



Resource Guide

DVG 2007 Annual Conference



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Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

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DVG 2007 Annual Conference: **Lost in Translation: Finding Your Way to Clearer Communications**

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Conference Schedule

8:30 to 9:00 AM

REGISTRATION, CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST AND NETWORKING

9:00 to 10:15 AM

MORNING PROGRAM

WELCOME

- ▶ Nancy Lanham, Executive Director, Delaware Valley Grantmakers

KEYNOTE ADDRESS:

- ▶ Andy Goodman

10:15 to 11:00 AM

NETWORKING BREAK

11:00 AM to 12:30 PM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Session #1: *Storytelling as Best Practice*

Session Leader: Andy Goodman

Session #2: *Building Your Communications Toolkit*

Session Leaders: Sharon Gallagher and Barbara Beck,
Sage Communications

Session #3: *Navigating the New Media*

Session Leader: Jon Cooper and Michael B. Stalbaum, Unreal Marketing

Session #4: *Breakthrough Messaging: Using Value-Based Language to Advance Your Mission*

Session Leaders: Liz Hersh, Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, and Dick Brooks,
ActionMedia

12:30 to 1:30 PM

LUNCH

1:30 to 2:30 PM

LUNCHEON PROGRAM

SPEAKER:

- ▶ M. Christine DeVita, President, The Wallace Foundation

2:30 PM

ADJOURN

Speaker Biographies

Keynote Speaker: **Andy Goodman**



After founding and running the American Comedy Network, an international radio syndication company, Andy grew weary of constantly hearing from friends in Los Angeles how radio is a "weak sister" to television. So, in 1991 he moved his family to California and launched a successful career as a television writer. He spent three seasons writing and co-producing the ABC-TV show "Dinosaurs" (plus co-writing the pilot episode of "The Nanny"), but ultimately learned that TV writers were considered weak sisters by screenwriters. Without hesitation, he made the inevitable next move and went to work for an environmental group.

As president of the Environmental Media Association (EMA) from 1993 to 1998, Andy worked with members of the film and television industries, encouraging them to incorporate environmental messages into their work. EMA also partnered with other environmental groups, helping them develop and communicate their messages more effectively. Environmental Defense, Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, and many other national and local groups turned to EMA during Andy's tenure to coordinate their media campaigns.

Now a communications consultant and trainer based in Los Angeles, Andy specializes in helping nonprofits, foundations, government agencies and educational institutions communicate more effectively through print, broadcast media, and the Internet. For a list of current clients and sample projects completed, [click here](#).

As a nationally-recognized public speaker, Andy regularly delivers presentations including, "The Four Connecting Points," "Storytelling as Best Practice," "Why Bad Ads Happen to Good Causes," "Dramatically Better Meetings," and "Why Bad Presentations Happen to Good Causes."

He publishes a monthly newsletter, free-range thinking, that profiles best practices in public interest communications; and is author of the books *Why Bad Ads Happen to Good Causes* and *Why Bad Presentations Happen to Good Causes*. Andy also serves on the advisory board of VolunteerMatch, as a senior fellow for Civic Ventures, and was selected by Al Gore to train 1,000 volunteers who will deliver presentations about global warming around the US in 2007.

Luncheon Speaker:

M. Christine DeVita **President, The Wallace Foundation**

M. Christine DeVita is President of The Wallace Foundation, a private charitable foundation created by Lila and DeWitt Wallace, the founders of Reader's Digest, as a legacy of their own philanthropic lives. DeVita joined the foundation in November 1987. Since then, she has led the foundation as it has shifted away from project-focused grantmaking and toward more integrated strategies that combine program, evaluation and communications expertise to deliver social benefits beyond the recipients of the foundation's



direct grants. Born in New York, she earned her B.A. magna cum laude from Queens College of the City University of New York; and her J.D. cum laude from Fordham University School of Law, where she was an editor of the Fordham Law Review. Prior to joining The Wallace Foundation, she was deputy general counsel for The Reader's Digest Association. She is chairman of the Foundation Center.

SESSION PRESENTERS:

Building Your Communications Toolkit

Barbara Beck and Sharon Gallagher

Co-Founders

Sage Communications Partners, LLC

<http://www.sage-communications.com/>

Barbara Beck is co-founding partner of Sage Communications. Nonprofit leaders rely on Barbara for her smart, honest and direct advice. She connects her work for clients to their strategies and is the first to ask, "Does that really make sense? Why are you doing that?" Previously, Barbara was a public affairs officer at The Pew Charitable Trusts, where she was recognized as the go-to expert for media relations and strategic and crisis communications counsel. Prior to her work at the foundation, Barbara served as director of news and public affairs at The University of Pennsylvania, handling strategic communications, issues management and crisis communications. Barbara also has two decades of experience in the news business. She was an editor at *KFWB*, an all-news Los Angeles-based radio station, and an editor and reporter at *The Los Angeles Herald Examiner* and *The Philadelphia Daily News*.

Sharon Gallagher took a unique combination of agency skills, foundation experience and nonprofit work and brought them together to create a practice where nonprofits and foundations could go for solid communications counsel. Clients now know her for her passion and creativity for promoting causes and framing the issues that address organizations' missions. Prior to co-founding Sage, Sharon was a public affairs officer at The Pew Charitable Trusts for seven years, where she was recognized for creating integrated communications strategies for the foundation and its grantees. Sharon also worked for seven years in the advertising/pr firm sector in Philadelphia and Providence, RI and also served as the director of development and special events for The National MS Society. She is currently a board member of the Fleisher Art Memorial and serves on the communications advisory committees for Project HOME, Alex's Lemonade Stand, The Philadelphia Committee to End Homelessness.

Navigating the New Media

Jon Cooper

Vice President, Marketing Systems & Product Development

Unreal Marketing

<http://www.unrealmarketing.com/>

As VP, Marketing Systems & Product Development, Jon Cooper manages and coordinates the Unreal full-service banner, including organic and paid search listings, media buying, and direct content feeds. His team includes experienced online marketers, expert keyword optimizers, and organic search developers whose efforts provide industry-leading ROI for Unreal's clients. Cooper is responsible for the development of Unreal's next-generation marketing technology platform, designed to

integrate Unreal's multi-level services and allow Unreal's online marketers to meet the highest standards of performance on behalf of their clients.

Prior to joining Unreal, Cooper served as Director of Distribution Programs at High Beam Inc., where he acquired new customers through partnerships with search engines and online properties. He also worked at Tucows, launching their online music distribution initiative, and he directed sales operations for Disc Makers, the U.S.'s largest independent CD replicator.

Cooper completed a BBA at the University of Wisconsin's School of Business and a degree in Music Composition from Boston's Berklee College of Music.

Michael B. Stalbaum
Founder and CEO
Unreal Marketing

As CEO, Michael B. Stalbaum is the leader of Unreal Marketing and directs the company with a focus on future planning. Stalbaum assists in client acquisitions and growth strategy, oversees the accounting and financial health of the company, and manages overall profitability.

Stalbaum developed his passion for marketing while attending law school, where he worked to create marketing campaigns and promotions for local restaurants and charitable organizations. He left his career in law and started Unreal Marketing Solutions in 1999, with a mission to help companies build and maintain a strong presence in the burgeoning online arena.

In addition to his role as CEO of Unreal, Stalbaum dedicates some of his time educating audiences about search engine marketing. He has spoken about SEM and entrepreneurialism at a variety of colleges and conferences, as well as on National Public Radio.

Stalbaum holds a law degree and an MBA from Temple University and a B.S. in Marketing from the Pennsylvania State University.

Breakthrough Messaging: Using Value-Based Language to Advance Your Mission

Dick Brooks
Co- Founder
ActionMedia

<http://www.actionmedia.org/>

ActionMedia provides training, research, and consultation services on issue framing and strategic communication to people working for positive social change. Dick Brooks co-founded ActionMedia in 1994 with Michael Goldberg, who together brought three decades of journalism and broadcast management experience and insights. They had been working behind the scenes to help a small Chippewa Reservation fight an Exxon metallic-sulfide mining project. In that battle they saw first hand that advocates – armed with solid facts, great ideas, and the best of intentions – were unable to communicate effectively outside small circles of like-minded experts and supporters. People tend to overestimate the value of the media they have the least access to, such as national newspapers and broadcasts, and underestimate the power of the media they have the most control over – their own voices. They specialize in issues of growth and development – housing, transportation, land use, and energy issues such as electric

generation systems for the 21st century, global warming, new technology, innovation and renewable energy development.

Prior to co-founding ActionMedia, Brooks worked as a reporter, producer and manager for print media and public radio. He has numerous national and international broadcast awards and fellowships, and served as a consultant to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. He remains active in training community broadcast journalists.

Elizabeth G. Hersh
Executive Director
Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania
<http://www.housingalliancepa.org/>

Liz Hersh is a professional social worker with a master's degree from the University of Chicago. Over the course of a varied 25-year career in Human Services, she has served as Bureau Chief of the Illinois Department of Public Aid, the Executive Director of the Tenants Action Group of Philadelphia, and the Executive Director of the Blueprint to End Homelessness in Philadelphia. She created and administered a successful volunteer program at Jobs for Youth/Chicago. She has provided management consulting to numerous non-profit organizations, has worked in youth employment in a housing project and provided basic services to migrant farm workers in Wisconsin.

A native Pennsylvanian, Ms. Hersh travels the state extensively to better understand the range of issues and build an effective advocacy network for the Housing Alliance.

Under her leadership, the Housing Alliance has doubled its membership base and budget, while becoming a well-respected source for expert information on housing policy, not only in Pennsylvania, but nationally as well.

The Alliance has published several important works on reclaiming vacant property, addressing community opposition to workforce housing and understanding the housing needs of our communities, which have resulted in new state legislation, funding and programs.

Reference Articles

Foundations Should Start Hiring Storytellers

By Joanne Edgar

(Originally published in Chronicle of Philanthropy, November 23, 2006. Reprinted by permission of the author.)

It is often said that foundations contribute two assets to social change — money and knowledge. But too many foundations fail to capture and share a critical part of what they know: the stories that explain what they do, why they do it, what they learn, and what difference it all makes.

Every foundation sits on a treasure trove of stories that represent its values, its goals, and its impact. These stories are complex, comprehensive, and engaging, and they are the face of social change, the catalysts for moving people from apathy to action. And they personalize the message.

These are the stories that foundation staff members see every day — the accounts that explain how people and communities are affected by a wide range of social problems and how new approaches can make a difference.

As grant makers increasingly focus on accountability and transparency, they support evaluations, gather data, and measure and publish results. But without the stories behind the data, these efforts end up seeming like buying a ticket to the movies and getting a PowerPoint presentation.

Recently, some foundations have begun to recognize the importance of documenting their progress through narratives. Annual reports increasingly include the voices of grantees. Newsletters and Web sites profile organizations that are making a difference in their communities. Video clips and podcasts are streamed online. But very few foundations make comprehensive story gathering a standard feature of their operations over time.

Foundation staff members and grantees are simply too busy to handle this work in such depth. Many do not have the skills. As a consequence, foundation reports are still laden with clinical jargon, and the real stories are left in the heads of staff members and grantees.

Grant makers need to dedicate a staff position to this work. The position could be the responsibility of a senior fellow or it could carry its own title: storyteller, story gatherer, or writer in residence. It need not be a full-time job, but the person who gathers the stories must develop long-term relationships with the foundation's staff, its grantees, and the people the foundation seeks to influence and serve.

How can these stories be used?

Comprehensive storytelling offers many benefits. It helps program officers understand the spirit of work accomplished early in a grant cycle, before results can be expected to show up in data.

It can help foundations engage organizations as partners in social change, educate policy makers and other leaders, motivate community members to join efforts to reform policies and systems that do not work, and explain a foundation's work to the news media.

Storytelling can also help build dialogue and collaboration between foundations, help to get out the word about programs and practices that work, and articulate what is not effective so that others will not make the same mistakes. Finally, when done consistently over time, storytelling documents the legacy of a foundation.

If the writer in residence does a good job, the work will also build storytelling skills among staff members, trustees, and grantees. Foundation officers will have compelling material for their speeches, and foundation staff members within the organization will be better educated about one another's work.

I discovered the joy of storytelling over the past six years when I followed the Massachusetts state child-welfare agency through a process of systemic change that is transforming its work with families of abused or neglected children.

My assignment, supported by Casey Family Programs and the Marguerite Casey Foundation, included documenting the transformation and producing regular written reports and case studies. I sat in on countless meetings, interviewed the agency's leaders and caseworkers, and spent time with families in the system.

I found a true excitement for change among employees of this large bureaucracy.

Because I visited regularly and staff members got to know my work, they trusted me to witness their struggles as well as their victories. I met parents who used to call the agency a "child snatcher," but who now sit at the table with social workers and administrators to redesign policies and practices. I saw social workers change their approach to families, no longer defining parents in the system as "perpetrators," but reaching out to ask what parents need to keep their children safe and help their families thrive.

I captured these stories. My reports were distributed to the more than 3,000 employees of the child-welfare agency across the state, who read and discussed the changes that were affecting their work lives. The reports were distributed to Massachusetts legislators, who determine budgets and regulations for the agency. The reports were shared with members of news media, so that they, too, could understand the human considerations behind the changes put in place.

Casey Family Programs, which works to improve child-welfare systems in numerous states, put the reports on its Web site and sent them to key child-welfare leaders across the country. This led to meetings between Massachusetts and Wyoming child-welfare officials, for example, on how to collect and use data. Casey staff members also shared examples and strategies from the Massachusetts experience in other states.

Proving the cause and effect of social change, of course, is an elusive commodity. But if foundations fail to document their chain of stories, no one will know, even if they are successful. Foundations and nonprofit organizations will remain captive of a perpetual cycle of reinventing the wheel.

Storytelling this extensive is a major investment. But I believe it is an essential ingredient of successful social change. Foundations are privileged to shape and witness change. If they are truly reflective about their grant making, they will collect their stories over time and offer them as gifts to others who share the goal of making the world a better place.

Joanne Edgar is a consultant who assists foundations and nonprofit organizations in using communication as a tool to achieve social change. She has worked with Casey Family Programs, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Open Society Institute, and others. She is a communication strategist, manager, writer, and editor. Ms. Edgar was a founding editor of *Ms.* magazine and also served as director of communications at the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation for 10 years, where she focused on integrating communications goals and activities into major program initiatives.

Spring 2007

Thinking Out Loud in the Public Arena

By Doug Bauer

Thanks to Bill and Melinda Gates, Warren Buffett, Muhammad Yunus, the Google guys, Bill Clinton and countless celebrities, the field of philanthropy finally got what it wanted: people's attention.

For years, donors and foundations have sought to shine a spotlight on their work and the work of their nonprofit partners. And for years, such attempts were met with either a giant yawn or shrug from mainstream media outlets.

Well, no more. Philanthropy is hot and we've gone from, "I'm sorry, you do *what* for a living?" to "Hey, great—what are you trying to do or who are you trying to help?"

While we should embrace this moment of acceptance, we should also stop and reflect on what we want to say and why we want to say it. Why?

Because the role of language and the communication of ideas is everything. This point is especially important because we are a field that is quite comfortable with a lexicon that is stuffed with jargon that only a business consultant or an academic can appreciate.

A key goal for the field of philanthropy in 2007 is to leverage this hard-fought attention and acceptance and share even better stories of caring and success and how charitable dollars make a difference.

What cannot happen is stories shared that are not clear, have no scale or scope, or do not contain hope or heart.

A key goal for the field of philanthropy in 2007 is to leverage this hard-fought attention and acceptance and share even better stories of caring and success and how charitable dollars make a difference.

Being inconclusive or unclear in one's work, using too much jargon, and/or appearing out of touch or out of sync with the issues could be something that hurts us as a field—not helps us.

It is, in short, not constructive to be thinking out loud in the arena of public opinion.

But, wait a minute—aren't ideas the currency of philanthropy? Should we not openly wrestle with ideas in order to take risks or to explore for solutions that help the greater good?

The answer is, of course, yes. Donors and grantmakers should be active participants in debates on the issues or how to enhance a community. The upside of open debate is that it helps to refine or strengthen thinking or discover a solution, strategy or tactic. The downside of open debate is that there are usually winners and losers. And sometimes debates do more damage than good. We must be wise about what debates we choose to participate in.

Going forward, the goal for donors and the field of philanthropy is to be active in the debate. But to do so, we must:

- Communicate clearly;
- Thoroughly know the issues we want to positively impact;
- Seek engagement;
- Be transparent in our thinking, our behavior, and our work; and
- Use language that everyone understands.

A tall order? It shouldn't be. But for donors and grantmakers it can be. Why? If there is one dynamic that is deeply embedded in our work it is this: private action for public good.

At this important, watershed, moment for philanthropy, a failure to communicate effectively would be a disaster.

We are, as a field, quite comfortable with this dynamic. In days and years gone past, it was acceptable. But now and with philanthropy truly out in the daylight and not in the shadows, it is no longer acceptable. We, as donors and grantmakers, must accept that the context of our work has dramatically changed.

But the change in context is a good thing: more communication of our work; better articulation of our theories of change; stronger justification for our investments and sharing what we have learned and the results we have generated will only reinforce why philanthropy is a force for good.

Calls for better communication in the field of philanthropy are evergreen. But timing is everything. And at this important, watershed, moment for philanthropy, a failure to communicate effectively would be a disaster. We must leverage this moment in time and sincerely communicate to the various publics the value of our role and the value of our work.

To do this means less arrogance from us and more acceptance of other people's ideas. Less pouting when we're criticized. And to reach out rather than retreat when there is disagreement.

We know how vital the notion of philanthropy's private action for public good is for our society and our world. But only we, donors and grantmakers, can make the case that it is seen and valued as a virtue and not a threat.

Doug Bauer is a Senior Vice President at Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors and leads the Strategic Initiative Team.

Philanthropy June 18, 2007

Private Foundations Should Consider PR

Philanthropic outfits increasingly are adopting PR programs to achieve their goals. Here's why some old PR objections are no longer valid

by Rich Polt

In the veiled world of private philanthropy, the practice of public relations is eschewed by many foundation leaders. Some believe that proactive media outreach is tantamount to inviting the Internal Revenue Service in for an audit, while others feel that publicity in some way diminishes the altruistic nature of giving. Yet over the last few years, a shift has begun to take place and foundations are seeing how external communications can complement and even strengthen their giving.

PR can be an invaluable tool for foundations of all sizes. It shines the spotlight on grantee successes; inspires action among constituencies; creates an environment for collaboration among multiple stakeholders; advances key issues; and perhaps most importantly, it highlights the foundation's role as a good community citizen that is leading by example. All one has to do is read the newspaper today and the impact of philanthropy in particular, and the nonprofit sector in general, will be readily apparent.

Thanks in part to the high-profile actions of several mega-philanthropists (need I mention names?), top foundations and their grantees are commanding greater quantities of ink and airtime. Not surprisingly, the media's coverage of philanthropy has grown in scope and fervor. This has created a tremendous opportunity for small and midsize foundations to also test the PR waters, as a means of building greater impact in and among the communities they serve.

Despite the changing media landscape and the increased use of communications programs, the foundations that are embracing PR are still considered the early adopters. Often, when speaking with foundation professionals, I find myself having to respond to their perceived hurdles for initiating a public relations plan. These are the ones I hear most:

1. "External communications requires a fundamental culture shift, and that is just not the priority for us right now."
2. "Press coverage is inevitably skewed and the media is always looking for dirt. Why would we willingly subject ourselves to that?"
3. "We don't have the capacity to handle the inevitable increase in grant requests."

In truth, these hurdles are the result of misinformation and an outmoded culture of privacy. Below, I take a brief look at each and offer my thoughts on why these should no longer be grounds for discounting a public relations program.

Culture Shift

The first hurdle has to do with changing the culture of a foundation from one that is inherently tight-lipped to one that values external communications. Before undertaking this effort, foundations should ask themselves two fundamental questions: 1) In a society where people associate integrity with transparency, is it in the best interest of our foundation to remain compartmentalized from the community and silent about our impact? 2) Will positive press for our grantees and/or the causes we support yield a greater return on our investment and therefore allow us to achieve greater impact? For growing numbers of foundations, the answer to the first question is "no," and to the second question, an emphatic "yes."

A 2006 report by the Philanthropy Awareness Initiative (PAI), titled *Making American Foundations Relevant: Conversations with 21st Century Leaders in Philanthropy*, offers this: "Good works do not speak for themselves. Sharing stories about successes and lessons-learned contributes to your effectiveness by creating awareness and understanding for what you do.... Behavior that is insular, fragmented, and reactionary is perceived to be both

widespread and problematic among foundations. A culture shift is needed in order to convey that foundations are benevolent, honest, collaborative, and instructive, and that they act with integrity, and work for the public good."

The Witch Hunt Myth

It is a tremendous misperception that the media is looking to bring down people and organizations. Yes, the media likes a good scandal because it sells papers, but that is not what drives reporters and editors on a day-to-day basis. It would be more accurate to say that the media likes a story with controversy and discourse. But these are also not prerequisites for coverage. Interestingly, stories that are inspirational by nature—i.e., overcoming the odds, making a difference—are getting more attention than ever before.

A separate 2006 report by the PAI looked at 38,000 news stories on philanthropy from 1990 to 2004. They found that, "contrary to common perception of coverage about the sector, only 1% of stories analyzed were negative."

What happens is that we tend to remember the scathing exposés more than we do other stories because we're thinking, "thank goodness that wasn't me." Also, consider the content of these negative exposés. They are likely the result of something that was going to receive coverage independent of a foundation's PR activities (i.e., no foundation ever issued a press release heralding fiscal abuses). When all is said and done, the vast majority of media coverage I'm seeing about foundations is positive in nature.

Bolstering Grant Requests

Yes, increased visibility will lead to a greater influx of grant requests. However, if a public relations program is grounded by solid messaging that clearly defines the foundation's mission and outlines the kinds of grants it makes, the benefits should be twofold: a stronger pool of grant requests and, in the long run, a healthier philanthropic investment portfolio for the foundation.

I was recently speaking with Jeff Martin, director of communications at the Council on Foundations, about this topic. He made the analogy to *American Idol*. When the show first started, it had a finite talent pool from which to draw. As the program grew in popularity, it developed systems to vet greater numbers of candidates, which resulted in a much stronger talent pool. By vigorously articulating grant-making criteria and clearly communicating this information to prospective grantees, the influx that comes as a result of public relations efforts can be effectively managed.

PR: A Small Step First

All of this is academic, of course, if you do not believe that PR will ultimately help increase the impact and efficacy of your foundation. If PR is something that you are considering, but you are not certain where to begin, I recommend dipping your toe in the water first. For relatively low cost and a minimal investment of time/resources, foundations can outline short-term PR projects with clear and definable objectives. These initial projects will serve as the litmus test for continued, and perhaps even greater, integration of a communications strategy into your foundation's operations and culture.

Polt is the founder and president of Louder Than Words, a Boston-based PR agency serving foundations, nonprofits, and businesses that are philanthropically minded, community-driven, and socially responsible.

* * *

This Issue: Five Keys to Creating Motivating Messages**September 19, 2007****Motivating Messages are Strategic**
Five Core Principles of Motivating Messages

1. Action drives message
2. Self-interest drives action
3. Desire trumps need
4. No common desire means no message
5. Less is more

Summary**Additional Resources**

From Becky Andrews, Marketing Manager, Fieldstone Alliance:

IT'S A COMMON COMPLAINT among nonprofit leaders, "When we're dealing with such important issues...why aren't more people listening?"

This issue of *Tools* and the next are adapted from our new book, *Message Matters: Succeeding at the Crossroads of Mission and Market*, by management and marketing expert Rebecca Leet.

Message Matters gives nonprofit leaders a simple framework for developing strategic messages that prompt people to fund them, vote their way, participate in their program, buy their service, volunteer for their organization, quote them, adopt a best practice, or take other specific actions.

In this issue, we're going to look under the hood to see what exactly makes for a motivating message.

Motivating Messages are Strategic

When we talk about creating motivating messages, what we're really talking about is developing *strategic* messages.

A strategic message breaks through information overload, catching and holding the audience through the first fateful minute of contact.

Basically, a strategic message is a set of statements that prompts one or more targeted audiences to take a desired action. Here are other characteristics:

- A strategic message consists of a **core** statement that is heard by all audiences and **subset** statements that are specific to each individual target audience.
- A strategic message does three things: it **captures** the attention of a

target audience, it **focuses** the subsequent conversation on attaining mutual desires, and it results in **action** you and your listener both want.

- There are three common reasons why strategic messages are developed: to prompt an **action**, to create an institutional **identity**, and to describe a complex **idea** or program.
- A strategic message is different from a brand, a frame, a slogan, and an elevator speech, although it shares some attributes of each.

Strategic messages are created through a structured process (like strategic planning, although strategic messages are developed over weeks, not months). They are tied to the larger mission and goals of the organization. They are aimed at specific groups and designed to appeal to the desires of those groups.

Five Core Principles of Motivating Messages

1. **Action drives message**—know why you speak.
2. **Self-interest drives action**—to move people, speak to their self-interest, not yours.
3. **Desire trumps need**—people have needs; people seek wants.
4. **No common desire means no message**—without overlap between your organization's desire and your audience's desire, an effective strategic message is impossible.
5. **Less is more**—fewer words, fewer audiences, fewer points equals more success.

Let's look at each in more depth.

1. Action drives message

Begin with the end in mind—the action you want your audience to take. This concept is almost absurdly obvious, but it's often overlooked.

Many, if not most, strategic message development groups start with the assumption that everyone in the group knows what action they're seeking. This assumption is almost always wrong.

Groups often resist specifying the action focus. They'll digress into a conversation about the web site or the need for more news media attention. Most people are more comfortable discussing smaller tactical issues than larger strategic ones.

Identifying the action is a significant strategic issue and often the hardest part of the message development process. Being precise about what their organization wants to accomplish is not, unfortunately, a strength of some nonprofits. However, it is an essential ingredient in strategic message development.

2. Self-interest drives action

The second concept is as obvious as the first: *people act because they want something*.

This reality is difficult to acknowledge for many in the nonprofit sector. But, a successful strategic message is almost impossible to develop without accepting

the fact that target audiences will respond based on their interests, not yours. Without this orientation, nonprofits inevitably end up telling people what to do or think, which is rarely a recipe for success.

The self-interest may be tangible or intangible. It may be a feeling: "I feel generous when I donate to the United Way." It may be a material benefit: "Maintaining my association membership will give me access to the latest developments in my profession." It may be an anticipated benefit: "I'll volunteer to work on Saturday to finish the report because it will show my dedication and increase my chances of getting the director's job." Or the action may actually be inaction: "We've got to stop requiring older volunteers to work nights if we want to keep them working with us."

Self-interest is not inherently a character flaw. It is, by nature, simply natural. We pay attention to what is more interesting to us. However, being unwilling to accept its importance as a motivator will fatally flaw message development.

3. Desire trumps need

When identifying an audience's self-interest, it's important to focus more on what the audience *wants* than on what it *needs*. Even when human conditions appear to be situations of obvious need, action may be driven equally—or more—by desire.

Most associations, nonprofits, and foundations are focused on need. This focus contributes to the tendency of nonprofits to *tell* their stakeholders what they should do rather than *ask* them what they want. The "I know what you need" culture is pervasive—if not predominant. And it is a major impediment to successful message development.

The Illinois Department of Transportation proved the power of desire in 2000 when it began replacing the didactic "Give 'Em a Brake" signs at highway construction sites with evocative signs that said "My Daddy/Mommy Works Here—Slow Down Please." In the first year, the state had a 30 percent reduction in work zone fatalities.¹

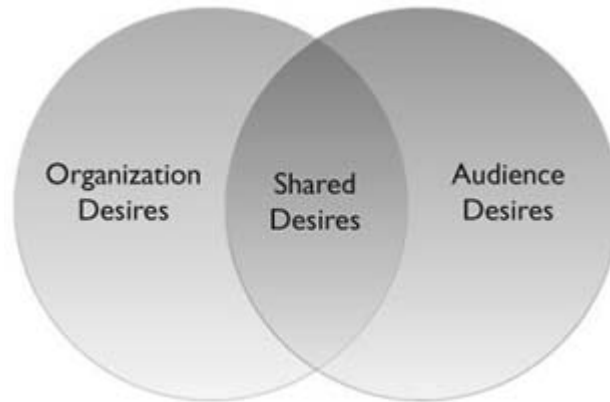
4. No common desire means no message

Mutual satisfaction is the key to successful messaging. The very simple diagram shown below captures both the concept and process that's at the heart of strategic message development. This "Action Connection" shows where the desire of the organization overlaps with the desire of its target audience.

If the circles overlap, there is shared desire, which is the foundation for continued communication. It is from this shared desire that action originates.

If no overlap can be created, then no effective message can be designed because the essential ingredient for sustained communication—shared desire—is absent.

The Action Connection



There comes a point in strategic message development when the Action Connection is either recognizable or obviously absent. If no overlap can be created, then no effective message can be designed. A sound bite may be created—but it will not capture the audience’s attention and hold it so that more information can be conveyed, which is what an effective message does.

5. Less is more

The problem with nonprofit messaging is that too many organizations “want to have four goals, ten audiences, and twenty messages,” notes Dana Shelley, director of strategic communications for the Annie E. Casey Foundation.² This is a sure recipe for failure.



Well, it is memorable...and brief

Here are two key tips to remember:

- The most successful strategic messages (core and subset) contain no more than three major points. Fewer than three is fine, more than three is not. The speaker usually cannot remember more than three, and the listener cannot successfully process more than three.
- When speaking, you may have fifteen to twenty seconds to catch someone’s ear, which is why a good core message is rarely longer than twenty-five to thirty words. If you’re initially successful, you may have upwards of a minute to capture a listener’s attention.

Think of messaging like fishing. A message is bait: If the bait is too big, the fish may nibble but swim away. If the bait is the right size, the fish takes it in and you have greatly increased your chance of hooking the fish. Once hooked, you have time to speak at some length about your concern.

Summary

Moving people to action is essential to achieving the mission of most nonprofit

organizations. In an age of information overload and nanosecond transmission, your message determines whether you are heard and people respond. Developing *strategic* messages will help you speak to your audiences' desires and be more likely to get them to act.

In the next issue of *Tools*, we'll look at two assessment tools which will help you determine how much your organization already knows about its goals, its approach to communication, and its constituents' desires.

Additional Resources

Rebecca Leet & Associates

www.LeetAssociates.com

This link takes you to short examples of situations in which Rebecca Leet & Associates has helped clients develop messages.

Cause Communications

www.causecommunications.org

They have some very good hands-on publications such as "Communications Toolkit: A guide to navigating communications for the nonprofit world" and "Why Bad Presentations Happen to Good Causes." And, nonprofits can order or download them for no charge!

The Communications Network

www.comnetwork.org

This is an association of foundations that provides training and resources in public relations and strategic communications.

Community Media Workshop

www.newstips.org

The Workshop trains people working on community problems to tell their stories to the media, tips sensitive journalists to the importance of these stories, and tries to create better relationships between the media and the diverse communities which make up Chicago and the Midwest. The focus is on Chicago, but the resources can be used by any nonprofit.

Fieldstone Alliance

www.FieldstoneAlliance.org

Article: *Stakeholder Analysis Tool* ([Tools You Can Use e-newsletter, March 15, 2006](#))

This tool was developed for public policy work, but it can be used by any group wishing to understand, influence, and mobilize its constituents.

Service: [Strategy Consulting](#)

Fieldstone Alliance's consulting team has extensive experience helping foundations, nonprofits, and networks develop clear vision and strategy and create strategic and business plans to inform their messages and guide their work. We know how to infuse organizations with strategic thinking and capacity for nimble action. For more information, contact Gordon Goodwin at 651.556.4502 or ggoodwin@FieldstoneAlliance.org.

The Jargon Files

www.emcf.org

The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation has a series of free booklets about the troubling use of jargon in the foundation world. The booklets are fun to read and

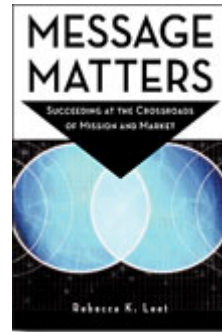
make good points about how jargon muddles messages.

Footnotes

¹John Kelly, "It's the Message That Counts, Answer Man Says," The Washington Post, August 13, 2006.

²Dana Shelley, phone interview by author, November 21, 2005.

Photo courtesy of the U.S. National Archives. Photographer, Charles O'Rear. Date: 1973.



This issue is adapted from [*Message Matters: Succeeding at the Crossroads of Mission and Market*](#), by Rebecca K. Leet.

\$26.95, Item No. 069636. You can order online or call us at 1-800-274-6024.

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Spotlight: The ABCs of Strategic Communications

This article details the process of designing a plan for strategic communications as discussed in The Jossey-Bass Guide to Strategic Communications for Nonprofits, written by Kathy Bonk, Henry Griggs and Emily Tynes, 1999.

A communications plan is an important part of an organization's daily operation. As a living document, it frames media activities, including internal and external communications, clarifies the organization's priorities, target audiences, resources and staff assignments.

What are the elements of a communications plan?

The elements are basically the same whether an organization is, for example, a large not-for-profit hospital, a museum, a university, a small advocacy group, service provider, or foundation. A communications plan affirms and is driven by the organization's goals and outcomes, its vision, as expressed in a mission statement, and its values and beliefs.

Overall communications goals:

The organization's communications goals may include:

- Developing and implementing communications plans for enhanced visibility and crisis management
- Generating positive media coverage by cultivating relationships with reporters
- Increasing the awareness and involvement of specific, targeted groups of individuals
- Changing attitudes or teaching new skills to clients and staff
- Generating support from the public, policy makers, and clients for community reforms across your state
- Encouraging financial contributions

The activities in the communications plan should support the organization's overall communications goals. It is important to set measurable goals in order to know when they have been achieved and to be able to gauge the progress along the way.

Vision and mission statement

The organizational mission statement is the cornerstone of the communications plan, driving the overall direction of media activities. The organization should include this mission statement at the very beginning of the communications plan to remind staff, board members and other internal decision makers that media-related activities flow from the organization's core mission and vision, not just from its communications department. Media activities enhance the organization's overall image, advance its agenda and influence public will.

Organizational values and beliefs

Every organization, foundation, public agency and institution has at its heart a system of values and beliefs. These values should be reflected in all that the organization plans and does, including communications goals and strategic plans.

Critical elements of a communications plan

In addition to the goals, vision and values that form the cornerstone of an organization's communications strategy, there are six critical elements organizations need to construct that strategy:

- An understanding of the target audience and how to reach it
- Research into past media coverage and public opinion about the issues
- Messages to be delivered
- Materials to be produced
- Financial resources from which staff and equipment will be drawn
- A written work plan

It is important to identify these elements and put them in place before implementing day-to-day activities. Successful implementation of a communications plan depends on pulling these elements together:

Identification of the target audience

The first task is to identify who the target audience is and how to reach it. List categories of people who are important to the success of the organization and identify ways to reach them. Audiences may include donors, potential members, elected officials, church groups, judges and the legal community, business leaders, communities of color, trade associations, women's leaders, teens, senior citizens, and the general public. In addition to these important outside audiences, it is important for organization not to forget its internal audiences, such as staff, board members and volunteers.

Research into media coverage, public opinion and facts How do target audiences perceive the organization and its issues? With the Internet, it is not difficult to develop a profile of how the organization's issues are covered in the media, how often the organization is quoted or described, and what public opinion polls have been done on relevant topics. A short and simple media analysis can be an instructive tool and will indicate the amount of resources necessary to increase name recognition.

Good data can be a gold mine in outreach to the media. Most media use “factoids” to help their audiences put stories in perspective. A good communications plan should collect data on the important issues in formats that can answer the “who, what, when, where, why and how.”

Message development

Develop a phrase of four to ten words to describe the organization that can be used every time a reporter does a story about the agency. It is important to be able to tell reporters how the group wants to be described; otherwise, journalists will come up with descriptions that may not be accurate.

The next step is to develop message points for the organization's spokespeople to use when they talk with reporters. One might consist of the basic facts about the group, but should be limited to three or four points to communicate in each interview.

Answer the following questions in-house before every media event or interview: What should the headline be? What should the article include? Answers given in the interview or at the media event should always deliver the key points.

Production of high-quality public relations materials Public relations materials are important tools for reaching reporters, donors, policy makers, and others in the target audience. These should include:

- A consistent and easy-to-recognize logo and stationery design
- An easy-to-understand, one page fact sheet about the organization
- At least one press kit on the issues and activities to be highlighted in the media
- Hard copy brochures and consistent Web site content
- Videos, slides, overheads and computer presentations
- Reports and studies for public release as news items
- One paragraph and one page biographies on spokespeople and agency heads
- Copies of the current newsletter, if there is one
- Copies of newspaper articles about the group

Assessment of resources

The communications plan needs to spell out how resources will be allocated, including staff time, budgets,

computers, software, equipment, databases, in-house and contract services and volunteer help. For mid-sized to large organizations, it is prudent to hire communications director. In agencies with fewer than ten employees, everyone from the executive director to the person who answers the phone should be a part of the communications team. A resource review for the organization should do the following:

- Assess staff time, in-house services and existing media technologies
- Recommend and arrange for training and technology updates as needed
- Designate or decide to hire a communications director
- Develop a budget that includes provisions for outside contracts and services, such as freelance writing, video production, database management, graphic design and Web site management
- Access funding and build programs for expanded activities that include executive loan programs, internships, pro bono support from commercial media firms, donations from local and regional corporations and grants from foundations.

Development of a work plan

Organizations should develop work plans for each major activity or event and try to review overall plans at least quarterly. Elements of a communications work plan should spell out assignments and important tasks:

- Develop timelines, calendars of events and priorities
- Assign responsibilities to lead and support staff, giving each a list of specific tasks
- Review progress and enforce or revise deadlines
- Hold people responsible for completing work and reassign tasks as needed

Crisis control

The work plan should also include a crisis control plan. This should be thought of as a fire drill, and regardless how non controversial the organization, there should be a plan in place to deal with possible negative stories in the media. This plan should include the identification of a crisis coordination team, a plan to ensure timely and appropriate responses to negative press and regular internal briefings about the procedures for implementing a damage control plan.

Evaluation

No strategic communications plan is complete without a built-in evaluation component as a way to check accountability and make improvements over time. Major evaluation activities might include analyzing media content and monitoring certain developments, such as shifts in public opinion, policy changes, increased membership and organizational participation, and improved institutional capacity.

Summary

A written communications plan should be easy to read and should have a format adaptable for overhead or computer presentations to larger audiences. Most organizations have been through a strategic planning process at some point; this effort is no different. Remember, the elements of a communications plan are basically the same whether the organization has thousands, hundreds, dozens, or a handful of employees.

Bonk, K., Griggs, H., & Tynes, E. (1999). Designing a Communications Plan, Chapter 4. The Jossey-Bass guide to strategic communications for nonprofits. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Story Time

Foundation leaders spin tales from their families' lives as a way to share values and traditions

By Darlene M. Siska

As a boy, William C. Graustein heard plenty of family stories -- up-by-your-bootstrap, American success tales about his father, aunts, and uncles. Children of a German immigrant dairyman, they were encouraged to use their education to imagine and create successful careers for themselves. As a result, education transformed their lives. That generation included a Harvard-trained lawyer who headed the International Paper Company, a Harvard mathematics professor, two Harvard Ph.D.'s in natural sciences, and a New Hampshire state senator.

What Mr. Graustein didn't know until later in life was how those stories would help provide him with direction and purpose when the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund (named for his uncle) increased its endowment hundredfold, to \$50-million in 1993, after his mother died and her assets were added to the foundation's total.

Rather than continuing to simply write checks to the same charities his late father had, Mr. Graustein, now a trustee, decided to develop a giving strategy for the Hamden, Conn., fund that focused on education, and hired a consultant to help develop it. While traveling with the consultant to talk to education experts, Mr. Graustein says, "We asked what they cared about. They shared stories about their passions and life's work."

He began to notice similarities and differences between the educators' tales and those of his family. He started to understand his own stories differently. "My family stories became fables with a moral," he says. "I began to hear how the world could change."

As a result of honing the meaning of his family stories, Mr. Graustein and the rest of the trustees decided to reconfigure the fund's new mission. Where it once spread its efforts among a variety of charitable causes, it now puts a particular emphasis on engaging children younger than 8 in education.

Today, Mr. Graustein tells his family's stories in the foundation's annual reports, to help grantees and others better understand the principles that drive the fund's work. The fund's staff members use storytelling when meeting with grantees -- for example, they might start off by telling an anecdote about their own experience, which may help prompt a charity's clients to tell their own personal tales and offer ideas that then help shape a group's programs. Mr. Graustein says he even judged candidates for the fund's executive director job in part on their respect for the value of storytelling.

"It's hard to overstate how significant storytelling is to me because it provoked a major career change," says Mr. Graustein, who, in 1997, left a 25-year career as a geophysicist at Yale University to focus on philanthropic work.

Growing Popularity

Mr. Graustein's family foundation is far from the only one to incorporate storytelling in its work.

Although he cannot point to data that show the scope of storytelling as a new trend among family grant makers, "there are certainly more families doing this now than in the past," says Jason C. Born, senior program officer in the Boston office of the National Center for Family Philanthropy. Several consultants, he notes, now specifically help family grant makers with storytelling.

Family stories are being recounted orally at board meetings and retreats, and also documented in books, on tape, and on videotape. The tales are being used to give recognition to and celebrate a family's history, to shape grant-making programs, to train the next generation of board members, and to pass on philanthropic values that help keep family members involved -- a major challenge for such organizations.

As families grow more geographically dispersed, "sometimes family stories are all that members of a family foundation have in common," says Deanne Stone, a writer and research associate at Lansberg Gersick & Associates, a consulting firm in New Haven, Conn., that helps families with business and philanthropic enterprises.

Charles Hamilton, executive director of the Clark Foundation, in New York, and editor of *Living the Legacy: The Values of a Family's Philanthropy Across Generations* (National Center for Family Philanthropy, 2001, \$45), says family grant makers may latch on to storytelling because "there's not only an incredible thirst by a family to understand its legacy and values, but so many family foundations are rather informal and don't have -- or may even dislike -- the idea of formal mechanisms. Things like strategic plans and vision statements are counter to their culture."

Also, says Mr. Hamilton, storytelling can be an easy way to deal with big current issues. Family foundations must concern themselves with money and family dynamics, he says, and "since no one wants to talk about values or money directly, stories allow them to talk about those things without someone getting hit over the head with a big 'should.'"

Family tales can also be used to spur action among trustees, says Catherine Conant, a professional storyteller in Middletown, Conn., who has coached charities and foundations on using storytelling in their work.

"Assets and numbers of grants made may not persuade a person to act," she says. "If I were someone who didn't understand why my grandparents created a foundation, I may not act. But for me to hear, 'Our grandparents lived during the Holocaust, and by sheer force and will they survived it. But they were painfully aware that others were obliterated, so they created a foundation to help' -- that provides a deeper understanding and an incentive to act. It's something to pin my actions on to."

Consultants who work with family foundations say that members of every generation -- not simply the older relatives -- must be able to tell their stories. And, Ms. Conant cautions, "Storytelling shouldn't be used to manipulate others or moralize. No one person should insist they and only they have the truth. No one likes being preached to."

Bridging Generations

Richard Woo, chief executive officer of the Russell Family Foundation, in Gig Harbor, Wash., says the foundation began using storytelling four years ago, when it was working to establish its culture. The family, which made its wealth in investment services, told tales -- illustrated by family photos -- at board meetings to help identify its values.

Today, he says, it has evolved into a ritual at every board meeting, and a tool integrated by trustees into several of the grant maker's activities. Every board meeting, Mr. Woo says, starts with "time for reflection, where members may share a poem or story or metaphor or allegory." A lit candle at every board gathering represents the trustees' predecessors, he says, "the people whose spirits and values drive the foundation's activities today."

Susan Price, managing director of family foundation services at the Council on Foundations, an association of grant makers in Washington, looks for storytelling to be used more often in the coming years.

"We are seeing more family foundations, as they mature, having to train their next generation to come on board," she says. "One way they are doing that is to share family stories and their values and legacies in videos and oral histories."

Rebecca Richards, 29, a lawyer in New York and a trustee of the Maxine & Jack Zarrow Family Foundation, in Tulsa, Okla., which was founded by her grandparents, grew up listening to her family's lore.

"We're a Jewish family in Oklahoma, where there is not a huge Jewish community," she says. "My grandmother grew up in a small town in Texas, where there also weren't a lot of Jewish people. She and others held their daily lives together through family stories that shared lessons and experiences, and provided a connection to their roots and a larger community not visible in their own."

In January, Ms. Richards participated in a workshop with 21/64, a nonprofit consulting division of the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, in New York, aimed at helping young trustees learn how to express their values through grant making. At the workshop, she learned that stories not only revealed her family's history, but also help her as she works out her role as a trustee.

"Stories tell of morals and values, but are also useful in helping us figure out what our ideals and giving priorities are," Ms. Richards says. By examining family stories and their values, she has realized that "my grandparents do good works as a way to influence how others might act, not to get recognition for themselves."

With three generations on the Zarrow foundation board, each offers different types of tales. Her grandparents will bring their family stories to board meetings, while she will recount an anecdote of her own. "I'll say, 'Here's what is going on in my life and I think we should look at this,'" she says. "Using stories is comfortable, and not being 'talked at.' If you want to engage people, it's a way of everyone being part of the same conversation."

Sharna Goldseker, special-project manager at 21/64, conducts storytelling workshops for current and prospective foundation-board members ages 18 to 28. In the workshops, Ms. Goldseker invites young people to tell their stories. To help prime the pump, she asks participants to create a timeline of their family events and the decisions made in the foundation. Such activities help young people reconcile their ancestors' values with their own.

For example, Ms. Goldseker says, "Say that someone's grandparents lived in an era with a high level of patriotism and decided to base scholarships on that. Rather than thinking, 'Why did my grandparents want to give scholarships for this?,' they may come to understand why their grandparents developed the values they did and figure out how they can align their giving with that."

A Bigger Audience

Some family foundations, such as the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund, incorporate storytelling into their work with grantees and grant seekers. "When the fund's staff are out in the community, they can listen to the stories of people they are working with and think, 'I don't have to judge this completely objectively; I can use my own experience as a legitimate way to understand what is going on,'" says Mr. Graustein. "It gives them more freedom to engage with the community at the place where the communities are, rather than at our level, where we think about program decisions."

Storytelling allows a fund's staff members to communicate more deeply with the community they serve than they might be able to otherwise, he says.

"Story works at a very different level than analytical thinking," he says. "We're schooled to think analytically, but story communicates at a level that is much more powerful at building things like trust and imagination."

In one of the grant makers' major efforts, the Discovery Initiative, 49 cities and towns across Connecticut are working with the fund to improve education for children younger than 8.

"We didn't send out a request for proposals to create the program," says David M. Nee, the Graustein fund's executive director.

Instead, he says, "the fund met with mayors, superintendents, and others and listened to their stories. Part of being a story teller is being a listener. We listen very carefully. It grows out of a sense that none of us is smarter than the whole of us."

Storytelling has led to a deeper relationship between the grant maker and at least one of its grantees, All Our Kin, a charity in New Haven, Conn., that educates parents and expands children's access to early care and education. The Graustein fund gave All Our Kin a \$15,000 grant in 2000, says Jessica Sager, the group's executive director, and she recalls how Mr. Graustein came to visit two years later to see about offering further support. He met with participants in an All Our Kin program that helps parents receiving welfare learn to become professional child-care providers, and broke the ice by telling personal stories.

"It was amazing," she recalls. "He sat down with participants in our program and they started a dialogue together."

Mr. Graustein has made subsequent contributions to her group as a private donor, she says, and she notes that All Our Kin's ties to the fund are closer than those it maintains with other foundations. "Our relationships with other grant makers is mostly conducted through paper," she says.

Because of Mr. Graustein's example, Ms. Sager says, she has begun using storytelling within her group.

"It's for these women who don't get listened to all that often," she says. "It is an incredible way to capture their experiences, for them to listen to each other and to learn of their commonalities."

Ms. Sager also now uses the technique in All Our Kin's annual newsletter to its supporters. "We told the story of one of our participants as a way to express why we're important to the community, rather than to use numbers," she says.

Although Mr. Graustein has published some stories from community members, he says that grantees and others are not forced to tell their stories to the fund's representatives.

He realizes that storytelling does not always come easily for grantees because of the power imbalance inherent in the relationship between grant makers and beneficiaries. Nonprofit organizations seeking money may be hesitant to reveal too much out of concern it could put off a foundation official.

Keeping Motives Pure

The entire nonprofit world is in the business of storytelling, says Mr. Woo of the Russell Family Foundation.

"A nonprofit staff person's task is to interpret and tell a story the best he or she can in the form of a grant proposal, and in turn, the foundation staffers present that proposal to the board," he says. "The best story can be told when members of a community can tell its story directly to the board. There's a lot of alignment between the value and power of storytelling and grant making."

To begin using storytelling as a tool, Ms. Conant says, the top leaders of the foundation have to set an example by telling their own stories, perhaps starting by setting time aside at an annual retreat. But ulterior motives can't be at play, such as wanting underlings to tell stories so that they will reveal their weaknesses, she says.

"If you take a cork off the barrel, you need to understand that your motives are clear and that family members, staffers, and others are treated with respect," she says. "Otherwise it's just asking them to put on rubber noses and run around."

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Additional Articles & Publications

“Bad Words for Good – How Foundations Garble Their Message and Lose Their Audience”

By Tony Proscio, Published by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation (2001)

PDF available for free download at: <http://www.emcf.org/pdf/badwordsforgood.pdf>

Proscio warns of the danger of using words we think sound impressive at the expense of communicating any actual meaning and writes about how we can return to real words and clearer communication.

“Communications Toolkit - A guide to navigating communications for the nonprofit world” (By R. Christine Hershey)

“Why Bad Ads Happen to Good Causes” (By Andy Goodman)

“Why Bad Presentations Happen to Good Causes” (By Andy Goodman)

PDFs available for free download at: <http://www.causecommunications.org/clients-cause.php>

These three publications from Cause Communications are “best practice” resource guides that offer tools and practical advice to help nonprofits be more effective in their communications.

Communications and Marketing Kit

Online at: <http://www.wkkf.org/default.aspx?tabid=75&CID=385&NID=61&LanguageID=0>

This online toolkit, designed by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, is a complete communications and marketing kit to help nonprofit organizations reach and secure support from their many constituencies. It includes both references and specific, detailed steps necessary to understand options, identify resources, plan, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of a communications/social marketing initiative for your organization.

“Bridging the Gap: Connecting Strategic Communication and Program Goals”

Published by FoundationWorks

PDF available for free download at:

http://www.foundationworks.org/pdfs/Bridging_The_Gap.pdf

This report documents a series of conversations that took place in 2002-2003 with a cross-section of foundation leaders and program staff with the goal of eliciting perceptions from program staff about the relationship between strategic communication and program goals and to find out how foundations use communication in their grantmaking. Based on this research, foundations and their grantees can and should adopt a more strategic approach to communication-in large part by working together to address the barriers identified in this report.

Free Range Thinking

<http://agoodmanonline.com/newsletter/index.html>

A monthly journal from Andy Goodman of communications best practices and resources for public interest groups, foundations, and progressive businesses that want to reach more people more effectively.

The Grantmakers Communications Manual

Published by the Council on Foundations (1998)

Cost: \$35 DVG members; \$50 non-members

To order: Contact DVG at info@dvg.org or call 215-790-9700

Building better grantmaker communications is key to getting your message out. This thorough, 295-page manual draws on a variety of proven strategies, techniques and examples from respected communications professionals and actual grantmaker experiences, to help you as a grantmaker: identify your target audiences; pinpoint the essential information to share; create delivery vehicles; and evaluate how that information was received. This user-friendly manual is just what you need to fulfill your communications goals.

Proving Your Worth: Ten Ways to Measure the Impact of Your Communications

Published by Fenton Communications

PDF available for free download at:

http://www.fenton.com/pages/5_resources/pdf/proving_your_worth.pdf

In this practical guide for public interest communicators, Fenton Communications outlines 10 key questions to help evaluate whether your communications are effective. Visit www.fenton.com for additional "best practice" resources and guides.

The Smart Chart

<http://www.smartchart.org/>

The Interactive Smart Chart is based on the Spitfire Strategies Smart Chart 3.0 – a planning tool that helps nonprofits make smart choices and develop high-impact communications strategies. This online version of the Smart Chart offers an interactive approach to the planning process. At the end of the process, you will have a fully completed Smart Chart that links your organization's goals to the many strategic decisions necessary for a successful communications effort.

Strategic Communications for Nonprofit Organizations: Seven Steps to Creating a Successful Plan

By Janel M. Radtke

Published by Jossey-Bass (1998)

Cost: \$49.99

Order online: <http://www.josseybass.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0471174645.html>

In this book, Janel Radtke introduces all-important communications concepts and issues in plain English and helps you coordinate and streamline communications efforts

Resource Organizations

Benton Foundation

<http://www.benton.org>

1625 K Street, NW 11th Floor

Washington, DC 20006

202-638-5770 phone

Charles Benton, Chairman, CEO and Trustee

The mission of the Benton Foundation is to articulate a public interest vision for the digital age and to demonstrate the value of communications for solving social problems.

Communications Consortium Media Center

<http://www.ccmc.org/>

401 Ninth Street, NW Suite 450

Washington, DC 20004-2142

Phone: 202.326.8700

Kathy Bonk, Executive Director

Email: info@ccmc.org

The Communications Consortium Media Center is a public interest media center dedicated to helping nonprofit organizations use media and new technologies as tools for policy change.

Communications Leadership Institute

<http://www.communicationsleadership.org/>

149 Natoma Street, 3rd Floor

San Francisco, CA 94105

415-227-4200 phone

Holly Minch, Executive Director

Email: cli@communicationsleadership.org

The Communications Leadership Institute (CLI) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing nonprofits with the training and tools they need to increase their communications capacity and use high-impact communications campaigns to achieve their goals.

The Communications Network

<http://www.comnetwork.org/>

PO Box 9300

Naperville, IL 60567

630-328-2857 phone

Bruce S. Trachtenberg, Executive Director

Email: brucet@comnetwork.org

The mission of the Communications Network is to improve the effectiveness and accountability of foundations by promoting and strengthening the strategic practice of communications in philanthropy. Full Membership is open to employees and trustees of foundations; Associate Membership is open to consultants currently working with a foundation and staff of nonprofit organizations

Media Evaluation Project

<http://www.mediaevaluationproject.org/>

A project of the Communications Consortium Media Center (see additional contact information above) and established with initial support from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the multi-year Media Evaluation Project aims to provide foundations and nonprofits with methods of gauging the effects of strategic communications campaigns both large and small.

Philanthropy Awareness Initiative (PAI)

<http://philanthropyawareness.org/>

312-212-4262 phone

Mark Sedway, Executive Director

Email: mark@sedwayassociates.com

The Philanthropy Awareness Initiative works with foundations and other interested groups to identify, develop and share effective ways to engage influential Americans in their work.

The SPIN Project

<http://www.spinproject.org/>

149 Natoma St., 2nd Floor

San Francisco, CA 94105

415-227-4200 phone

Heath Wickline, Director

Email: heath@spinproject.org

The SPIN Project provides strategic communications consulting, training, coaching, networking opportunities and concrete tools in order to strengthen nonprofit social justice organizations, small and large, to communicate effectively for themselves.

Delaware Valley Grantmakers (DVG),
the region's forum for philanthropy, serves
as a network, resource and voice to help
philanthropy strengthen and improve the
health and vitality of our communities.

For further information about DVG,
please visit us online at:

www.dvg.org

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