Nonprofit World

Advancement
Through
Sharing

Don't Go It Alone in a Crisis
Are you prepared for the unthinkable?

36th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

PLUS: Secrets to a Board that Makes Cash Gifts ▪ Time Travel, True Stories, & Other Useful Exercises ▪ Tech Tactics to Boost Fundraising Success ▪ Term Limits – Yes or No? ▪ Tap the Greatness of Your Staff and Your Self ▪ Take-to-Work Tips on Mindfulness ▪ and much more!

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36th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

DEPARTMENTS

FEATURE STORY

A crisis could strike at any time, from any direction. You won't know the specifics beforehand. But that doesn't mean you can't be prepared. The key is to build a team who will be there with you in good times *and* bad. Get started with the steps in **Don't Go it Alone in a Crisis on page 18**.

ARTICLES

SOCIETY for NONPROFITS
Advancing the nonprofit world together

Vitamins, Yoga, and Appreciation

Ingesting a vitamin or doing a yoga move just once won't have much impact on your long-term health. But the right vitamins and the right moves for your particular body on a regular basis can make a huge difference.

So it is with appreciation. If you hold an annual thank-you party for your staff, the effect will be negligible. For appreciation to make a real difference, you must express it regularly – daily if possible. It won't hurt to miss a few days now and then, but like vitamins and yoga (or whatever your preferred exercise mode may be), the power is in taking a series of small actions consistently over time.

It's also vital to remember that there's no one-size-fits-all that meets everyone's needs. Not everyone likes to be thanked in the same way. Each of us has a primary appreciation language, one that speaks most deeply to us.

Gary Chapman and Paul White have identified five languages of workplace appreciation: verbal praise, time together, positive acts, tangible gifts, and physical touch. While the fifth language – touch – can be problematic in a work setting, there are ways to use touch appropriately if you're careful, and the proper touch at the proper time can be immensely gratifying to certain people. As with all the five languages, it's helpful to scope out each person's preferred language before moving forward. In their book *The Five Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace,* they explain how to do so. (Take a look at "Five Ways to Show Appreciation" on page 29.)

If you have trouble expressing appreciation to coworkers, it may be because you don't have enough information about each person's likes and dislikes. Such lack of knowledge indicates poor communication patterns in the organization. Be sure you have an effective process for employee input, review, feedback, and helpful instruction. "Tap the Greatness of Your Staff and Your Self" (page 32) offers pointers.

All of us have growth areas. You and your team members need regular times to discuss what's going well and what can be improved. When there isn't a structured process for doing so, such crucial communications often don't occur, making it nearly impossible to show gratitude effectively. "Unleash the True Power of Conversation" (page 20) underscores the critical role of skillful communication in deepening relationships. "Rethinking Negotiation" (page 31) expands our view of negotiating, defining it as a way to increase understanding and orchestrate effective human interactions. "Let's Stop Shouting at Each Other & Start Talking" (page 16) describes a technique for effective listening.

Creating bonds throughout the organization has never been so essential. Today's workers hunger for help in navigating their stressful lives. Many feel fragmented and discouraged. Some worry that to succeed at work they must give up other parts of their life. That's untrue, Stewart Friedman tells us in *Leading the Life You Want.* He makes the point that everyone needs to balance four realms: work, home, community, and the private realm of mind, body, and spirit. Doing so will add passion and power to all areas of a person's life. To help others (and yourself) find such harmony, try the suggestions in "Time Travel, True Stories, and Other Useful Exercises" (page 31).

The hindu monk known as Baba, in his book *Making Your Mind Your Best Friend,* encourages his followers to stop what they're doing and pause throughout the day. Pauses bring meaning and focus. Without them, he says, your life is like a book typed without using the space bar. That's what we call gibberish. And what creates the gibberish? Lack of space, lack of pause.

Viktor Frankl also spoke of the importance of adding space to your life. "Between stimulus and response there is a space," he noted. "In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

Taking the time to pause is essential to good decision making, as "Take-to-Work Tips on Mindfulness" (page 32) reminds us. Be sure to hit the space bar frequently throughout your day.

Jill Muehrcke

Jill Muehrcke, muehrcke@charter.net

Four Things to Do Next Monday

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

1. **Analyze** the state of your tech network, as explained in "When Funding Windfalls Cause Technology Problems" (page 26).

2. **Use the suggestions** in "Secrets to Creating a Board that Makes Cash Gifts" (page 12) to assure that every one of your board members donates money to your organization every year.

3. **Ask yourself how prepared you are** for an emergency. Use "Don't Go It Alone in a Crisis" (page 18) as a checklist.

4. **Make your donor thank-you letter more powerful** by adding a story ("Revitalize Your Thank-You Letter with a Good Story," page 10).

Term Limits – Yes or No?

It's a crucial question. Use this advice to weigh the pros and cons.

Q Our board is discussing a rewrite of our organization's bylaws. A sticking point is the issue of term limits. There are two camps – both vocal. As you can gather, one side wants to adopt term limits, and the other side doesn't. The "yes term limits" group has shared that as many as 70% of nonprofits have adopted term limits. The "no term limits" group insists that term limits work only with organizations with strong social appeal and/or large boards with a waiting list. The "no term limits" group argues that we have a small board that no one wants to join, and we would be cutting off our nose to spite our face, so to speak, if we require turnover. Do you have any thoughts that you could share?

A Most boards have this discussion at one point or another. There are valid points on both sides of this issue.

For "no term limits," the most convincing argument goes like this: Why would you want to force off the board someone who is still committed to your organization and doing an incredible job for you, just because that person has served some arbitrary number of years? (Of course, just because someone's term has expired doesn't mean that the person must leave the scene altogether. There are many options for keeping interested individuals involved, such as putting them on key committees.)

I find the scale weighted more strongly on the "yes term limits" side (though it doesn't necessarily make it right for your organization). The arguments in favor of "yes term limits" include ensuring regular turnover, which allows the organization to bring in the right skills at the right time, as needs and environment change.

Perhaps more important, such turnover ensures a future for the organization. Without turnover, organizations become stagnant. There are no fresh ideas. And, when the current board grows tired of its responsibilities, or when board directors become infirm or die, the organization often fades away due to the lack of incoming leadership.

Few people are going to join an organization that historically has been closed to new directors. Even if people are willing to say yes under such circumstances, the chance of them staying is slight. That's because typically their suggestions will be rejected ("That's not how we do things here." "We've tried that, and it doesn't work." "You're new. You don't understand our organization.")

Of course, there's also the fact that it's easier to remove dead wood from the board when there are term limits, but I find that a weak argument. Boards have a right and

responsibility to hold directors to high standards, and boards that do are exponentially more effective than those that don't. That means speaking with those who are shirking their responsibilities and, if nothing changes, asking them to step down rather than taking the coward's approach and waiting for a term to expire.

It's for these reasons that, according to BoardSource's *Leading with Intent: A National Index of Nonprofit Board Practices* (and other survey results are similar), 71% of organizations have term limits for board directors. The number is consistent, within a few percentage points, regardless of budget size, type of organization (charity, association, foundation, or other) or service area (local, regional, multi-state, national, or international). This reality makes specious the argument of your "no term limits" group – that term limits work only for large boards with waiting lists.

Frankly, I believe your "no term limits" supporters are comfortable – even if subconsciously – having an excuse that allows them to avoid actively recruiting. I guarantee there are many, many people who would love the opportunity to join your board. They may not be the usual suspects. They may not all be able to give large gifts, though I bet there are even some of those out there.

The key is recognizing that you must move beyond your own circles of influence. It may be easier to go back to the same well all the time than to create a year-round recruitment plan and work it; but since you asked my opinion, I believe your organization will be stronger for adopting term limits than not.

Terrie Temkin, Ph.D., Founding Principal
CoreStrategies for Nonprofits, Inc.
Corestrategies4nonprofits.com

Keep Your Board Healthy

Whether or not you adopt term limits, you need a strong plan for recruiting and energizing board members. Start with these articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

Tools for Improving Your Board's Diversity (Vol. 25, No. 5)

Success through Engaged High-Level Board Members (Vol. 34, No. 1)

Action Steps for Effective Governance: Test Yourself (Vol. 35, No. 3)

LOP: A Model to Remove Board Members (Vol. 22, No. 1)

Tech Tactics to Boost Fundraising Success

Use technology to cement connections with donors.

By Michael Wasserman

As attention spans grow shorter, technology is critical to engage donors. But an online strategy requires more than a donate button on your website. Here are ways to give your organization an advantage:

Make it mobile. Mobile users make up 40% of nonprofit website traffic. Mobile donation platforms make it easy for donors to give on the spot, which lets you capitalize on impulse giving. In a few taps, donors can give to causes that resonate with them in the moment, as soon as they're made aware of the need.

Go live. Livestream platforms have become a fundraising powerhouse for organizations of all sizes, raising money 37 times faster than conventional methods. Whether it's live music, a hosted broadcast from your run/walk, or a gaming livestream, the potential is huge, utilizing Twitch, YouTube Live, Mixer, and Facebook Live. The interactive capability of livestream events makes this strategy a major draw to younger donors.

Estimates show as much as $120 million raised last year in this fast-growing market. The industry has more than doubled over the past few years with every major streaming platform jumping on this opportunity to integrate fundraising into their technology.

Thanks to the active gaming community in particular, livestream fundraising helps organizations raise a massive amount in a short time – days instead of months – and at a low overhead cost through these virtual telethon-style events. Last year alone, GuardianCon raised $2.8 million for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. And St. Jude raised another $2 million during its Play Live Prize Month, a campaign that hit its $1 million goal in just the first 19 days.

Leverage influencers. Online influencers have tremendous power to activate their followers and entice them to open their wallets. In livestream e-sports, the results have been tremendous. Fortnight video game streamer DrLupo raised $1.3 million last year for St. Jude, including a single, record-breaking livestream that pulled in $613,000 in just 24 hours. Celebrity streamer Jacksepticeye raised over $1.2 million last year, while others like Ninja (Twitch's most popular broadcaster who has now reached global fame) and Markiplier (who has 10 billion video views and 22 million subscribers on YouTube) also raised blockbuster amounts for charities by rallying their followers to give through livestream fundraising.

Create social buzz. Social-media promotion is an effective and inexpensive way to create buzz and spread the word. About two-thirds of Americans get their news from social media, more so than other channels, and this is especially true among younger generations.

More than 30 million people visit YouTube every day, watching almost 5 billion videos, creating a tremendous

> **Mobile users make up 40% of nonprofit website traffic.**

opportunity for exposure, especially when influencers with a huge following get involved. Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook also have massive numbers of daily visitors. The use of hashtags to create buzz around a specific campaign on those channels makes it easier for users to find information about your organization.

Donors increasingly want to feel involved and invested in causes they care about. Social-media sharing not only satisfies that need but also turns donors into an army of ambassadors for your cause.

Demonstrate impact. Traditionally, older donors have chosen a charity and made an annual contribution. But younger generations are more piecemeal in their approach, spreading their contributions in smaller amounts across more organizations. At the same time, they want to know more detail about what their money can do – the impact of their $5 or $10 in making a real difference.

Using a multimedia approach to show where people's money goes can spur them to give more, knowing their contributions drive results. For example, a simple thank-you video from the CEO – or even better, video or images of your program in action – can create a sense of ownership in the cause.

Michael Wasserman is CEO of Tiltify (Tiltify.com). Tiltify is the next evolution of peer-to-peer fundraising, designed to maximize the effectiveness of charitable programs. Peer-to-peer fundraising is a great way to get new donors and reach new networks of people.

The Right Message at the Right Time

For more on leveraging interactive technologies to connect with donors, see these articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

Accelerating Fundraising through Social Media (Vol. 28, No. 3)

The Best Way to Tell Your Organization's Story? Capture It on Video (Vol. 35, No. 4)

How Mobile Marketing Can Work for You (Vol. 32, No. 4)

Remember Your Brand when You Market with Social Media (Vol. 33, No. 4)

Two Surprising Ways to Broaden Your Reach Online (Vol. 32, No. 4)

Engage Donors with Social Media (Vol. 33, No. 3)

How Can You Boost Donors' Trust in Your Organization? (Vol. 36, No. 4)

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

please get in touch...

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

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

E-mail to: muehrcke@charter.net

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

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

WHAT'S UP ONLINE?

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

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

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

New Excise Tax: How Will It Impact Nonprofits?

An expert clears away the confusion over this new tax.

We connected with Spencer Walters, an attorney at the Washington, D.C. tax-law firm, Ivins, Phillips & Barker, Chtd. (Ipbtax.com) to discuss the new 21% excise tax that is impacting nonprofits. This new tax presents some unexpected consequences for tax-exempt entities.

What is the IRS Code Section 4960 excise tax?

This new excise tax applies to nonprofit entities and related organizations starting for 2018. It's a 21% tax that kicks in on amounts paid to certain employees beyond $1,000,000 or beyond a severance multiple if the employee is paid out upon involuntary termination of employment.

Is this the "college-football-coach tax"?

Yes, exactly.

So, if an organization doesn't have a football coach, can the tax still apply?

It can still apply! The tax will catch university pay to executive leadership, as well as executives at other tax-exempt entities, including hospital administrators. A nonprofit organization could be affected if it is related to an entity (including a for-profit corporation) that employs individuals who are – or ever were – employees of the nonprofit.

In fact, as it turns out, the tax may not apply to some of the highest paid collegiate coaches because of a drafting accident – many public universities are shielded from this tax because they are arms of a state government.

Who pays the tax?

The new tax falls on employers, not on the employees. Nonprofit organizations and their related organizations are responsible for calculating and paying the tax.

Who are the employees that trigger the tax?

Under the new law, each year, the tax-exempt entity must identify its top-five highest-paid employees. These individuals become "covered employees" and remain as such forever. Under the proposed IRS rules, pay from any related organization counts toward whether the employee is in the top five.

> **"This new tax presents some unexpected consequences."**

When do these employees trigger the tax?

This ever-growing pool of "covered employees" can trigger the tax in either of the following conditions:

- The covered employee has pay that exceeds $1,000,000 in a year *including* any bonus earned (even if paid in a later year) and any deferred compensation that becomes vested.

- The covered employee involuntarily terminates employment and receives a severance payment of more than three times the individual's average pay over the three years before termination.

Broader Reach than Expected

What is the most surprising aspect of the new tax for nonprofits?

The most surprising part of the IRS rules is that the tax could apply even if no employee of the nonprofit organization is paid $1,000,000 or has pay in excess of the severance threshold.

One way this can happen is because the definition of pay is different from what we ordinarily call pay. It's not taxable wages reported to the employee on a W-2. Nor is it pay that the organization may already report on a Form 990 filing.

Another way the tax could unexpectedly apply is because of the "related entity" rule. If a nonprofit has a related entity, then all pay from every related entity counts. It counts for purposes of whether the employee is a top-five highest-paid employee. And it counts for purposes of whether the employee exceeds $1,000,000 in pay or hits the severance threshold. This means an employee could receive little or no pay from a nonprofit organization but a related company or entity would still owe the excise tax. For example, a company CEO is paid $2,200,000 per year and also is an employee of the company foundation without any additional pay. The company pays a 21% tax on $1,200,000.

More problematic, because of the "Once a Covered Employee, Always a Covered Employee Rule," pay from a related entity could result in a tax even after the employee has stopped providing services to the tax-exempt entity.

How can a related entity avoid this tax?

Being a top-five highest-paid employee of a nonprofit organization forever sticks with employees for any pay they receive from a related entity of the nonprofit. It appears that the only way to end this status is to either (1) sever the nonprofit organization from its related organization or (2) dissolve the nonprofit organization.

Who counts as a related entity of a nonprofit organization?

A related entity includes any entity that is controlled by or controls the nonprofit organization. Commonly a company foundation is related to the company that establishes it because the company names its directors.

A related entity also includes an entity that is controlled by any person that controls the nonprofit organization. For example, if an entrepreneur establishes a family foundation, the foundation may be related to the entrepreneur's businesses.

Finally, a nonprofit organization is considered related to any "supported organization" or "supporting organization" with respect to the nonprofit organization.

Potential Impacts & What To Do

What effect could this new tax have on nonprofit organizations?

A relatively small number of nonprofit organizations pay employees enough that they would be directly affected. However, we fear that this change could reduce involvement in philanthropic organizations by highly-compensated executives and businesspeople. It could discourage companies and entrepreneurs from starting charitable foundations and even cause some companies to close their charitable foundations.

> **"This change could reduce involvement in philanthropic organizations."**

Put two companies side by side, each paying their founder and CEO $2.5 million per year: The first establishes a foundation and its CEO plays an active role running its charitable efforts, although she draws no additional salary from the foundation, while the second forgoes charitable contributions to pay dividends to shareholders. ***Because of the first company's philanthropic efforts,* the company is hit with a $315,000 extra tax bill** (21% of $1,500,000). You can see why fewer companies might form new charitable foundations.

It's more difficult to predict the indirect effect this new tax could have. Often, private and family foundations are the initial or primary funders of smaller nonprofit organizations. Of course, even if the tax causes foundations to change their practices (or causes companies not to have foundations), companies and individuals wouldn't necessarily stop making charitable contributions. They could continue making direct charitable contributions, although there isn't

Taxes, Taxes, Taxes

You know that taxes are one of the two things that are unavoidable (the other being death itself). Tax laws are complex – and getting more so all the time. Not knowing the law can land you with large fines, penalties, fees, and even criminal prosecution if you're not careful. You can't take tax laws lightly. Keep reading *Nonprofit World* for information on tax law, and in the meantime check out articles on the subject from *Nonprofit World's* library (NonprofitWorld.org). Here's a sampling:

always the same tax incentive for doing so. Another fear is that corporate giving may be less stable and more subject to the whims of company budgets.

What was Congress thinking with imposing this tax so broadly?

There's a well-intentioned rationale behind the tax. The thinking was that foundations and charitable organizations receive significant tax benefits. For example, when a company funds a foundation, it can receive an immediate tax deduction and there are no – or relatively small – taxes on the foundation's ongoing operations (although there are a lot of requirements to make sure the foundation actually provides charitable benefits). The rationale was simple: These tax benefits shouldn't be used to subsidize high pay.

The problem is that the new tax applies even when these subsidized tax benefits aren't being used to pay high salaries – even when a private company is paying the entire amount to the employee.

Can a tax advisor plan around the new tax?

Yes, there are ways to plan around the tax, and nonprofits and related organizations should consult their advisors to determine how best to do so. As with many well-intentioned tax provisions, one big concern is that this tax becomes a trap for the unwary.

The potential "fixes" will need to be specific to each nonprofit organization. For example, company foundations may want to prevent their employees who are, or someday may be, high-paid from being involved in the charity.

Another approach is to make sure that any individuals involved in the foundation don't become "employees" of the foundation under IRS rules. The IRS typically is aggressive in arguing employee status. For example, the IRS's presumption is that an "officer" is a de facto employee, so a safe approach may be to avoid having company employees be officers.

Can the IRS fix these problems?

The IRS is stuck with the law as Congress wrote it. But it has flexibility to offer relief.

We think the IRS could help by making sure that the tax applies only to amounts that are actually paid by the nonprofit organization. It could do this in part by limiting who counts as an "employee" of a nonprofit organization for purposes of the new tax.

We are hopeful that the IRS won't interpret the tax too broadly and will think of the unexpected consequences of the tax when they write the final rules.

Nonprofit Boards & the Future of Technology: A Modest Proposal

Boards often have to make decisions involving technology. But do they have the expertise needed? Here's how to address the issue.

By Eugene Fram

Nonprofit boards often encounter technology issues while they're developing strategies. Thus, they're always seeking ways to become better informed about technology issues.

Some organizations have tried to add technological experts to their boards. However, the type of people with this expertise who also can contribute to broader discussions on finance, marketing, and human relations are in short supply.

Another approach has been to consider younger directors who understand the world of technology better. But this leaves only one board member, or at most two, qualified to review the issues involved.

Nonprofit directors need to prepare themselves to become more technologically literate. Some developing technologies, such as 3-D printing, will completely change the future of organizations. To spread costs, nonprofits will certainly see the opportunities in developing big-data analytics with allied nonprofits or consortia. A director naive about technology opportunities will be equivalent to one currently naive about basic financial statements.

About 60% of potential nonprofit stakeholders under the age of 40 accept social media as a credible source. Boards without directors having a modicum of technological competence will be at a distinct disadvantage in establishing viable policies and strategic directions.

My Proposal

I suggest you consider forming a small advisory technology committee. This group can meet with directors and senior managers to focus on how new technologies might be applied to your organization. The committee shouldn't focus on technology nuts and bolts but, rather, on applications, new developments, allied apps, and the pros and cons of technological change. If your board encounters a major decision involving technology, there will be a relationship between your board members and the advisory committee. That relationship will help them develop a critical-thinking decision process.

Since most nonprofits are volunteer organizations, I anticipate that there will be technical personnel who will be willing to serve on the committee pro bono. I think the

> **"Some technologies will completely change the future of organizations."**

advisory committee should be able to function with three or four volunteers.

Nonprofit directors are now expected to have broad understandings about a variety of fields. It's time to add technology to that repertory. 🍴

Eugene Fram, Ed.D. (frameugene@gmail.com, blog site: http://bit.ly/yfRZpz) is professor emeritus at the Saunders College of Business, Rochester Institute of Technology. In 2008, Fram was awarded the university's Presidential Medallion for Outstanding Service. In 2012, a former student gifted Rochester Institute of Technology $3 million to establish the Eugene H. Fram Chair in Applied Critical Thinking. Fram's book Policy vs. Paper Clips *(available in a new edition at http://amzn.to/eu7nQl) has been used by thousands of boards to model their board structures. His book* Going for Impact *(https://goo.gl/iRrrtv) is a brief (100 page) guide for onboarding directors and focusing retreat topics on current issues.*

Understanding Technology

For more, peruse these articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

Revitalize Your Thank-You Letter with a Good Story
Stories rule. Capture your donors' hearts with these steps.

By Vanessa Chase Lockshin

Your thank-you letter is one of the most vital fundraising and marketing tools you have. It's a best practice to refresh your donor thank-you letter (also known as an acknowledgment letter) at least twice a year.

An easy way to update your letter is to add a story. Just like appeal letters, thank-you letters that use a story are more emotionally engaging. They also demonstrate your organization's impact, which is crucial to retaining donors. To create a powerful, effective thank-you letter, follow these steps.

Step 1: Decide what kind of a story you want to use.

Our recommendation is to use a staff story or a client story. If you segment your thank-you letters, then you can collect a variety of stories to be used in different versions of your letters.

QUESTIONS THAT WILL HELP YOU TELL A GOOD STORY

You can use stories to great advantage not only in your donor letters but also in your newsletter, on social media, and in future appeals. Here are a few questions to ask donors when interviewing them for a story:

- **How did you first hear** about our organization?
- **What made you decide** to give your first gift?
- **Why do you enjoy giving** to this organization?
- **What's your favorite program or service** to donate to?
- **What do you hope to accomplish** through your philanthropy?
- **If you were talking to someone else about giving to our organization,** what would you tell them?
- **What do you wish everyone knew** about this cause?

> **"This is what donors most want to hear about – change that they've helped facilitate."**

Step 2: Ask three people if you can interview them.

We recommend three people because you may only get one who says yes. Plus, if you're unsure of exactly which story to use in your thank-you letter, this will give you an option or two. Here's a sample script you can e-mail to the three people you choose:

Hi, (Name)!

I'm in the process of updating our donor thank-you letters and would like to use a story in them. Our donors love to hear direct examples and stories about our organization's work, and I immediately thought of you. Would you (or a client in your program) be willing to be interviewed and have your story used in our thank-you letter?

Hope you're having a great week!

(Your Name)

Step 3: Conduct the interview.

It needn't take all day. In fact, you can keep your interview under 30 minutes. Bring a notepad and pen, or recorder – whatever your note-taking tool of choice is. Focus on having a conversation.

Once you've finished the interview, go through your notes and pull out any direct quotes or morsels of the story that speak to change. This is what donors most want to hear about – change that they've helped facilitate.

Step 4: Incorporate the story into the thank-you letter.

After you've reviewed your notes, pull up a copy of your current thank-you letter. Add a direct quote between the opening salutation and the first paragraph. Then thank

the donor and continue telling them the story and emphasizing their impact. Here's what this letter might look like:

Dear (Donor Name),

"Quote . . ."

(Donor Name), this is the kind of change that you make possible in our community through your gifts. We are so grateful that you continue to support XYZ organization to . . . .

As you can see in (Name)'s story, . . . (Tell them more about the person's story).

But it's not just this one person that you helped. There are many other people like (Name) who need . . . .

Thank you again for your support.

This is a skeletal outline of a thank-you letter, but it gives you an idea of the flow from the quote to the thank you and back to the story. Nonprofits that use similar letters have found great success in their fundraising efforts. We hope you do, too. $

Vanessa Chase Lockshin (vanessa@ thestorytellingnonprofit.com) is president of the Storytelling Nonprofit (thestorytellingnonprofit. com) and author of The Storytelling Nonprofit: A Practical Guide to Telling Stories that Raise Money & Awareness. *This article is adapted from CoreStrategies' newsletter (corestrategies4nonprofits. com).*

The Power of Connection

For more ways to connect with your donors through thank-you letters, stories, and other creative channels, see articles such as these at NonprofitWorld.org:

Telling the Story: Exploring Clients' Lives (Vol. 17, No. 1)

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

Breakthrough Tips to Boost Your Fundraising (Vol. 33, No. 2)

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

Why Telling the Right Brand Story Matters So Much for Nonprofits (Vol. 32, No. 3)

Think Out of the Box for Fundraising Gains (Vol. 29, No. 5)

Also see Learning Institute programs on-line: Resource Development and O for Opportunity: Exploring New Revenue Opportunities for Nonprofits (NonprofitWorld. org/LearningInstitute).

Creative Fundraising Ideas

Break a Record

Some nonprofits have found that breaking or setting a world record can help them stand out in a crowded marketplace and draw attention to the cause. A few recent examples:

- Ludington Hospital's "Be Someone's Angel" event shattered the record for the most people making sand angels simultaneously when 1,387 people gathered on the beach at Lake Michigan to raise awareness about cancer, honor someone battling the disease, and raise funds for local cancer services.

- The Uniting to Combat Neglected Tropical Diseases coalition, along with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, enlisted 10 pharmaceutical companies to donate an unprecedented 207,169,292 medications to set the Guinness World Records title for the most medications donated in 24 hours.

- Two nonprofits, the Rebuild Rowlett Foundation for Long Term Relief and the Garland Tornado Relief Fund, earned the Guinness World Records title for the largest toy pistol fight. The event organizer created a page on Tilt, where participants purchased tickets with proceeds going to the two nonprofits. Nearly 2,289 participants attended, breaking the previous record while raising funds for the nonprofits involved.

Nonprofits often turn to sponsors to underwrite the costs for the Guinness World Records attempt. Other nonprofits charge participants a portion of the registration fee. If the record is successful, Guinness World Records will leverage the power of its robust social channels and share the results on its website and social platforms, giving the nonprofit additional exposure. For more information, contact guinnessworldrecords.com.

Get Your Events off the Ark

How many of your fancier events are single friendly? Many single people don't like to come to an event alone. But they would be delighted to attend if your invitation said:

___ This year I'm coming solo. Put me at a table with interesting people.

Single women aged 20-54 give two-and-a-half times more money than their older counterparts. And more bequests are made by single people without children than any other demographic. So gain the loyalty of singles by reaching out and embracing them.

"Don't leave your single party animals on the dock," advises fundraising and board expert Carol Weisman (boardbuilders.com). Make it clear on your invitations that single people are welcome at your events and that you'll make sure they have a good time. $

Secrets to Creating a Board that Makes Cash Gifts

Do you wish every one of your board members would give money to your organization? You can make that wish come true.

By Karen Eber Davis

You might believe that asking board members to give a cash gift to your organization is too much. After all, your board members do so much for you. They promote you. They give oodles of time. They willingly offer expertise. Asking them to give money as well is excessive, right?

Unfortunately, this belief can hurt your organization. Most nonprofits need the cash. They need donors, and people are more apt to give if the board gives. Also, your board members will likely make more thoughtful decisions when they know their own money is involved.

Your board already has a standard about giving money. Make it your goal to replace the existing standard about optional giving with one where every board member makes a yearly cash gift. This article shares several tools that ingenious nonprofit leaders, like you, can use to create this standard.

Do Them a Favor

By asking your board members to give, you do them a favor. Do you believe this? I mean *really* believe it? Research shows that giving gifts to others is one of a few actions that make us happy (http://greatergood.berkeley.edu). Giving gives back. People get more happiness from giving to others than buying bigger homes, new cars, or more stuff. Giving people the opportunity to give is not too much. It's a gift.

Unconvinced by research? Make it personal. Take the Hundred Dollar Challenge. Over the next seven days, give five gifts from your personal funds. Give $20 gifts in five different places. For instance, place $20 in a street musician's cup. Send a check to a nonprofit you admire. Insert another $20 into the mailbox of a neighbor experiencing financial difficulties. When you visit your coffee shop, give the barista

> **People decide differently when their money is involved.**

$20 to pay it forward. You get the picture. Watch what happens. Notice your happiness.

It's counterintuitive, but true. Giving changes lives for the better — including the life of the giver. Receiving cash gifts from your board begins with this mindset.

Help Them Belong

Another ingenious method to improve your board's giving standard involves the herding instinct. Herding is an ingrained human instinct, and it's all about belonging. Since we desire to belong, we adopt the behaviors of others. We constantly compare our behavior to that of those around us and seek to match it.

To create a cash-giving standard, herd your board members so that making a yearly cash gift becomes common, expected board behavior. To visualize what this looks like, imagine a shepherd herding sheep with the help of several dogs, or helpers. The shepherd gives instructions and begins to move. The sheep slowly follow. The helpers work at the edges and gently (or not — some nip) move the rest of the herd in the desired direction.

Find helpers willing to move others in the direction of the new gift standard. Who might these friends be? For one, board members who do give. Another helper? Foundations that inquire about board gifts in their applications. With few exceptions, what foundations mean by these questions is that requests from groups without a cash-giving standard are futile. Other helpers are videos, articles — like this one — and other media that share the importance of yearly board gifts.

You don't have to shout from the top of the hill to be a shepherd. Just decide where the board needs to go and guide them.

How can you herd? It depends on your starting place. Here are several scenarios and recommendations for each:

1. IF YOU ALREADY HAVE A GOOD NUMBER OF BOARD MEMBERS WHO GIVE

The path is straightforward. To increase the percentage of givers, you might design an activity that creates 100% giving with one swoop. For instance, ask a donor (helper) to

> ❝**A yearly cash gift from every board member is a proven best practice.**❞

make a major gift, but only if *all* the board members give a gift, too. Also create more gifts using one-on-one requests, such as, "Audrey, would you be willing to fund $100 to see your new initiative? If yes, we could start it tomorrow." People give because they are asked. One-to-one requests make the best asks.

Once you reach the 70% participation level, create an accountability chart. On the chart, list board activities (attending meetings, leading a committee, and the like). Include "giving yearly cash gifts" as one of these activities. Give each board member a copy of the chart — with this very important caveat: Don't name names. List members by code. Hand out the chart in sealed envelopes. Replace the code with the board member's actual name and highlight the board member's board activities *only* on that person's personal sheet. These charts will show them exactly how their activities stack up against everyone else's and give them the information they need to truly belong.

2. IF YOU HAVE ONLY A FEW BOARD GIFTS

Your task is harder. In truth, if you're a CEO or development director, the board probably doesn't consider you a member of their herd. Much of the time, they consider requests from you, like those of other outsiders, to be ambient noise, not on their radar the way appeals from their herd members are.

Stop talking at them. Work one on one instead. First, find helpers. Look amongst those who give already. Seek or create board champions who "get" the importance of giving. Don't overlook the people who might have resisted initially but participate later. In one recent case, a new board member grudgingly gave the required $500 donation the first year. Year two, he made a motion suggesting that the minimum be increased to $1,000. During subsequent years, he persuaded his fellow members to give larger and larger gifts until $10,000 became the standard.

3. IF YOU HAVE NO GIFTS

If you can't find a champion to promote board giving, your work's cut out for you. But don't despair! Find a bigger, different herd to join. One group did this by merging — which is pretty extreme — with a group with a giving board. Less extreme, but still effective, is claiming your membership in a bigger herd of successful nonprofits. Since you probably already talk about "other nonprofits" with wishful sighs, encourage your board to see your organization as about to

join this wonderful herd. Bring your board information about the ways you're already part of this herd. Also, share ways you need to grow. Will anyone on your board be surprised that the nonprofits in your big new herd, among other behaviors, all have a standard of 100% cash gifts? Probably not, but they'll like being part of success.

Recruit with Giving in Mind

Recruiting board members solely on the basis of their willingness to give cash gifts would be absurd. However, it's informative and useful to ask candidates what their attitudes are about giving. In board interviews, include questions regarding their beliefs and experiences about giving. Inquire about personal giving and past participation as board members. Share your personal goal of 100% board giving. Explain that this standard will support the success of the nonprofit and be meaningful to each board member.

Don't Give Up

A yearly cash gift from every board member is a proven best practice. Imagine the joy of writing in your future grant applications, "The board contributed over $200,000 during the last fiscal year. Every member gave. The gift range was from $1,500 to $25,000." A short time later, when your grants are quickly approved, you'll know that creating your new board standard was well worth the effort. 💲

Karen Eber Davis (karen@kedconsult. com) is an expert in maximizing philanthropic impact. She is the author of 7 Nonprofit Income Streams: Open the Floodgates to Sustainability! *Sign up for her free newsletter "Added Value" at kedconsult.com.*

100% Board Giving by Design (NonprofitWorld.org)

How to Talk to Your Board (Vol. 23, No. 1)

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

Does 100% Board Giving Matter? (Vol. 35, No. 1)

How to Solicit Your Board: Rules for Success (Vol. 35, No. 4)

Why You Need a Prenuptial Agreement (Vol. 13, No. 1)

How to Create a Strong Board-CEO Partnership (Vol. 27, No. 1)

Also see Learning Institute programs on-line: Board Governance (snpo.org/li).

Pictures, Pictures, Pictures: Using Photos to Capture Your Volunteer Story

Showcase your organization's volunteer corps with multi-purpose photos.

By Susan J. Ellis

Not that long ago, creating a collection of multi-purpose photos required all sorts of equipment and a budget for developing and printing the shots. While it still takes creative skill to snap a great image or an expressive portrait, everyone can gather a large library of photographs and videos for many purposes. Think of the following situations in which including images of volunteers might make an impression of what volunteering really looks like in your organization.

Use Photos for What Purposes?

Recruitment

Help prospective volunteers actually "picture" themselves in your setting. Take real photographs of volunteers at work, not obviously staged promotional shots. Show the office, recreation hall, or patient room where the service happens. Of course, you won't show client faces, but that doesn't mean you can't include someone's hands or the backs of people in a circle.

An archive of many different images – kept current – provides you with choices for what to print in a brochure, post to the volunteer pages of your website, include with a press release, or add to any slide show for different audiences.

Recognition

Forgo the usual "certificate" of appreciation and instead give each person a framed photograph of her- or himself doing the volunteer work for which you're giving thanks. What better way to show that "we see you"? Matte the photos with a printed message such as "you fit right in" or "thanks for all you've contributed here this year." Bet those pictures go on display in volunteers' homes, too, so be sure to include your organization's logo!

Even more useful are self-running slide shows at recognition events that offer the year-in-review, projected either as people gather for the party or during the event. Real pictures of real happenings with real volunteers and paid staff working together. Everyone gets excited to see people they know in the shots. The cumulative effect is to educate all viewers (including the executives who attend the event) about the range of activities accomplished by volunteers during the past year.

Hint: Record the voices of the *beneficiaries* of volunteer service (clients, staff, visitors, etc.) making comments about

> **Forgo the usual "certificate" of appreciation and instead give each person a framed photograph.**

the volunteers who helped them, and use those audio clips as background to the slide show.

One more idea: Catch people doing something right or good! Include the photo in a thank-you note right after you witness the positive moment. Definitely do this for staff as well as for volunteers.

Special Events

It's become common at weddings and other events to scatter disposable cameras on dinner tables and encourage guests to capture whatever images they think are fun, moving, or special in some way. Yes, there may still be a professional photographer taking formal pictures, but these spontaneous shots can save wonderful memories. Even without encouragement, it's impossible to *stop* guests from snapping photos on their phones . . . and almost immediately posting them to Facebook, Instagram, or some other picture-sharing platform. Use this to your organization's advantage and encourage such photography at any special event you sponsor.

Perhaps the most well-organized videotaping in our field is that of Volunteering Queensland TV on YouTube. Most of those videos are planned and produced by skilled volunteers.

Recruit & Train Volunteer Photographers

You don't have to be the one taking the pictures. Recruit volunteers onto a photography team. Some may want this to be their primary assignment, others may be willing to be on call for scheduled photo opps.

Before you add a volunteer to the photography team, do the same sort of screening as with any other volunteer position. Ask to see samples of the applicant's pictures. If,

after viewing these portfolios, you feel additional training is needed, schedule some with a professional photographer (another volunteer?) who can give your new team member some basic "tricks of the trade." The goal is to have candid, quality photos that anyone would enjoy viewing. **S**

Susan J. Ellis, longtime contributor to Nonprofit World *and president of Energize, Inc., passed away on February 24, 2019. Since 1977, Energize, Inc. has helped a wide diversity of clients start or expand volunteer efforts. Ellis has written 14 books on volunteerism and dozens of articles. She was co-publisher of the international online journal,* e-Volunteerism *(e-volunteerism.com), and dean of faculty for the online volunteer management training program,* Everyone Ready®. *Browse the 1200+ pages of free volunteer management information on the Energize website: energizeinc.com.*

> **"Catch people doing something right or good."**

For More Insights
(NonprofitWorld.org)

Volunteer Screening: Changing Trends in Changing Times (Vol. 34, No. 2)

The Best Way to Tell Your Organization's Story? Capture It on Video (Vol. 35, No. 4)

Building Trust with Your Volunteers (Vol. 34, No. 4)

Keep Your Volunteers Happy with Dynamic Training (Vol. 31, No. 4)

Maximizing Volunteer Participation (Vol. 28, No. 2)

Are You Making It Hard to Volunteer? (Vol. 22, No. 5)

Common-Sense Answers about Volunteer Involvement (Vol. 34, No. 1)

Also see Learning Institute programs on-line: Volunteer Management (snpo.org/li).

Let's Stop Shouting at Each Other & Start Talking

How can you get through to people who think differently from you? Here are tried-and-true strategies.

By Terrence Fernsler

Talking across the Divide: How to Communicate with People You Disagree with and Maybe Even Change the World.
By Justin Lee.
Softcover. 259 pages.
Penguin Random House, penguinrandomhouse.com.

It's become far too common to terminate communication with those who disagree with us. The result is a destructive polarization in which *anything* one "side" claims is disavowed by those identifying with the other "side." How will we ever change social problems when we refuse to even agree what the problems are?

Justin Lee, who has much experience with getting polarized people to talk with each other, offers the benefit of his experience. His solution: strategic dialogue.

He concedes that "strategic dialogue" isn't an exciting phrase. But it's a powerful tool to change minds. He emphasizes the "strategic" part of the equation. It's not enough to have a dialogue. You must have a strategy for engaging, understanding, and having an impact on the other person.

Lee explains, step by step, how to overcome barriers between people. Tactics include:

Listen before asking them to listen to you. "Strategic listening" is a key technique. Gather as much information
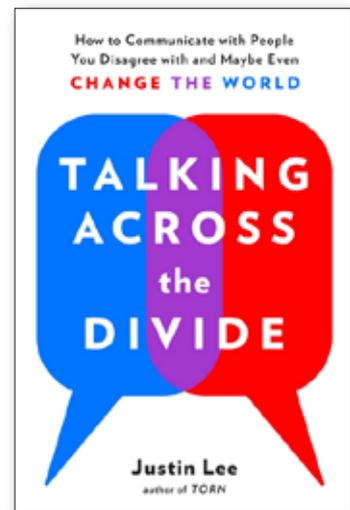
> **How will we ever change social problems when we refuse to even agree what the problems are?**

as you can about them as they talk. Seek the answers to questions such as these: What do they want? What do they believe? What do they think *you* want? What are their sources of information? What terminology do they use (certain phrases will clue you in to their influencers). What worries them?

Humanize the other person. Fight your instinct to see the other side as a villain. Look instead for commonalities.

Tell personal stories that show why an issue is important to you. People can always dismiss an expert, but they can't argue with your story.

Tell their story back to them. Repeat what you've heard them say and ask if you've got it right. Tell it as if they were the hero of the story. Doing so will break down a lot of walls.

The process has worked for Lee many times: He even created a nonprofit that practices and teaches strategic dialogue.

He candidly admits that strategic dialogue doesn't always work, that we should be prepared for that possibility, and that we learn from those failures. Learning from when it didn't work for him, he offers ways to break through obstacles. Perhaps the only scenario he omits is when there is such disproportionate power between two parties that one party has no incentive to understand the other's position.

He suggests that strategic dialogue works best in one-on-one situations. And, after all, isn't one person at a time still the most effective way to change the world?

Terrence Fernsler, MNPL, PhD, has been a nonprofit professional for over 35 years. He is currently an instructor and advisor in the James Madison University Nonprofit Studies minor program (jmu.edu/academics/undergraduate/minors/nonprofit-studies).

Avoid the L Word
Treat this word like the plague.

By Max T. Russell

> **"Those simple words blow away a whole lot of fog. So, help your team stick to them."**

I can't tell for sure what they're saying, and you can't either – not if we're honest.

Storeowner Rafael said, "I wrote the mayor, and I was like, 'Somebody needs to take responsibility for these aggressive, out-of-town panhandlers.' And she was like, 'Have you talked to our office that addresses those issues?' And I was like, 'Which office is that?'"

This is ridiculous conversation. How can we know exactly what was said? This is the kind of communication you must avoid in your public messages, and yet this problem with the L word has became more prevalent during each of the past 10 years.

The words you need are *said* and *thought.*

Example: I wrote the mayor and *said* that somebody needs to take responsibility.

Example: When she asked whether I had checked with the right office, I *thought,* "Hmm . . . which office is the mayor talking about?"

Or maybe, in the second example, Rafael meant *said* instead of *thought,* but how can we know unless he first gets away from the L word and into the habit of saying what he means? He can't represent our organization or persuade us to back his cause until we know what in the world actually transpired in the conversation – and in his head.

The craziest part of this problem is that journalists nowadays are keeping the L word in their reporting, rather than clarifying with the people they quote. So, we still don't know what was said or not said, even though the reporter is reporting the exchanges. We need to know. Reporters could take time to clarify with the speakers' assistance and replace the L word with specific verbs. The ones that immediately come to mind are . . . um . . . *said* and *thought.*

Those simple words blow away a whole lot of fog. So, help your team stick to them. You can persuade more people to support you, join you, and work for you when you say things as clear as a bell. Beware the L word. $

Max T. Russell (maxt@maxtrussell.com) is owner of Max and Max Communications. He improves marketing messages for alternative medicine, lawyers, nonprofits, and business intelligence.

Defog Your Messages

Remove clouds of ambiguity with clear, simple, straightforward words. For more insights, take a quick look at these articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

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

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

Keep the Main Thing Up Front (Vol. 36, No. 1)

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

Writing Well by Doing LESS (Vol. 30, No. 5)

Get to the Point Fast (Vol. 37, No. 1)

Cynicism Rx: Authentic Communication (Vol. 24, No. 6)

Don't Go it Alone in a Crisis

Will you be prepared if the unthinkable happens?
An emergency-management expert shows you how to be sure.

By Lucien Canton

You rarely know beforehand when a crisis is going to hit. That's why pre-planning is so important. You need to know the steps to take and the people you're going to rely on to help you if the worst should occur.

Make the Right Decisions

First, keep in mind the three phases of decision-making in a crisis:

1. Collect and analyze information. The early stage of a crisis is one of confusion and uncertainty. The cause of the crisis isn't always evident. The long-term impact is usually obscure. If you can quickly gather information to use in decision-making, you'll have a distinct advantage. It's critical, therefore, to have people who know what kinds of information to collect and where to find it.

2. Create an action plan. Once you have enough information, begin the process of considering options and deciding on a plan. Gain input from people who understand the nature of the crisis and are familiar with your organization.

3. Implement your plan. Having a sound plan is meaningless if it can't be implemented. You need support to obtain resources, direct the operations of employees, and communicate with customers and vendors. The job is just too big for one person.

Build the Right Team

Success in a crisis hinges on decision-making, and those decisions must be informed by trusted advisors and implemented by capable people. To be an effective leader, you need a good crisis management team.

Creating such a team isn't all that complicated if you build on day-to-day problem solving. A major mistake is to develop a team that only meets during a crisis. A much better approach is to use the people you rely on each day, who are used to working together and who trust each other.

Ask these four questions when developing your crisis management team.

1. Whom do you trust? These are the people you turn to for everyday problems, the people whose opinion you seek on new ideas. Most important, they're the people you'll listen to

when they tell you you're wrong. These trusted advisors should form the core of your crisis management team.

2. Whom do your employees trust? In any organization there's a formal organizational structure and an informal one. The closer these two mirror each other, the more efficient the organization. The informal structure is represented by employees that other employees respect and trust. While you may or may not add these individuals to your crisis management team, you can use them to "take the pulse" of other employees, act as conduits for information, and help implement your action plan.

3. What skills will you need? Some people are obvious choices, such as your management team, your publicist, and your legal counsel. But consider others who may not be so obvious – administrators, human resource staff, and those who interface with customers and suppliers on a regular basis. Not all these people need to be decision-makers, but they can provide important advice and suggestions.

4. Who has the information you need? Information is the cornerstone of decision-making. Some of that vital information is internal. Do you know where to find it? For some problems, a maintenance person who knows your building's operating systems might be the most important member of your team. What about external sources? An employee who has built a relationship with public safety agencies or with your insurance company can get information that's not available through the media. Speaking of which, who will monitor broadcast and social media?

A crisis management team shouldn't be just for crisis. It should be composed of the people you trust and rely on for normal operations and problem solving. Augment that core group with the additional staff and skills you need, and you'll boost your ability to manage in the face of a crisis. ⑤

Lucien G. Canton, CEM (luciencanton.com, info@ luciencanton.com) is a consultant specializing in preparing managers to lead better in crisis by understanding the human factors often overlooked in crisis planning. A popular speaker and lecturer, he is the author of the best-selling Emergency Management: Concepts and Strategies for Effective Programs.

Hone Your Crisis Communication Skills

To be sure you communicate smoothly and clearly when trouble strikes, see these articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

When You're Forced to Say "No Comment" (Vol. 22, No. 4)

Will You Be Ready when Disaster Strikes? (Vol. 18, No. 3)

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

Negative Publicity: Do Nonprofits Have a Plan? (Vol. 18, No. 6)

In the Hot Seat (Vol. 12, No. 4)

Crisis in the Boardroom – Can We Avoid Catastrophe? (Vol. 21, No. 5)

Coming Up in *Nonprofit World*
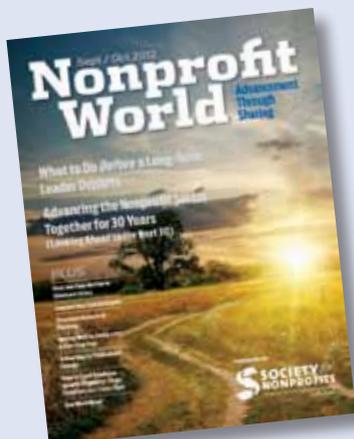
- Better Delegation = Better Leadership

- What Has Changed about Marketing?

- Handling Difficult Calls

- Extraordinary Impact on an Ordinary Budget: It's Possible with These Tactics

- This Is How It Feels when You Don't Acknowledge a Donor

- From Bored to Blazing: Fire Up Your Board

- Employer-Provided Parking: The New Tax on the Block

And much more …

Unleash the True Power of Conversation

For true engagement, honor how the brain works.

By Brady G. Wilson

You may not realize it, but your organization is home to an incredibly powerful operating system.

Think outside the realm of technology. What has the potential to engage and energize your employees, bring teams closer together, and create a high-performing workforce?

It's *conversation*.

Conversation is the common denominator behind "apps" like customer service, feedback, coaching, strategy, and innovation. Meaningful conversations between leaders and employees power up all the things that make an organization successful.

Not sure you agree that conversation is your organization's most mighty operating system? Consider what would

> **Rather than consider the "why," leaders often rush to create strategies.**

> **Ask employees what's energizing them at the moment.**

happen *without* conversation. All those apps would crash – and your organization would fail.

Talking heads

Let's go a bit more "micro" and look at the human brain's operating system. Every single message transmitted from one neuron to another enables us to see, hear, move – and think. If all those 100 billion neurons were to stop talking to one another, our bodies and ability to process information would cease to function.

Meanwhile, science shows us that our brains are strengthened and enhanced by social conversations "between brains." This is our native wiring – and, consequently, the perfect operating system that we need to connect, understand, and harmonize with others.

> **" This technique catches issues before they become calamities. "**

And as neuronal conversations are the way the brain gets things done, *employee conversations* are the way *organizations* get things done.

With this in mind, then, why do organizations not integrate conversation into their employee-engagement initiatives?

Ignoring conversation = missed opportunities

Using engagement surveys as an example, consider how organizations often deal with results. Rather than pause to consider the "why" behind results, leaders will rush to create strategies – one-size-fits-all, broad-brush strategies – built on nothing but numbers.

But employees don't respond well to global solutions. They want to know that they've been listened to. Leaders who draft plans without taking time to consider context or "back story" practically guarantee employee non-compliance to any engagement initiative.

Organizations that ignore the importance of conversation are missing out on a range of opportunities to create a higher-performing workforce. Here's why: Science shows that when you have meaningful, face-to-face conversations that demonstrate value, respect, and care, this boosts the brain's processing power – forming a feel-good energy cocktail of connection, calm, concentration, creativity, and curiosity. Essentially, conversation can deepen the leader-employee relationship, energize employees, and power those apps that make an organization so successful.

No time to talk?

Don't feel you have time to talk to your employees? Consider this: Unaddressed concerns fester and simmer. Then they turn into *difficult* conversations – consuming *multiples* of energy, time, and mind-space from everyone in the organization.

And not only that: Conversations don't have to take a lot of time. Short, simple, "energy-check" conversations are a proven way to unlock insight and possibility in your employees' minds. It can be as simple as asking employees what's energizing them at the moment and what's depleting their energy. Done systematically, this technique not only saves time. It catches issues before they become calamities.

Easy to install

Conversation already exists in your organization. It's simply up to leaders to embrace it as the key operating system that drives success. Just shift your mindset to include conversation in all engagement endeavors. This generates energy, fueling great experiences and results for everyone in your organization.

Brady Wilson is co-founder of Juice Inc., a training company that services organizations from Toronto to Los Angeles. He is also a speaker, trainer, and the author of Beyond Engagement: A Brain-Based Approach That Blends the Engagement Managers Want with the Energy Employees Need. *Follow Brady on Twitter (@ BradyJuiceInc), visit his website, bradywilson.com, or receive a free downloadable copy of his book by visiting juiceinc.com.*

Power Up

For other ways to communicate, engage, and energize your employees, take a look at these articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

Productive Employees: Two Crucial Ingredients

Do you need to rejuvenate your organization's environment? Here's how to tell, and what to do about it.

By Monica MacDougall

As a nonprofit leader, one of your most vital tasks is to be sure workers (both paid and volunteer) are productive and happy in their jobs. The best way to improve job performance and enhance employee skills is through job enrichment – a term developed by Frederick Herzberg.[1]

Two Essential Factors to Invigorate Your Work Environment

Herzberg posits that two types of factors are necessary to provide an enriched work environment:

1. Motivator factors are the primary causes of job satisfaction. They include:

- achievement
- the job itself
- responsibility
- opportunity for growth
- advancement.

2. Hygiene factors don't create job satisfaction, but they do reduce dissatisfaction. Being dissatisfied isn't the opposite of feeling satisfied, according to Herzberg. The factors that influence satisfaction are different from those that induce dissatisfaction. Thus, hygiene factors are just as important as motivator factors. Hygiene factors consist of:

- organizational policy
- quality of supervision
- working conditions
- job security.

The Four Possible Job Profiles: Where Do Your Employees Fall?

In an ideal world, both motivator and hygiene factors are strongly present, and employees are completely satisfied. At the opposite end of the spectrum, with no fulfillment in either the motivator or hygiene factors, employees are

> **Cyclical factors aren't enough to lead to superior performance.**

> **Learning opportunities boost motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction.**

completely dissatisfied. Taking these two extremes and adding two gradations between them, Hertzberg has developed four possible job profiles. Each employee falls somewhere within these four groups:

1. High Motivation/High Hygiene: "Best of All Worlds"

In this category, both motivator and hygiene factors are strongly present, and employees are completely satisfied and happy. They're excited by the tasks and the job itself. The nature of the work is challenging. Needs for achievement and recognition are being met and will lead to positive long-term effects. In addition, the employee isn't dissatisfied with the hygiene elements such as organizational policy, job security, and interpersonal relationships.

2. High Motivation/Low Hygiene: "Starving Artist"

This type of employee is both happy and unhappy. "Starving artist" employees find the work satisfying, but aren't pleased with such factors as organizational policy, job security, and quality of supervision.

3. Low Motivation/High Hygiene: "I'm All Right, Jack"

Employees is this category are unhappy with long-term aspects of the job, such as feelings of achievement and a belief that the job will lead to growth and opportunity. On the other hand, these workers are satisfied with organizational policy, relationships with peers, and personal work-life balance. Unfortunately, these hygiene factors tend to be cyclical in nature and don't fulfill the complex needs for recognition and increased job capacity; thus, they aren't enough to lead to superior performance.

4. Low Motivation/Low Hygiene: "Down & Out"

Staff members in this category are unhappy with every aspect of the job. They aren't being fulfilled in any way, and it's possible that the job itself can't be enriched. You can be sure that an employee in this group is looking for a new job.

Where Nonprofits Shine and Where They Need More Light

Many nonprofit workers fall into quadrant 3, "I'm all right, Jack." Although they enjoy their interpersonal relationships and other hygiene factors, they lack motivators such as a sense of achievement and opportunities for advancement.

Studies (such as the "Nonprofit Employment Trends Survey"[2]) show that many nonprofit employees are thinking of leaving their jobs due to a lack of future opportunities and career development. If nonprofit leaders don't enrich the work environment, they'll lose knowledge and be unprepared for leadership succession.

What can you do to improve this situation? Begin by expanding the training you offer to employees. Research has shown that training opportunities improve task related knowledge and lead to overall increases in employee performance.[3] Learning opportunities boost motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction.

You can customize in-house training to the specific requirements of employees. Other types of learning such as online courses can also add value, extend existing knowledge, and promote active thinking. Many professional associations offer continuing education programs, courses, and conferences throughout the year.

In addition to offering learning opportunities, do whatever you can to remove layers of hierarchy, introduce challenging tasks, and increase employees' authority. The combination of these factors will enrich the job and move your employees into the "best of all worlds" category. The result will be highly motivated, productive employees who are eager to grow, learn, and help your organization achieve its mission for many years to come. 💲

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Footnotes

[1] See Herzberg's "Orthodox Job Enrichment: Measuring True Quality in Job Satisfaction," *Personnel*, 53(5), 54-68, which describes the Herzberg Motivation/Hygiene Theory (or Two-Factor Theory).

[2] http://www.nonprofithr.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/2013-Employment-Trends-Survey-Report.pdf.

[3] For example, see "Strategy and HRM in Nonprofit Organizations," *International Journal of Human Resource Management* 17, 1707-1725.

How to Move Employees into the "Best of All Worlds" Category

Provide opportunities for growth and career advancement by coaching and mentoring employees.

Encourage an environment of continuous learning by offering tuition reimbursement for those who want to take courses.

Offer challenging work and assign new tasks when opportunities are available.

Ensure all employees are informed of the mission and vision of the organization. Constantly reinforce common values.

Motivate people with recognition programs for going above and beyond.

Make additional training available when improvement is required.

Engage employees by giving them autonomy over their work.

Cross-train employees at different levels to give them experience in a variety of areas, build new skill sets, and develop their leadership abilities.

Communicate expectations clearly.

Survey workers to see what training they want and need. Customize training accordingly.

Remove hierarchal structure when possible to provide increased responsibility.

Discuss potential career paths during employee appraisals.

Be sensitive to employees' personal needs, and help them create a work-life balance that will reduce stress and boost motivation.

More Paths to Enrichment

For more details on enhancing your work environment, see these articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

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

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

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

Using Training Strategically to Build Organizational Capacity (Vol. 14, No. 4)

The High Cost of Employee Turnover — and How to Avoid It (Vol. 32, No. 3)

Training Programs Need More than Good Information (Vol. 21, No. 2)

Tapping into the Next Generation:
Pitfalls & Best Practices for Engaging Millennials

Harness the talents of the biggest-ever generation with these strategies.

By Matt McCrosson & Liz Gousse

Move over, baby boomers. Millennials are officially the largest generation in U.S. history. There were 92 million Americans born between 1980 and 2000, according to census data. In a class so large, it's difficult to make broad generalities about work ethic and perspectives. But given that millennials will make up 75% of the workforce by 2025, there's little debate that organizations that can harness this generation's skills and talents will be better positioned for success.

The nonprofit sector is in fact uniquely suited to hire and retain top talent among millennials. In a recent survey, six in 10 millennials said an employer's "sense of purpose" played a role in why they chose their current position. And they place a high value on the impact they can have in their careers – 84% said "knowing I am helping to make a positive difference in the world is more important to me than professional recognition," according to research from Bentley University. Nonprofits have these aspirations baked into their business. That's an advantage.

But while millennials may place impact over recognition, they still have high expectations when it comes to their work environment. Only 30% of the respondents surveyed by Bentley were willing to work in an unpleasant environment to achieve career success. They want the employer to have a sense of purpose, but they expect a nice place to work, too.

The key for nonprofits is to communicate their mission while fostering an environment that matches what millennials want on the job. We've seen it work at nonprofit organizations of all sizes in many different fields. Here are five things nonprofit leaders should keep in mind to bring millennials on board.

1. Culture Counts

Nonprofits that best connect their organization's outward mission with their internal culture will be the most effective at wooing millennials – and motivating them to do their best work. That starts with keeping employees updated on the impact your organization is making in the world, just as you do with your donors. Make sure these communications are honest and candid. Employees, especially millennials, will dismiss reports that seem forced or phony.

> **"Millennials have high expectations of their work environment."**

Arrange the work space to accommodate a millennial mindset. Younger workers see traditional cubicles as stuffy and isolating. That doesn't necessarily mean they expect bean bag chairs and ping pong tables, but there can be a balance. Create a more open layout with unassigned seating. Areas primed for collaboration will foster the teamwork and creative working sessions employees crave.

When it comes to updating operations, consider this: The majority of millennials grew up playing video games and want gamification in everything from workplace training to physical fitness. They see competition as a frequent part of collaboration and look for the built-in rules and structure that gamification offers. You can't turn your whole office into a game, but a "Best Idea Competition" with bragging rights for "Genius of the Week" may spark a better brainstorm than a traditional whiteboard session.

2. Flexibility & Accountability Aren't Mutually Exclusive

As millennials occupy more of the workforce, part of the culture shift is the waning dominance of the 9-5 workday. Millennials expect to be able to take time off when they need it (even if it's just a personal day). But they don't mind answering an e-mail or two on that day off or later in the evening. If a big project means everyone works late, millennials may be less likely to complain.

Nonprofits must embrace this more flexible approach without sacrificing accountability. Millennials may expect a little more leeway in how they complete an assignment, and they may do better work because of that freedom to follow a creative idea or rethink an approach. But that flexibility shouldn't extend to missed deadlines or shoddy work. It's up to an organization's leaders to make sure a looser structure doesn't impact accountability or results.

> **"Traditional cubicles are seen as stuffy and isolating."**

3. Create Clear Goals & Roles

One way to set an expectation of accountability is to establish clear goals and roles for employees as soon as they join your organization. Again, nonprofits have a unique opportunity to tie workplace expectations to the greater mission and impact of people's work. The stereotype that millennials are constantly job hopping is a myth, Pew found. Millennials are eager to grow their careers at a single organization, and they appreciate – and need – mentors to help them navigate that path.

A big part of creating that culture of flexibility and accountability is empowering younger workers to take ownership of their work and the effect it has on the outside world. That starts with a clear understanding of what role they will play and what your organization expects from them.

4. Be Generous with Benefits

Nonprofits often struggle to compete with the corporate world when it comes to salary – that's not a new challenge exclusive to millennial workers. Nonprofit organizations often try to fill this gap by offering plentiful benefits. The most revolutionary examples include unlimited vacation and mental health days. These perks can be effective, provided organizations have successfully built a culture of accountability.

But the approach doesn't have to be so extreme – millennials still appreciate traditional benefits like generous health care coverage and retirement savings matches. These perks, combined with the meaningful work and a path for career growth, are often enough to lure top millennial talent away from the corporate world.

Nonprofits should also consider incentives that don't only benefit the employee. Many organizations allow employees to take time off for volunteer work. Some nonprofits sponsor organization-wide volunteer days to make an impact locally. These kinds of "days on" are more common in the for-profit world but present a unique opportunity for nonprofits to draw one more connection between the work employees are doing and the greater good.

5. Cool Tech Is Enticing

There's no doubt that millennials are wowed by cool technology. They've grown up assuming that near-constant updates to technology will make their lives easier. To them, the workplace is no exception.

You need to be thoughtful when it comes to technology upgrades – budget limitations demand that. But finding ways to embrace new technology, without sacrificing security or privacy, can show your organization is ready to adapt to new opportunities – and may also improve productivity.

Bring in New Funds

Understanding what motivates millennials won't just give you a leg up inside the workplace; it will also give you a fundraising advantage. Studies show that about half of millennials donate to a cause on a monthly basis, based on their own criteria and expectations. As millennials dominate the workforce, they're quickly becoming affluent members of society and leading decision makers.

Nonprofit organizations that can successfully onboard millennial employees and help them transition to leadership roles will be better suited to attract this growing donor class. That starts with creating a workplace and culture that resonates with millennials. Focusing on impact, flexibility, gamification, and cutting-edge tech are all crucial elements in reaching younger generations and incorporating them into the organization. 🔷

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Matching Your Methods to Millennials

To dive deeper into millennial engagement, see these articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

When Funding Windfalls Cause Technology Problems

Be sure you're prepared for tech-related donations.

By Anna Murray

You run a mid-sized nonprofit. Suddenly, a funding source comes through big-time with the technology grant you've been waiting for. Time to pop the champagne?

Not so fast. Technology funding windfalls can cause disorder and disarray at nonprofit organizations. Here's why.

Staff. Accustomed to running on a shoestring, staff have honed their skills to economize. Many IT staff have never been given resources and have no experience in even medium-scale system upgrades.

Legacy Systems. Networks, hardware, and software in resource-strapped nonprofits can often have a chewing-gum-and-duck-tape setup. Funding for brand-new servers or tablets can be difficult or even impossible to deploy atop such systems.

Lack of Internet Bandwidth. Even medium-sized nonprofits tend to economize on internet access, with insufficient wifi points and third-tier providers. This results in unreliable broadband access. But many state-of-the-art tools rely on good access. If your nonprofit is funded for distance learning or given a high-end digital assets management system (DAM), it may be uncomfortable to learn your access doesn't support its use.

Limited Timeframe. Funding sources may require implementation within a certain amount of time. Upgrades and installations need to happen within that window.

Here are four tips to mitigate these problems and get to the champagne popping.

Know your IT Situation

Whether or not a windfall comes your way, you need to answer this question: What is the state of your network, equipment, and staff? Before applying for technology-related funding, nonprofit mangers should understand whether their existing infrastructure can handle a grant if they get it. Build these costs into your funding requests.

Augment Staff

Imagine you're the leader of a school and your grant request was just fulfilled but you didn't plan ahead. You have 200 tablets arriving for your students, an IT director who graduated college last year, and a cobbled-together, outdated computer network.

The very first thing you need is IT expertise. An experienced person can quickly analyze what you need to absorb your new tech funding and get the most out of it.

Identify the Critical Path

Your IT expert will likely lay out numerous high-priority fixes. But, although everything needs to be done, it doesn't necessarily all need to be done now.

This is where critical path planning comes in. Such planning identifies the show stoppers and deal breakers. For example, if someone donates a Photoshop license to your organization, you need computers capable of running the latest version of Photoshop. Lack of those computers is a show stopper – absolutely high, probably number-one, on the critical path.

Consider the tablet example above. In this real-world situation, the school didn't have adequate wifi to support all 200 tablets getting online at once. But, with some questioning of teachers, the IT expert discovered that not all students needed to be on wifi at once. In fact, the teachers could coordinate among themselves so that at most 20 tablets would get online simultaneously. This situation could continue for a semester.

Fixing the wifi immediately came off critical path. Other items, such as developing a process to set up, roll out, and troubleshoot the new tablets, were much more important.

Case-Study Your Experience

Networks, servers, and bandwidth aren't super sexy. It's often hard to get administrations and boards to pay attention to such nuts-and-bolts elements of operations. Perceptions may be, "Everything seems to be working okay. So what if we're down a couple times a month?"

A new source of funding can be a great ah-ha moment. Case-study your situation. By writing up a case study, you can show why it's important to put your organization in a nimbler posture to absorb technology investment.

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Five Ways to Show Appreciation

Communicating appreciation to employees decreases the chances of their leaving, increases satisfaction, and improves productivity. *The Five Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace* (Northfield Publishing, moodypublishers.com) posits that everyone has a primary language of appreciation. Here are the five languages and how to use them to assure that every person feels truly appreciated:

1. Words of affirmation. Verbally praise someone by focusing on a specific achievement. "Catch" someone doing something "right" and call attention to it.

2. Tangible gifts. Conduct a survey asking people's favorite musicians, hobbies, and the like. Then give gifts that match their preferences – ballet tickets to someone who enjoys the ballet, football tickets to a football lover, restaurant coupons to someone who likes eating out. To those who value this form of appreciation, the right gift sends a powerful message of support.

3. Acts of service. Ask people if they would like help with their work. Discovering the service that would be most meaningful is as easy as asking, "Is there anything I can do for you that would make your work easier?" Then follow through.

4. Quality time. Give someone your undivided attention, encourage them to share their feelings and thoughts, and listen carefully.

5. Physical touch. Many people wonder, "Is there any place for physical touch in the workplace?" The authors believe there is. Appropriate physical touches are a fundamental aspect of human behavior. In every culture, there are appropriate and inappropriate touches. Affirming, nonsexual touches, such as shaking hands, briefly patting a shoulder, or high-fiving a colleague, can be meaningful expressions of appreciation. Pay close attention as you do so, and if you feel your colleague stiffen, then you know your touch isn't communicating appreciation.

How do you know which language each person prefers? Have everyone on your team complete the Motivating by Appreciation Inventory (mbainventory.com). Or simply try out the languages on people and deduce their languages of appreciation by how they respond. Keep a file of people's responses, their preferred languages of appreciation, and the context in which they would most like to receive them.

ACTION CHECKLIST

✔ **Choose someone who values words of affirmation.** Find a chance to praise that person within the next week.

✔ **Listen to people's conversations.** Make a note when you hear them say, "I'd like to have one of those," and let that information guide you in getting small gifts for them.

✔ **Say "thank you" to a volunteer or paid staff member** at least once today. Be sure you speak from your heart. Hollow words are worse than no thanks at all.

✔ **Look for opportunities this week** to ask someone about their personal interests.

✔ **Notice whether those in the workplace** frequently pat each other on the back, give fist bumps, or hug others. If so, you can assume that receiving an affirming touch from you would be received as an expression of appreciation. If not, be cautious about touching others at work.

✔ **Check in with people** to see if they are feeling supported by you and if there are better ways to show your appreciation for them.

✔ **Reflect on your interactions** with someone, and consider the character traits you've observed. Tell that person how much you admire those traits. 💲

Assessing Grantmaking from Within

It can be challenging to evaluate the effectiveness of foundation programs. One way to do so is to determine if foundations are learning from their initiatives. The Center for Effective Philanthropy asked foundation CEOs what they were learning about their funding's impact and reported the results in *Understanding and Sharing What Works: The State of Foundation Practice* (cep.org). Key findings:

Almost two-thirds of CEOs say they have a good understanding of what's working in their foundation's programmatic efforts, but more than 40% say their foundation isn't investing enough time and money in developing this understanding.

Foundations use many sources of information to find out what's working and what's not. These include site visits, grant reports, and anecdotal feedback from grantees. There's little consensus, however, as to which of these sources are most useful.

While they think they have reliable ways to evaluate what works, foundation CEOs admit they have few ways to learn what's *not* working. One problem is that grantees feel pressured to report on successful outcomes and are reluctant to admit a program's shortcomings. By focusing on achievements and minimizing defeats, leaders don't learn the lessons that failure can teach.

Foundation CEOs are using what they learn about their programmatic work to make decisions about subsequent initiatives and are willing to share that knowledge. Unfortunately, fewer than one in five CEOs say they use information from other foundations. There are clearinghouses of grant information that would make such sharing easier, but foundation CEOs tend to spend more time on internal matters than learning from others in the field. The low emphasis on using information from other funders suggests a position of competition – in order to justify foundation programs or even the foundation's existence – rather than cooperation on broad purposes.

There's a lack of clarity by many foundations about what information is actually useful and worth sharing.

While only a basic way to explore the effectiveness of foundation programs, this research does uncover areas in which communication about learning from funding initiatives can improve. Investing more research into transparent, authentic communication may help serve grantees and their communities better. 💲

— reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

Study Finds Urgent, Chronic Fundraising Problems — and Some Solutions

Many nonprofits are caught in a vicious cycle that makes it hard to raise the resources they need, according to *UnderDeveloped*, a study by CompassPoint (compasspoint.org). The report warns that this problem is widespread in nonprofits throughout the country and offers an urgent call for action.

Key Findings

Organizations are struggling with high turnover and long vacancies in the development-director position.

Organizations aren't finding enough qualified candidates for development-director jobs.

There are performance problems and a lack of basic fundraising skills among key development staff.

Everyone in the organization, not just development staff, needs to support fundraising. The findings indicate that many nonprofits aren't doing this.

Fundraising Bright Spots

Prompted by the challenges identified in *UnderDeveloped*, CompassPoint has helped create another report, *Fundraising Bright Spots*, that highlights potential solutions and ways to make fundraising more effective, including:

Create a documented plan to distribute fundraising activities throughout the organization.

Make sure everyone in the organization understands what your primary and secondary income strategies are — and why you're pursuing them.

Learn peer coaching skills to motivate action and learning within fundraising.

Provide opportunities for staff, board, and donors to engage together during the year to build trust and relationships.

Hire development staff who aren't just skilled in the tactics of fundraising (such as direct mail, events, planned giving) but are also strategic thinkers with communication and marketing skills.

Focus fundraising efforts on building relationships with donors over time — not just asking for money when needed. Respects donors as individuals and treat them as partners, not just funders.

Invest money in strengthening the organization's fundraising infrastructure, including professional development, training, and technology.

Spend more time on keeping donors than acquiring new ones.

Discuss fundraising responsibilities with prospective board members before they're elected to the board, and include personal giving in board members' expectations and agreement.

Thank and engage donors on a regular and personalized basis to ensure they know their value to the organization.

Be sure all staff and board members see themselves as ambassadors for the organization, are involved in fund development, have contact with donors, and can articulate the case for giving.

Give donors, clients, board, and staff plenty of chances to "tell their stories" about their philanthropy. Then use these stories as the focus of development outreach. 💲

You Gotta Accentuate the Positive

There has been a great deal of debate over the idea of positive thinking. Some dismiss it as "wishful thinking" or "pie-in-the-sky dreaming" and consider its practitioners hopelessly deluded "Pollyannas."

But the latest brain research tells a different story. New studies show that thinking positively makes the brain more flexible, as Leonard Mlodinow explains in *Elastic* (Pantheon Books). Positive emotions prompt us to consider a wider range of ideas than are typical. Studies prove that when people are in a positive mood, they do far better in tests of elastic thinking. Such thinking allows more original solutions to surface when encountering problems.

When we think positively, we're more able to learn new things, create new relationships, expand our networks, and open ourselves to absorbing information. Those activities increase resilience and lower stress.

Positivity isn't the same as fantasizing about perfect outcomes. Dreaming doesn't fix problems. What does work is a mindful approach to seeing the positive side of things. Some ideas:

When you have to deliver bad news or criticism, think of good things you can add to what you say. This practice will engender a more positive mood throughout your organization.

Imagine a goal you want to achieve. Consider all the obstacles that may come your way. Then think about how you can overcome those problems. Such "realistic optimism" is a proven way to succeed.

When you have negative thoughts, acknowledge them. Then imagine it's a friend who's having those thoughts. Consider how you would advise your friend. Then apply that advice to yourself.

Make it a regular practice to write down things for which you're grateful and things that are going right in your life. Such lists make you more mindful of positive information about yourself, which helps you play to your strengths.

Ask the people around you what would make them happy, and do what you can to provide it. The happier workers are, the more productive and creative they will be. 💲
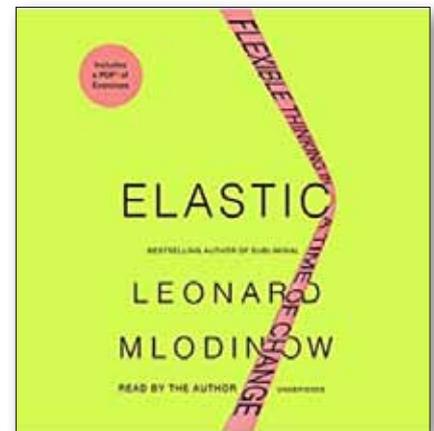
Rethinking Negotiation

We tend to think too narrowly about negotiation, says Deepak Malhotra. We equate it with haggling or hammering out a deal. We consider it something negative. But what is negotiation really? It's about human interaction. The question we're asking in negotiation is: How might we engage with other human beings in a way that leads to better understanding and agreement?

In *Negotiating the Impossible* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, bkconnection.com), Malhotra focuses on tough negotiations – the seemingly impossible ones. He lays out tactics that can help in such situations:

Control the frame. There's almost no limit to the types of frames that can emerge in a negotiation, explains Malhotra. For example, you may look at a deal through a lens that's financial or strategic, short- or long-term, friendly or hostile. The other party may be looking through a different frame. You need, first, to understand what their perspective is, then help them see the situation through your own frame.

Avoid one-issue negotiations. Though it may seem counterintuitive, negotiations tend to be smoother when more than one issue is in play. If you reach a stalemate on one issue, it helps to introduce another one, even if that issue is relatively minor. Giving in on the second issue may give the other party enough of a win so that they'll concede the first issue to you.

Shape the process. Here are just a few elements of process to consider and control as much as possible: When and where will the negotiations take place? How long will they last? What will be on the agenda? Will there be outside observers or mediators? What milestones might help keep the process on track? How will results be implemented?

Use empathy to create more options for yourself. The better you see the other side's perspective, the more likely you are to find a solution. The more you understand their motivations, interests, and constraints, the greater the possibilities for resolution. §

Time Travel, True Stories, & Other Useful Exercises

In *Leading the Life You Want* (Harvard Business Review Press, harvardbusiness.org), Stewart Friedman describes a set of exercises that can transform your organization. You can use them to help everyone in your organization feel inspired, connected with others, and excited about the future. A few examples:

Take 15 minutes to remove yourself from your everyday hustle and bustle. Let your mind travel into the future and imagine you've fulfilled your organization's main goals. What would that future look like? What would people be saying about your organization? How would the world be different? Write down some specific actions that will make that ideal future a reality. Ask others in your organization to try this exercise, and compare your results.

Think of true stories of someone putting your organization's values into action. Share these stories to motivate others.

Gather a group of people affected by a problem in your organization, and ask them to come up with potential solutions. Record all their ideas. Discuss each solution, drawing on the wisdom of different viewpoints. As a group, select the best, second-best, and third-best options, and decide on the next action to take on the first-choice solution.

Consider one of your goals and the people who will benefit once you've fulfilled it. Have a quick conversation with those beneficiaries. Focus on finding out what they need and care about. If feasible, commit to providing what they want.

Together with others in your organization, pinpoint one of your organization's core values. Identify one simple action toward a goal that's consistent with that value, and commit to completing this action.

How Should You Handle a Tainted Gift?

At some point in your organizational life, someone will donate money that isn't "pure." There may be strings attached, or the money may be associated with a group whose values don't align with yours. Or what if you accept a gift and later the donor does something disreputable – should you return the donation?

That question arose recently when the University of Louisville announced it was changing the name of its football stadium from "Papa John's Cardinal Stadium" to simply "Cardinal Stadium." How come? Papa John's founder, John Schnatter, confirmed that he used a racial slur in a conference call, thus acting in conflict to the university's values.

Gifts large and small have prompted similar agonizing in all sorts of organizations, as Leslie Lenkowsky, affiliate Faculty Member, Lilly Family School of Philanthropy (lenkows@iupui.edu) notes. Some nonprofits refuse to accept or keep tainted money, while others argue that gifts should be judged on what they accomplish, not on the character of their donors.

So how do you decide? Gene Tempel, professor at Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy (philanthropy.iupui.edu) urges nonprofits to have gift acceptance policies in place *before* a tainted money issue arises. For instance, if a donor offers a naming gift, you need a policy that explains when and how you might remove the name if necessary in the future.

Dr. Tempel suggests creating an ethics committee to handle these situations. "If there is an ethics committee in place, no organization will have to make a decision by just one or two people (the executive director and director of development, for example)," he explains.

"The first consideration is whether the individual who is donating or has donated the money committed an illegal act," Dr. Tempel says. "If so, the money is automatically tainted and should be refused or returned. In the John Schnatter situation, he did not break the law. In this case, it's a values conflict." In addition to identifying your values and deciding whether the donation violates those values, Dr. Tempel says to consider the totality of your organization and the effects of accepting the money on your reputation. §

Take-to-Work Tips on Mindfulness

Can mindfulness help you and your colleagues work more harmoniously and productively? The short answer is yes, says Stephen McKenzie. In *Mindfulness at Work* (Career Press, careerpress.com), he provides advice:
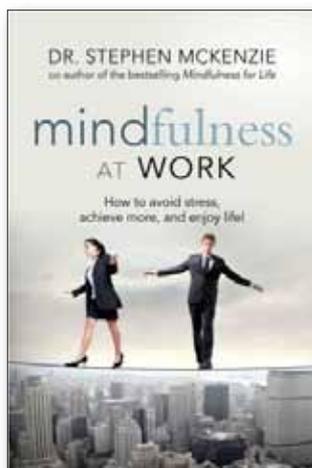
Begin all work in stillness, and separate the components of your work with pauses. Withoutpausesyouractivitieswillblurintoeachother! It's only in the stillness of true listening that you really hear anything, that you really learn anything. When you listen, you can make optimal decisions.

Take time before making any decision. Mindless decision-making is characterized by haste, attachment to a certain result, not listening, and excessive emotions – all of which are the opposite of mindful traits.

Less can be more. Consider what's essential, and focus on that. Delegate or let go of the rest.

Keep your eyes and mind open. As Steve Jobs said, "When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they didn't really do anything; they just saw something."

Always ask, "What action will create the greatest good for the most people and bring all of us closer together?"

Whatever you're doing, do it with your complete attention and acceptance.

Mindful relationships lead to true connection. The best way to connect with fellow workers is to actually see them – up close – at least occasionally.

Use the Platonic form of dialogue, in which you ask questions that can take you, and the people with whom you're communicating, to the truth. This is the opposite of the adversarial system that's commonly used. A vital principle of the Platonic approach is to start off with the idea that you might be wrong.

Great leaders transform people by transforming themselves. Remember the difference between a boss and a leader. A boss says, "Go!" A leader says, "Let's go!" Or as Lao Tzu puts it, "Be a conductor, not a controller. To see things in the seed, that is genius."

Tap the Greatness of Your Staff and Your Self

The Brian Tracy Success Library (harpercollinsleadership.com) is a series of brief, practical, pocket-sized books on subjects that include: Leadership, Negotiation, Management, Marketing, Delegation & Supervision, Motivation, and Time Management. These little gems are packed with helpful action exercises and tips, such as:

Save time – and boost motivation and productivity – by using the management-by-exception tool. Tell people, "If everything's going fine, there's no need to report to me other than an occasional e-mail. I leave it completely to you."

Remove the two great demotivators for employees: fear of failure and fear of rejection. Drive out fear by making it clear that no one will be criticized for making mistakes.

Always check references three deep. That is, ask the given reference for the names of others the candidate has worked with. When you interview three additional people whose names aren't on the candidate's resume, you may be surprised what you learn.

Treat staff members like friends and family. Expect the best of them. Tell them continually how good they are and how impressed you are with their work.

Read biographies of great leaders. The more you study what constitutes effective leadership, the more you'll be able to internalize the same behaviors.

Beyond the Briefs

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

SOCIETY *for* **NONPROFITS**
Advancing the nonprofit world together