For example, the judge may let the appeal proceed if the individual:

- **suffers from mental illness** and didn't understand the process
- **has difficulty** with the English language
- **was misled** by the Social Security Administration.

Attorneys' fees in disability claims are set by the Social Security Administration. Currently, the fee is based on a contingency (meaning that there's no need to pay the attorney unless the claimant is awarded benefits). The fee is 25% of the award with a cap of $6,000. So, if the claimant receives $10,000 in benefits, the fee is $2,500. The government mails that amount directly to the attorney without the claimant's involvement.

It's unfortunate that so much perseverance is needed to help people receive the benefits they need and deserve. But since the government is sending a clear message — "We're not going to make this process easy" — we need to respond with all the ammunition we can muster. A trusting partnership between your organization and an attorney will help many deserving people lead the most dignified and enriching lives possible.

Bruce S. Lipsey (blipsey@elclaw.com) is a Social Security disability attorney and partner at Epstein, Lipsey & Clifford, P.C. (elclaw.com) in Hanover, Massachusetts. A graduate of Brown University and Suffolk Law School, he is a member of the Plymouth and Norfolk County Bar Associations, as well as the Massachusetts Bar Association and the Federal Bar Association.

Building Your Legal Partnership

Use these articles (available at www.NonprofitWorld.org/members) to help you create a trusting alliance with an attorney:

Where to Find Free Legal Assistance (Vol. 26, No. 2)

Four Myths about Attorney-Client Privilege (Vol. 25, No. 6)

Attorneys and Nonprofit Consultants: Keep Communications Confidential (Vol. 22, No. 1)

WHAT'S UP ONLINE?

To broaden online discussions on nonprofit topics, we're expanding our Discussion Forum with a ListServe, provided by Yahoo Groups. To join, you can either click on the "Yahoo" button at:

http://www.NonprofitWorld.org/social/

(free Yahoo login required)

or send a blank e-mail to:

NonprofitWorld-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

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

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Tools to Manage & Promote Your Events

Use these apps to be sure people benefit from your trainings, networking offerings, fundraisers, and other events.

By Amy Sample Ward

Posting your event details online can be tricky. Are you including enough information, links, registration details, and social sharing options? Are you posting the information on a Web page where people will be sure to find it? Many software applications exist to help manage your events, from planning to recruitment, communication, and engagement. First, ask yourself: Do you have any existing systems that you want to integrate with this process? For example:

- Would you like to connect a database to the online registration process? This may be especially useful if you're collecting event fees.
- Do you want to have tailored communications before, during, or after the event that should come through your existing e-mail marketing system?
- Would you like event participants to access exclusive or private content ahead of the event or after it's over? Do you need to share that permission through your Web site?

Let's take a look at three tools that may help with your event promotion. You'll need to evaluate your own technology capacity, of course, but these tools could be what you need to get your next event seen by more people, shared by more registrants, and bringing in more new supporters.

Eventbrite (http://eventbrite.com/) is an online tool for posting events, selling tickets, and more. One feature is the option to sell tickets at different price levels (speakers versus attendees, full table versus a single seat, full event and single day tickets, and so on). You can connect all your events (past and future) to the same organizational profile for easy browsing by potential attendees. You can send communications to registrants, reminding them of the event or thanking them for coming. The pricing structure is based on your ticket sales, so if you have a free event, the tool is free to use. If you charge participants, then you pay a percentage of each registration as well as a payment processing fee. Eventbrite has complimentary mobile apps for your phone or tablet to assist with attendee check-in, too!

> "If you have a free event, the tool is free to use."

Try it out today at eventbrite.com

Meetup (http://meetup.com/) is an especially valuable tool if you have events that happen regularly or a community of supporters organizing with you. Using Meetup, you can create a profile that operates like an online group where other users can join you, register for events you post, and even post messages for discussion. You can also send messages by participation level — for example, messaging those with a "maybe" RSVP status for an upcoming event or all those that had RSVPed "yes" to a past event. Meetup has a small monthly or yearly fee for use.

See if Meetup works for you at meetup.com

amiando (http://amiando.com/) is the most all-inclusive offering in this list, including aspects that the other tools have, like event registration and attendee messaging, and adding functionality for speakers, management, and beyond. The payment structure is the same as Eventbrite, with free events requiring no fee to post. Because it's used worldwide, it includes support for a wide range of languages. You also have the option to integrate your ticket sales through amiando directly with your Web site to support a seamless experience for your supporters. It's also easy to see how your event is doing with built-in online statistics and charts.

Learn more today at amiando.com

> "These tools could be what you need to get your next event seen by more people."

Amy Sample Ward (amy@nten.org) is CEO of NTEN: The Nonprofit Technology Network and author of Social Change Anytime Everywhere.

Gain Extraordinary Impact: Fund Your Most Difficult Challenge

Look with fresh eyes at what people need and what you can offer them.

By Karen Eber Davis

Four years ago, The Workplace (a nonprofit in Bridgeport, Connecticut) launched a new program: Platform to Employment (P2E). Born during the recession, the program provides those who've been unemployed longer than two years with classes, an internship, and other services.

> "What results can you create using this model?"

At the end of the pilot program, 70% found employment, compared to a national average of 10-15% percent for the same demographic. Building on this success, Platform to Employment will be started in four additional cities this year with plans in place for 25 more cities next year.

For nonprofit leaders like you, Platform to Employment's design contains a number of replicable components, including:

Produce Results Based on Your Customers' Needs. Staff at The Workplace, who provide workforce development services, noticed growing numbers of people experiencing long-term unemployment. The needs of this group are different from other job seekers: They face more self-esteem issues and workforce prejudices. Many employers assume they're lazy or unemployed for a reason. Staff designed Platform to Employment to overcome these and other barriers by offering five weeks of classes to sharpen participants' skills, the services of an employee-assistance program (EAP) to enhance their bruised self-images, and a paid internship.

Find Creative Ways to Offer What You Have. The Workplace staff realized that one of the most valuable things they possessed was influence with local employers. When those employers advertised jobs, The Workplace asked them to hire an intern for eight weeks. The Workplace paid the intern's salary for the first four weeks and asked the employer to split the cost for the second four. (Only 50% of the employers elected to take the funding; the rest were happy to pay for the full eight-week internship.) This solution saved employers money and made them active participants in doing social good.

Use Cash When Necessary. Once the program was designed, The Workplace presented the idea to individuals and at meetings throughout the community, asking for cash to jumpstart the project. Sponsors were offered an opportunity to be part of a national model to help people who had been tax-paying citizens to regain their place in the American Dream. Each donor was asked to sponsor just one individual, for $6,000, which made the sponsorships feel personal and doable. The organization raised $600,000, over half from corporations.

Craft Your Funding Request to Meet Donors' Needs. When The Workplace staff went out to seek sponsorships, they understood that for some corporations and people, government funding created anxiety. So they eliminated government money from the program.

How to Use the Ideas in this Model

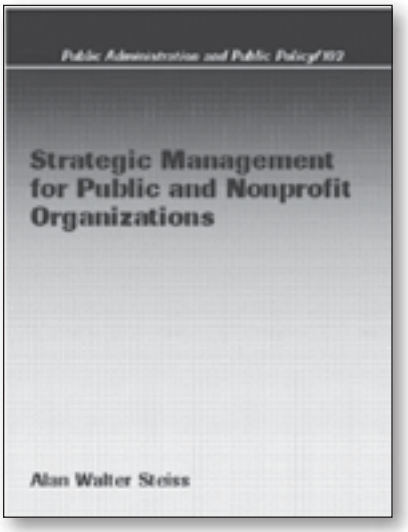
Be inspired to boldly design programs that serve your customers' needs. What are the critical areas in your program design? What do your customers need most? How can you obtain the resources (in this case, jobs for the long-term unemployed) that you need? Raise money as a tool to fund your most challenging components as necessary.

Platform to Excellence is worth examining for its success, its design, and as an example of a traditionally funded government nonprofit that created services without government funding. What results can you create using this model?

Karen Eber Davis (karen@kedconsult.com) is an expert in nonprofit innovation and author of Nonprofit Income Without the Mystery. *For over 20 years, Karen has helped leaders make dramatic improvements that "move the needle" in excellence, effectiveness, and bottom lines. Sign up for her free newsletter "Added Value" at kedconsult.com.*

Moving beyond Strategic Planning

Skyrocketing change requires new approaches to daily planning and big-picture thinking.



By Terrence Fernsler

Strategic Management for Public and Nonprofit Organizations By Alan Walter Steiss. Hardcover. 438 pages. Marcel Dekker, Inc. (dekker.com).

Strategic planning is a good starting point, but, by itself, it's not enough. You need to move beyond strategic *planning* to strategic *management.*

Managing strategically means:

- **identifying** your organization's long-range needs
- **exploring the consequences** of policies and programs designed to meet these needs
- **developing strategies** that enhance your organization's advantages and minimize its shortcomings.

In this instructive book, Alan Walter Steiss describes the three basic components of strategic management:

1. Planning in a strategic way. Such planning:

- ***clarifies*** goals and objectives
- ***creates policies*** to acquire and distribute organizational resources
- ***translates decisions*** into specific actions.

2. Managing resources effectively. Such management involves:

- ***turning goals and objectives*** into programs, projects and activities
- ***designing processes*** to carry out those programs, projects and plans
- ***staffing the processes and acquiring*** other necessary resources.

3. Establishing acountability. Meaningful performance evaluation assesses how effective and efficient programs are in achieving goals. Information management systems can be quite useful in collecting and storing relevant data needed to measure performance.

The tasks needed to carry out strategic management are typically assigned to different parts of the organization: Planners plan, financial analysts measure, program personnel control resources, and administrators evaluate. Steiss argues that this division of labor may be an obstacle to strategic success. A more comprehensive framework is needed to guide and coordinate, he suggests. Thus, he explains the purpose of each aspect of strategic management in detail. Such an understanding will help organizations implement strategic tasks across organizational divisions.

While this book is an academic work, it contains many practical applications. The case studies, references, and glossary are added bonuses. Those seeking ways to manage their organization strategically, to help it progress and meet the demands placed upon it, will find *Strategic Management for Public and Nonprofit Organizations* quite useful.

Terrence Fernsler has been a nonprofit professional for over 30 years and is currently in the School of Strategic Leadership Studies Ph.D. program at James Madison University in Virginia.

Making a Strategic Decision in the Face of Uncertainty

The framework for strategic management is decision making. Yet the behavior of decision makers often appears to violate rational thinking. To assure that your decisions make good sense for your organization, follow these three steps:

1. **Assess alternatives.** Determine what payoffs each option implies for your organization's stakeholders.
2. **Evaluate the attitudes toward risk** held by your organization's stakeholders.
3. **Estimate the benefits each option offers**. Decide whether these benefits outweigh the risks you're willing to take. Then select the outcome that has the most benefits while not exceeding the acceptable risks.

– from *A Primer for Policy Analysis* (Norton) as quoted in *Strategic Management for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*

Basic Strategies for Managing Change

1. **Invite employees to participate in change.** Ask for their opinions. Help them identify their own self-interest regarding the proposed change. Make sure they feel part of the process.
2. **Provide an incentive for people to change.** Self-interest is one of the most important motivators.
3. **Develop an open communication system** so that people understand the purpose for the changes.
4. **Encourage feedback both from and to employees.** Everyone enjoys knowing how things are going and how much progress is being made.

– from *Management* (Random House) as quoted in *Strategic Management for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*

Why Ask "Why"?

Why are "Why" questions so powerful? Research reported by Wray Herbert in *On Second Thought* (Crown Publishing, crownpublishing.com) provides some answers.

In one experiment, researchers had volunteers think about their health, but they framed the issue in two different ways. Some volunteers were asked "Why" questions ("Why do you maintain good health?" "Why do you exercise?" etc.) while others were asked "How" questions ("How do you maintain good health?" "How do you exercise?" and so on).

Then the psychologists gave the volunteers tests of their willingness to delay gratification. They discovered that those who'd been primed to think about *why* they wanted to be healthy were more apt to delay gratification, show self-discipline, and persevere to reach their goal. Other research confirmed these results, finding that those primed to think about "why" showed greater endurance and more tolerance for discomfort on the way to their goal.

Of course, there are times when it's better to be up close and practical than abstract and idealized. When it's time to begin a task, it's easy for people to procrastinate if they're absorbed in long-term, theoretical thoughts.

Scientists have found that those primed for concrete thinking are much less likely to delay doing something than those primed for abstract thought. They see the task as more urgent and more doable, so they're more likely to get started on it than to postpone it.

What does all this mean for you? When motivating people (including yourself) to try something new, first focus on why: What's the purpose? Why is it important? As you get closer to actually taking on the task, switch to the more immediate how-to details.

Once you know *why* you want to exercise, for instance, the best way to actually get to the gym is to stop focusing on how healthy you'll be, and start thinking about putting on your tennies and tying them, one lace at a time.

But, remember, you're more likely to get to that first concrete step if you've already focused on the big picture. So, first ask "Why?"

Harness Your Brain for Good Decisions

In recent years, brain researchers have made amazing strides in their ability to see and measure what's going on in our heads. We can use their conclusions to help us make better decisions. For example:

We're hardwired to make snap judgments based on stereotypes. Such thinking can save our lives in battle situations, where we need to decide instantly if someone is a friend or enemy. But in a diverse workplace, we need to counter that tendency. The first step is to acknowledge that we all have prejudices. Then we need to consciously refute such thoughts. If we're vigilant, we can do so.

Once we've made up our minds, we tend to reject any contrary arguments. That's why continually asking questions — did we do the right thing? Are we missing something important? Would it be wise to get another opinion? — is so crucial.

We vastly over-estimate people's understanding of what we say. They actually absorb and retain only a tiny fraction of what we tell them. Continually ask for clarification, and ask to be sure others understand your message.

The biology of our brains is wired to add value. The best way to take advantage of this fact is to focus on your strengths, not your shortcomings. Put your time into things that add value to your life instead of trying to eliminate defects. Crowded out by your burgeoning strengths, your weaknesses will fade away on their own.

We tend to be too optimistic when it comes to budgeting our time. We think we can accomplish much more than we actually can. Thus, we may end up rushing, getting anxious, not thinking things through, and missing important details. To address this penchant, break problems into manageable chunks. Choose one tough problem to work on each month, and examine it systematically.

Our productivity plummets after four hours of work. Concentrate on important problems during those four hours, and then switch to tasks that don't require high brain power.

We have the power to regulate our thoughts and sculpt the brain we want. Even though our mind has a multitude of ways to trick us, we can override them if we make a conscious effort. We can create an imaginary "mental butler" who will watch out for these brain traps for us. Once our butler understands our intentions, our unconscious will take over, and our conscious mind can relax its vigilance.

– adapted from *A Mind of Its Own* (wwnorton.com), *What?* (walkerbooks.com), & *Build the Life You Want* (M2Epress.com)

Keep Your Team on the Right Path

Leverage these four guiding thoughts to keep your team moving forward in the right direction:

1. **Hire effective team members.** The time to think about building a high-performance team is when you hire people in the first place. Look for four C's: competence, character, courage, and collaboration. Vet these attributes during the interview process — way before you assign someone to the team.
2. **Foster trust.** Promote a high-trust environment, in which people do what they say they're going to do. Along with having the right people, nothing is more important to team-building than forming trusting relationships.
3. **Encourage candor,** and quickly acknowledge mistakes. The path forward is forged around a series of course corrections based on what's working and what's not. Candid, timely conversations are essential.
4. **Be clear about expectations.** The clearer the mission, the better the team performance. Everyone must know what's expected of them, in as granular a way as is practical.

– adapted from "Building Effective Teams Isn't Rocket Science, But It's Just as Hard," a *Harvard Business Review* blog by Douglas R. Conant

Ask the Bold Questions

When you ask the right questions, you'll discover something important — even if it's not the answer you were looking for. And that's even more true when you query *yourself*. Ask these bold questions, and see where they lead you.

1. **What would you do if** you weren't afraid of failing?
2. **What can you do** that draws on both your head and your heart?
3. **Why are you doing** what you're doing? What paths do your actions put you on?
4. **What are you absolutely sure** is true? Why? What and who might refute your truth? What other truths are there?
5. **What is at the heart of the problems** you face?
6. **How did your recent mistakes happen,** and what can you learn from them?
7. **What can the history of your organization** tell you?
8. **Are you confusing change** with progress?
9. **Are you forgetting** something important? Who might help you answer this question and point you to something you've overlooked?
10. **What choice can you make and action can you take,** in this moment, to create the greatest value?

– adapted from *Work on Purpose* (Echoing Green Publishers, workonpurpose@echoinggreen.org) & *Answering the Central Question* (axiogenics.com)

Changing the World with Social Entrepreneurship

We all have the capacity to be leaders, forge meaningful lives, and change the world through social entrepreneurship. *The Future Makers: A Journey to People Who Are Changing the World—and What We Can Learn from Them* (Greenleaf Publishing, greenleaf-publishing.com) provides profiles of people who have transformed their careers by finding innovative, sustainable solutions to social problems.

The Future Makers shows how to blend capitalistic drive with a life of ideals. Its tenets are valuable to all of us in the nonprofit sector, highlighting ways we can use business practices to help build civil society.

– reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

Low-Cost Ways to Show Employees They're Valued

To reduce turnover and build an engaged workforce, you need to know what's important to your staff:

Provide Discretionary Time: The New Definition of Employee Wealth. Workers deeply appreciate being given more control of their time. Here are a few ways to do so.

- ***Flex time.*** Let people adjust their schedules to fit their lives. Evaluate them on results rather than face time.
- ***Unlimited vacation time.*** You'll cultivate a culture of deep trust if you let people set their own vacation time. Organizations that have tried this find it rare for anyone to abuse this trust.
- ***Paid sabbaticals.*** Offer month-long sabbaticals after five years of service or two months after 10 years. This is a great way to separate your organization from the pack, as well as an antidote to burnout.

Offer Learning and Self-Improvement Opportunities. In addition to letting people choose educational opportunities they care about, give them time to work one on one with mentors and coaches.

Nurture Their Hearts, Souls, and Stomachs. Provide employee interest groups, a fully stocked kitchen, wellness and exercise programs, laundry service, professional housekeepers, and other things that people love. If you aren't sure what your employees want most, ask them. Then start implementing programs and practices to strengthen your connection with them.

– adapted from *Talent Magnetism* (Nicholas Brealey Publishing)

Six Effective Ways to Ask Questions

Certain types of questioning can enhance the quality of your communications and relationships, as described in *Attractive Communication: 300 Ways to Make Communication More Attractive* by Michael Rooni and Juris Doctor (publishinternational.com):

1. **Open-ended questions** such as "What are your observations?" encourage people to share their thoughts and feelings freely. They're much more productive than questions that call for a yes or no answer.
2. **Positive-imaginative questions** invite imagination. For example,"Would you consider the idea and let me know what you think?"
3. **Reflective-clarifying questions** include a reflection of what you've heard and a request for clarification. For instance, "I hear you saying . . . Is that correct?"
4. **Opinion questions** urge others to express their beliefs and feelings. ("What do you think about this issue?" "How do you feel about it?")
5. **Modifying questions** change the nature of negative communication directed at you. They transform disapproving or hostile statements into positive, productive questions. For example, if someone says, "You're being cheap," you could respond, "What I understand that you want to know is why I believe this expenditure is necessary, correct?"
6. **Apologetic questions** include, for example, "I was wrong about this, wasn't I?" or "I could have done this differently, couldn't I?" They show your openness to the idea that you may have made a mistake. They communicate candor, concern, and a desire to make things better.

The Ice Bucket Challenge Debrief: Was It Worth It?

A new study delves into the true value of one of the most talked-about viral marketing campaigns in history. Some highlights:

1. **While the campaign raised more than $100 million in just a few months for the ALS Association, the actual conversion rate** from "dumper to donor" was only 20%.
2. **One in four participants didn't even mention ALS** in their videos of ice water dousings. And a paltry 20% mentioned donating money.
3. **Participants who did mention ALS were five times more likely** to donate.

The harshest criticism of the ice bucket campaign is that it's just another example of slacktivism, notes Robert Moore, the study's author and CEO of RJ Metrics (rjmetrics.com). This relatively new term is defined as half-measures in which people donate with their tweets and shares rather than their wallets, focusing more on themselves than on the charitable cause. There are certainly data to support this claim (see #2 above).

"So," asks Moore, "was this whole thing a big waste of time? Hardly." Don't forget the $100 million — an astonishing 3,504% increase over donations during the same period last year. Even with some obvious slacktivism, the campaign worked because it hooked something deep in people's psychology. It was fun, different, a little outrageous, and tied to the always-popular field of celebrities and would-be reality stars performing for the camera.

By getting people's attention with an entertaining video and a simple message, the campaign moved millions of people one step closer to donating. This phenomenon is known as "successive approximation" or, more commonly "the foot-in-the-door technique." Once people make a small commitment, they become emotionally invested and more likely to become increasingly involved. The very nature of successive approximation suggests that participants in the challenge "will continue to feel an emotional investment in the future success of ALS research," says Moore. "We'll raise a bucket to that."

laughter alert

YOU WRITE THE CAPTION CONTEST

Thanks to all of you who entered the contest. You'll have another chance to win with a new cartoon in our next issue. We're glad to see you all have a solid sense of humor! Keep laughing! And keep sending us your nonprofit jokes, riddles, observations, humorous anecdotes, and the funny experiences that occur every day in the nonprofit sector. Please send to **Jill@NonprofitWorld.org** with "Laughter Alert" in the subject line.

The cartoonists' original caption is below:

Reprinted with permission and our thanks to cartoonist Christopher Burke.

and the winner is....

"This concludes our fall pledge drive. Tune in tomorrow for the launch of our winter pledge drive."

The winner of *Nonprofit World*'s cartoon contest is **Gail Coover,** University League, Chicago, Illinois. Congratulations, Gail! As the winner, Gail will receive a card deck of "52 Ways to Motivate Your Board and Volunteers" from Carol Weisman (carol@boardbuilders.com), founder of Board Builders (www.boardbuilders.com).

Why Switch to a Prepaid Card Program? You may be surprised by all the benefits.

By Toffer Grant

Generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) require nonprofits to report expenses on a functional basis. Costs must be managed according to category — either program services or supporting activities.

Using prepaid expense cards can make this reporting duty easier. Prepaid cards help you manage the spending of everyone in your organization, including volunteers. By tapping a more innovative approach to expense management, you can leverage five key benefits of prepaid card programs:

1. Streamline spending for volunteers and staff. Prepaid debit cards offer an efficient spending solution, particularly for small and mid-sized organizations that don't employ many full-time-equivalent employees (FTEs). A prepaid program is an ideal way to provide a spending card for volunteers and part-time staff without the risks of issuing a traditional credit card.

A good example is provided by a nonprofit group home that recently began using prepaid debit cards. Employees who work in the home use their cards to purchase cleaning supplies, gas for the home's van, and similar items. The card program's administrator can place restrictions on where the cards are used. Funds are distributed to each card on a real-time basis from an online dashboard or a mobile device.

2. Optimize control and card management. With a prepaid program, staff can't purchase anything for the organization until the administrator activates and funds their cards. Managers have complete control of where and how the cards are used. This avoids improper spending and helps financial managers allocate and track funds.

> "Funds are distributed from an online dashboard or a mobile device."

> "You can place restrictions on where the cards are used."

3. Sidestep credit blocking hassles. Credit cards have specific open credit limits with limited functionality for temporary blocking. With prepaid card programs, managers can unblock a temporarily blocked card, load budgeted money, and then block the card again after a project or trip is completed. This is an efficient resource for those in the field working on such tasks as building, event hosting, facility maintenance, and group trips.

4. Get the best pricing options from banks. Banks make no distinction between nonprofits and for-profits. They treat and assess both the same. But nonprofit needs, particularly from an expense perspective, are unique. That creates a disconnect in nonprofits' relationship with banks, and it's more challenging for nonprofits to open accounts and get the best pricing. Prepaid card programs give nonprofits more control, make it easier for them to manage expenses, and help them avoid paying variable-interest charges and over-the-limit fees.

5. Circumvent formal sign-up restrictions. To open a credit card, a board member, bookkeeper, or someone else from your organization — maybe even you — has to guarantee the line of credit. With prepaid card services, no guarantees or credit checks are required. Prepaid programs let you manage funds deposited by customers and impose usage caps. Additionally, prepaid accounts are more cost effective than bank credit-card services.

Toffer Grant (toffer.grant@pexcard,com) is CEO & founder of PEX Card Service (pexcard.com), a prepaid card solution used to budget and track employee spending.

Death to Elevator Speeches

By Carol Weisman

Is it time to throw out your elevator speech and try a new way to gain supporters?

I detest elevator speeches. I've never had an authentic conversation after someone just gave me a canned pitch.

I realize this is heresy. The elevator speech — a pre-planned synopsis that tells people, in the time it takes to ride the elevator with them, what your organization does — has become standard. Everywhere I go, I hear people urging others to create such a speech and teach it to everyone in the organization.

What's the problem?

My problem with pre-planned speeches is that they tell what the organization wants you to know and not what the person inquiring is interested in. They assume the listener doesn't know anything about your cause or your organization.

One of the most touching meetings I ever had with a potential donor occurred when I went to visit a CEO on behalf of a child abuse organization. I was prattling on, giving my canned speech about sexual abuse when I looked at his eyes.

I finally stopped chattering and said, "You understand what I'm talking about, don't you?"

He quietly said, "Yes." He then said, "What does your organization need?"

We got down to brass tacks. On the way out the door I said, "If you want some help, we have terrific therapists who work with survivors." He said thanks and kissed me on the cheek. After that, he became a huge supporter of the organization.

I realize that the purpose of elevator speeches is to solicit interest. I find that they rarely achieve that. First of all, there's rarely any poetry to them. And even if the wording is terrific, they're delivered in such a rote manner that it turns off the listener.

> "Listen, ask questions, and get off the elevator."

What's the alternative?

It's simple: Ask questions. Here's a sample of a different kind of conversation:

Cocktail party guest (a little sober): I hear you're on the board of Trailnet. Tell me about it.

You: What do you want to know?

Cocktail party guest (still sober): Why don't they maintain the trails?

You: Great question. We actually don't manage the trails. Our origins were in building trails, but our mission and focus have changed. What do you think we should do about this misperception about the bike trails?

Cocktail party guest (not too sober): Well, some signage might clear this up.

You: Great point. I'll bring it back to the board. I wonder how much it would cost.

Cocktail party guest (sober enough to get out business card): My brother-in-law loves the bike rides your organization sponsors. He owns a sign company. Do you want me to see if he might be interested in helping out?

You: That would be terrific. (Exchange cards, head to the bar, or continue conversation.)

What to do?

Try a donor-centered approach. Find out what your conversational partner wants to know. Listen, ask questions, and get off the elevator.

Carol Weisman (carol@boardbuilders.com), MSW, CSP, is founder and president of Board Builders (boardbuilders.com) as well as an internationally known speaker, author, trainer, and consultant. See her Learning Institute program (Board Governance) online at NonprofitWorld.org/LearningInstitute.

For Long-Term Stability Look to Corporations

By Bruce W. Burtch

Here's how to garner corporate dollars.

What if I told you that you could use new trends in corporate culture — to create solid, long-term stability for your nonprofit organization, even if yours is a small or medium-sized organization?

> "It's this focus on the greater good that provides the magic."

It's true. And smart nonprofits know it.

On the other hand, if you *miss* the hundreds of opportunities out there right now, you could find your wells getting drier and drier in the coming months. That's because for-profits are focusing more and more of their funds on full-scale cross-sector partnerships with nonprofits.

For-profits know that when they fully align with a good cause, their customers notice. So do their employees, who gain valuable skills, become re-energized, and are more loyal. And then there's that precious free press coverage for-profits get when they're out there supporting your organization.

Nonprofits and For-profits: Better Together

Art with a Heart is a two-person nonprofit whose mission is to bring art to underserved school districts around California's Marin County. This tiny nonprofit partnered with Autodesk, a locally-based corporation. The corporation not only sponsors the artists but provides paid employee volunteers and guidance for the nonprofit, which now provides art programs to 300 students. More and more companies like Autodesk, who see partnering with nonprofits as an integral part of their corporate culture, simply will not consider assisting a nonprofit unless it focuses on the business objectives of their company.

So when you walk in with a solid Business Valuation Proposition, believe me: They'll take notice.

(Don't worry: You won't have to compromise your mission to reap all the benefits.)

In these austere times, for-profits are looking for mutual value in the nonprofit/for-profit equation. After all, it's their time, it's their talent, and it's their money!

UNDERSTAND WHY FOR-PROFITS WANT TO WORK WITH YOU.

For-profits are finding that with long-term, multi-faceted partnerships with nonprofits, they get both a financial return on their investment and social benefits from fostering closer engagement with nonprofits.

As we noted in Part 1 of this series, for-profits actually gain more benefits (38 to be exact) than nonprofits (31) when they contribute funds, highly skilled advisors, in-kind donations, and pro bono services to a nonprofit. That's why your nonprofit is very valuable to the right for-profit companies.

Cause marketing, a subcategory of cross-sector partnerships, is "the fastest growing area of corporate marketing spending" according to *Advertising Age*: In 2012 an estimated $1.7 billion was spent in North America alone on cause marketing campaigns.

A cross-sector partnership is fund development wrapped in a multiple benefits package. It will increase your success in getting

Gen Y Embraces Cause Marketing

Gen Y, or Millennials, are people born in the 1980s and early 1990s. This generation has a very strong affinity to causes. The 2010 Cone Cause Evolution Study stated that "college-aged Millennials have nearly $40 billion in discretionary income . . . and they buy with an eye toward the greater good." This study also found that "94% of respondents ages 18-24 find it acceptable for a company to involve a cause or issue in its marketing" and "they are much more willing to try new products because of a cause affiliation." The study also found that 81% of respondents volunteer in some way, and 87% consider a company's cause commitments when deciding where to work.

funding, lowering expenses, and expanding your donor base while bringing a myriad other opportunities — benefits you won't receive if you're only seeking funding.

ZERO IN ON ALIGNED COMPANIES.

Research your community or marketing region's companies to find the ones that best "fit" your organization's goals and mission. One example of excellent brand alignment is the partnership between Barefoot Wine and the SurfRider Foundation, whose mission is the protection and enjoyment of oceans, waves, and beaches.

Together they've created the *Barefoot Wine Beach Rescue Project* to help keep America's beaches "barefoot friendly." The partnership has hosted beach cleanups and restoration events coast-to-coast, utilizing volunteers to clean the shorelines, plant native greenery. and collect litter along the beaches. At the end of each event, volunteers enjoy Barefoot Wine and surf-inspired food.

What a perfect fit for both partners! You can find one too, maybe several.

DEVELOP YOUR BUSINESS VALUATION PROPOSITION.

A corporate marketing or sales proposal won't see the light of day unless it provides a solid Business Value Proposition (BVP) for increasing the revenue of the business. So, to begin a partnership conversation on a level playing field, you'll need a good plan — and a great Business Valuation Proposition.

Here's how to do it:

DO YOUR HOMEWORK.

You've looked at for-profits in your community or marketing region and narrowed down the list to those whose brands look like they could align well with your nonprofit's mission and goals.

Now it's time to dig deeper, to learn everything you can about your top two or three potential partners. Read the organizations' promotional materials and annual report. Conduct an Internet search for press coverage and other information about your potential partners. Check them out on Hoovers.com, their LinkedIn page, business journals, and the Chamber of Commerce. Talk to friends who work or volunteer at these companies. Do all you can to gain a good understanding of your potential partners' key business priorities.

Now take the list we discussed in the first part of this series, the benefits for-profits receive from partnering with a nonprofit, and mix these benefits together with the information you've gathered on the for-profits' key business priorities. With this knowledge, consider the ways that this partnership can best benefit the particular for-profits you're interested in approaching. Keep in mind that if it doesn't make dollars, it doesn't make sense — although dollars to the for-profit also come in the form of free media coverage, increased brand awareness, and lower employee turnover, to mention just a few.

Now you can develop a BVP like they've never seen before — one that makes them say, "Wow — these nonprofit people really 'get' our business." Create a BVP that shows you've done your homework, you're clear on their business objectives, and your nonprofit has good things to offer them. Greater good things.

Chances are, with a well-researched BVP, you'll knock it out of the park.

KEEP IN MIND THE PARTNERSHIP GOALS.

Your Business Valuation Proposition should meet the business objectives of each partner, but most important, it should have a clear focus and impact on the *greater good*. It's this focus on the greater good that provides the magic that drives the success of any cross-sector partnership.

IT'S MARKETING, NOT PHILANTHROPY.

So where do you take this Business Value Proposition? No, not to the foundation desk. Knock on the marketing door. The budgets of a corporate marketing and sales department are usually between 100 and 1,000 times larger than the budgets of their foundation or their overall philanthropic giving. What's more, the marketing director is in contact with every department of a company, from the CEO to HR to PR to Sales. And when you're proposing a long-term mutually-beneficial relationship that improves a company's sales, product brand, and human capital, you need to show the Marketing Department how this association is going to be good for them. Very good.

REAP THE MAGIC.

Success comes through a step-by-step approach, leveraging what you already have, with the right partners, in a combined effort to create a greater good. And if there is one thing I've learned over these many years, there is magic when organizations from different sectors come together to create a greater good. These experiences will not only change the lives of those you are serving; these experiences will change your organization, your life, and the long-term stability of your nonprofit organization.

Bruce W. Burtch (bruce@bruceburtch.com) is CEO of Bruce W. Burtch, Inc. (www.bruceburtch.com) and author of Win-Win for the Greater Good. *Called the "Father of Cause Marketing" by the Cause Marketing Forum and highly regarded for his innovative and creative win-win partnerships, Bruce Burtch is recognized nationally and internationally as a pioneer and leading expert in the field of cross-sector partnerships and cause marketing.*

Making the Match

For more on corporate partnerships, see these articles at www.NonprofitWorld.org/members:

Please Give Generously: How Your Nonprofit Can Help For-Profit Corporations (Vol. 32, No. 3)

Boost Your Share of Corporate Sponsorships (Vol. 29, No. 4)

For-Profits and Nonprofits Meet Missions Together (Vol. 25, No. 4)

Corporate Partnerships for Nonprofits: A Match Made in Heaven? (Vol. 30, No. 2)

Is a Cause-Related Partnership in Your Future? (Vol 32, No. 1)

Seven Steps to Hiring & Keeping The Right Person

By Beverly Flaxington

Here are foolproof ways to hire the best people — and hang on to them.

There are a lot of unsatisfied people in the workplace. The Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that about 50% of employees leave their job within the first six months of being hired. And, according to a survey by Right Management, a whopping 86% say they plan to actively look for a new position this year.

> "The most basic reason for worker discontent is a job mismatch."

The most basic reason for worker discontent is a mismatch between what they want out of their job and what the position offers. Whose fault is that? The organization that hired them.

When hiring, most organizational leaders don't look for a behavioral match or cultural fit. The good news is that it's not difficult to fix the problem: There are some simple steps to find out what job seekers want and how to keep them happy.

Here's a seven-step approach to hiring the best people every time. It's a model that has a real-world track record of success.

Step 1: Be clear about success for this role.

Let prospects know what success will look like. Make the job description as detailed as possible. Include details such as:

- **the role's major areas** of accountability
- **actions and behaviors** that are critical for success
- **working conditions** and other requirements unique to this position
- **the way you'll measure** performance

> "About 50% of employees leave their job within the first six months of being hired."

- **skills and knowledge** necessary for the job
- **a list of people** with whom the employee will be involved.

Step 2: Match "carrots" to your objectives.

A common mistake is to come up with a salary and benefits package that's based on what the candidate needs or expects. Instead, consider what your organization needs to accomplish. Then design compensation to specifically address your organization's objectives.

Step 3: Develop an interviewing strategy.

It's important to have a clear plan in mind before you start holding interviews. Here are some keys to successful interviewing:

- **Know in advance who will be involved in the interviewing process and how much weight each person will have** in the final decision.
- **Develop a procedure for comparing notes after the first round.** Interviewers should have a pre-set time to meet, share their impressions, and explain why they recommend for or against hiring.
- **Create guidelines for collecting feedback** so the post-interview meeting doesn't devolve into decisions based merely on "like" or "dislike."

Step 4: Know what behaviors will succeed in the role.

Take time to identify the behavioral style the job requires. Assess candidates to see how they'll do the following:

- **Manage problems** and challenges.
- **Interact** with people.
- **Handle the work pace** and environment.
- **Deal with rules and procedures** set by others. (For a way to assure that an employee's willingness to submit to rules fits your organizational culture, see the first article in "Know Your Workers" on the right.)

Every person has behavioral preferences, and every role has behavioral requirements. Match them as closely as possible.

Step 5: Fit candidate motivators to organizational motivators.

Consider the workplace culture. Ask yourself:

- **Is the atmosphere relaxed, social, and highly collaborative? Or do people work independently,** driven by fast turnaround and a rapid pace?
- **How do client and customer relations** shape the culture?
- **What are the spoken and unspoken values** that define the organization?

Once you're clear about the values that shape your culture, communicate those beliefs to job candidates. Be sure their values align with yours.

Step 6: Ask questions that provoke revealing answers.

Analyze the job. Critically evaluate the major areas of accountability. Ask yourself: What factors are essential for success in this position?

Based on this job analysis, the behavior style identified in step 4, and the cultural values from step 5, write a detailed set of interview questions that are specific to this job. Make sure you ask the same or similar questions of every candidate so you have a good way to compare them.

Ask questions that will give you important information. For example:

- **What factors** helped and hindered you in past jobs?
- **Who's the best boss** you've ever had? Why?
- **What challenges** have you overcome? How, specifically, did you do so?

Probe to get a window about how people performed so you can "see" them in action.

Step 7: Establish ongoing feedback & communication checkpoints.

Hiring the right people is the first part. Keeping them happy and on track is the next part.

- **Establish regular milestones** and feedback check-in points.
- **At regular intervals — monthly, quarterly, or yearly — have reviews in which you discuss specifics of people's jobs.** What are they doing well? What do they need to correct?
- **Be as clear as possible about what you observe and what you need people to do differently.** Don't wait for an end-of-year discussion. Keep the dialogue open and ongoing.

Know Your Workers

Use these articles at www.NonprofitWorld.org/members to gain insight into your employees, what they want, and how you can keep them positive and productive:

The Key to a Productive Workforce (Vol. 32, No. 2)

Three Tops Tips to Attract, Energize, and Retain Winning Employees (Vol. 31, No. 1)

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

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

Keeping Your Best and Brightest Workers (Vol. 28, No. 6)

Avoid Headaches: Engage Your Employees (Vol. 27, No. 2)

Creating a Values-Based Road Map (Vol. 23, No. 2)

Beverly Flaxington is a Certified Professional Behavioral Analyst (CPBA), hypnotherapist, and career and business adviser (thehumanbehaviorcoach.com). She's the author of five business and financial books, including the award-winning book Understanding Other People: The Five Secrets to Human Behavior *and* Make Your SHIFT: The Five Most Powerful Moves You Can Make to Get Where YOU Want to Go *(ATA Press).*

How Mobile Marketing Can Work for You

By Anne Heraghty

Here's a new way to use social media to capture minds and hearts.

How do you talk to your clients, donors, and other stakeholders? Do you still know "regulars" by name? Is it getting harder for you to send personalized messages? Nonprofits are beginning to use a creative solution to reach their valued customers: mobile marketing.

Devices such as smart phones offer multiple avenues for interaction through social media connections, on-device apps, and SMS (short message service) text messaging. Together, these communication avenues represent a virtual ecosystem that's perfectly suited for mobile marketing.

One reason mobile communications strategies are so effective is that they provide a sense of urgency and a way to connect through time-sensitive offers. People are captivated by the immediacy and personal nature of mobile communication. You can build on that urge to "do it now" by providing limited-time offers that link directly to your Web site. A few other things you can do:

- **Use people's names and other personalized information** in your communications with them.
- **Build relationships** with donors, prospective donors, and other customers through a simple opt-in process.
- **Introduce a viral element** in the form of offers they can share, helping you gain new donors.
- **Provide people with information and offers that will appeal to them,** based on their preferences.
- **Confirm upcoming appointments** with clients.
- **Keep donors up to date** with the progress of a campaign.

> "This virtual ecosystem is perfectly suited for mobile marketing."

> "At-a-glance reporting shows who responded to various offers."

Even nonprofit leaders who are excited about mobile marketing can't spend all their time working on it. But platforms have been designed for marketing programs that can be quickly created and easily maintained. Using an integrated platform provides multiple channels to reach customers and potential customers, including:

- **downloadable apps** that create an atmosphere of engagement with customers
- **active social media connections** that allow you to go beyond a simple "Like" to sending timely messages such as greetings and birthday wishes
- **SMS text messaging** that lets you send special offers and coupons to customers
- **"refer a friend"** offers
- **Quick Response (QR) codes** that customers can scan to access offers and information
- **pre-set offers** that are automatically sent out at the time you select
- **at-a-glance reporting**, showing who responded to various offers.

Mobile marketing can be incredibly beneficial and is most likely easier than you think. New communication channels open up an opportunity for you to interact with people, whenever and wherever they are, and build solid, enduring relationships with them.

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GUARANTEED

You're Guaranteed to Make Money

When You Set Up Our "Live and Silent Auction Raffle Kit" at Your Next Fundraiser Because We Give You Your First Balloon Ride FREE!

Everyone wants to go up on a Hot Air Balloon Ride! Our Balloon Ride Flight Certificates will be the hit of your event! Nothing is more fun than floating silently through the sky with beautiful views in every direction. Our Balloon Ride Flight Certificates are good for a full year at any of our 200 locations nationwide. The people who take the rides will have exciting stories to tell. Just go to **www.FundraisingRides.org** and download your free "Live and Silent Auction and Raffle Kit," or call us at **1-800-762-7464.** We will mail or email a kit to you. It's as easy as 1-2-3.

1. *Silent Auction Table.* Just set up the three Silent Auction posters we provide in the kit: The Ride for One Person, the Ride for Two, and the Ride for Four and watch the bidding go wild. You'll make money on every ride you sell. Sell as many as you can. The more you sell, the more you make. **The sky's the limit!**

UP, UP AND AWAY!

2. *Live Auction.* If you wish, you may include a Ride for One, Two or Four in your Live Auction. A good auctioneer can get the bidding up high, bringing in more income for your projects.

3. *Sell Raffle Tickets.* During the evening sell raffle tickets to your guests. No one minds spending five or ten dollars for the chance to win a Hot Air Balloon Ride. Use your free Certificate for the Raffle and everything you collect is yours. Most organizations make between $400 and $1,000 on the raffle, depending on the size of the group. The raffle is fun and is an easy-to-do, high moneymaker.

When the event is over, order your free Balloon Ride Flight Certificate and any others you may have sold. You get your free Certificate even if you don't sell any others. Most organizations use their free Certificate for the Raffle. The Silent Auction posters all have minimum bids so if you sell a ride you make money. If you don't sell a ride you just don't order it. It's foolproof. No upfront costs. Easy to do. Because we give you one free ride you are Guaranteed to make money. The free "Live and Silent Auction and Raffle Kit" explains everything. Get your kit now online or by phone.

Welcome Aboard!

"This is the Best Birthday Present Ever!"

"I wanted something that we could do together! I bought the tickets for my son for his 10th birthday. We took our ride in Charlotte, NC and the sights and views were absolutely amazing. This was definitely an experience that would last forever for us. I think that my son's testimonial sums it up nicely..."

"Even though I had to get up early, this was a great memory that me and my mom will remember forever. All of the kids in my 4th grade class will be so jealous to hear what I did for my birthday!"

Here's a Sample of Thousands Who Participate

United Way, Linda Vista Elementary School, CA, Avon Grove Library, PA, St. Boneface Episcopal Church, WI, American Cancer Society, Wolverine Band Boosters, FL, The Washington Hospital, PA, St. Ignatius College Prep, PA, Pets/People Humane Society, OK, The Boys and Girls Clubs, Montessori Center of South Dayton, OH, Special Olympics, Metropolitan United Methodist Church, MI, Mothers of Preschoolers, CO, Jewish Community Centers, NJ, Callier Preschool Parent Association, TX, Make-A-Wish Foundation.

www.FundraisingRides.org

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