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Nonprofit Communications Report

MONTHLY COMMUNICATIONS IDEAS FOR NONPROFITS

Inside

MAKE A COMPELLING CASE

‘The Book’ Addresses Engagement Opportunities

By Daniel Lindley

Looking for a way to sum up all the philanthropic opportunities it offers businesses, Ronald McDonald House Charities in Omaha (Omaha, NE), came up with a straightforward solution: Put it all in a book.

As a cross between a high school yearbook and an encyclopedia of philanthropic opportunities, *The Book* is intended “to trigger business owners’ imagination into how corporate partnerships could work,” says Lindsey Rai Kortan, CEO. A response to feedback from business supporters, it seeks “to encapsulate all the different options in one ask and is tailor-made for corporate social responsibility,” adds Kari Ketcham, chief development officer.

First published in 2020, the 32-page book has a black cover with its title in lower-case white letters. RMHC has distributed it digitally via email links and printed 250 copies for physicians, local McDonald’s franchisees and other supporters. The book covers how to support the group financially via sponsorships of events from galas to golf tournaments, volunteer opportunities, donations of in-kind items like boxed meals and printer paper and services ranging from lawn care to legal help, and a couple of pages about the nonprofit.

Pull quotes from participants and photos of donors, volunteers and others draw readers in and supplement information about how to get involved. Many donors feel “flattered” when they see themselves or colleagues in *The Book,* Ketcham notes, which “helps deepen relationships and encourage engagement.” Some people flip through it to look for pictures of or quotes from friends or colleagues.

Creating the book wasn’t as time-consuming as one might suspect, Kortan and Ketcham say, because it contains information the nonprofit already had in flyers, invitations and other communications. Printing costs weren’t a budget-buster either.

“As a marketing piece, this is good enough to sit inside car dealerships and other places where people are waiting and far more inviting than a flyer or a pamphlet,” Kortan notes. “All those things were being produced anyway. This was just a more efficient way to deliver the same content.”

Although the organization has no metrics on how *The Book* has encouraged business participation, it is “a great idea to create chances for businesses to make more money because, when you make more money, you have more opportunities to give back,” Kortan says. ◆

Sources: Lindsey Rai Kortan, CEO, Ronald McDonald House Charities in Omaha, Omaha, NE. Phone (402) 346-9377, ext. 127. Email: lkortan@rmhcomaha.org. Website: https://rmhcomaha.org/

Kari Ketcham, Chief Development Officer, Ronald McDonald House Charities in Omaha, Omaha, NE. Phone (402) 346-9377, ext. 128. Email: kketcham@rmhcomaha.org. Website: https://rmhcomaha.org/

Funding Ideas

Before your organization's external newsletter or magazine goes to print, examine each story and article intended for publication. Could any of the projects or programs mentioned benefit from additional funds? You never know when an interested reader might be inclined to contribute to a project after reading about it.

Below or next to each article, include a brief statement that points out any gift opportunities related to that story. Include a name and phone number for any readers who might want to learn more. ◆

Tips for Memorizing Names

- Look at the person's face when making introductions. The visual association helps plant the name in long-term memory.
- Say the name in a sentence: "Mark Ebbers. That name sounds familiar." ◆

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WILEY

SOCIAL MEDIA INSIGHTS

Best Practices for Using Hashtags

By Erin Sandage

Hashtags are a great vehicle to connect your organization to the outside world. Using them the best way possible just takes a little know-how.

"Hashtags present nonprofits with a few opportunities — the first is to connect their work with conversations happening outside of their organization, to help connect with audiences that haven't discovered them yet but who are passionate about their cause," says Sarah Best, CEO and chief strategist, Sarah Best Strategy. "For example, one of our clients is a national thought leader in the area of early education, and there are some very active hashtags among practitioners in that space. For others, hashtags present an additional tool for building brand awareness around specific campaigns or to invite their fans to participate in an awareness campaign."

There are several types of hashtags and deciding which one an organization should use depends on its audience, size and platform.

According to Best:

- **Community hashtags help organizations connect to broader conversations.** They connect like-minded users around specific topics, issues or subjects.
- **Branded and campaign hashtags start the conversation**. Branded hashtags, which might be your organization name, drive brand awareness and recall. Campaign hashtags also drive brand awareness as well as engagement when connected to a campaign or event.

"For local and regional nonprofits who aren't trying to reach people in other parts of the country or the world, doing some research on what hashtags are popular in their communities can be fruitful. We advise people to check their local chamber of commerce, tourism office and even school districts for ideas," she says. "For our national nonprofit clients, campaign hashtags used consistently over a period of time can help thread posts about a specific initiative or tagline together."

Best adds using a single hashtag repeatedly can help improve recall, which increases awareness and primes your audience for calls to action. Event or conference hashtags can help organizations monitor customer service issues and track conversations about the event and ultimately engagement.

Platforms where hashtags are useful include Instagram (you can use up to 30), Twitter (use only one or two) and LinkedIn (no more than five). Facebook is not a platform for hashtags as it doesn't facilitate discovery or help anyone find related information.

For nonprofits looking to curate their own organization-specific hashtag, Best suggests first searching for that hashtag to see what other types of content are coming up.

"Sometimes you'll find other nonprofit organizations who have a similar name using the same hashtag, which can create confusion for your audiences. If the hashtag doesn't have negative connotations and has been dormant for a number of years, that's a sign that it might be a good option," she says.

Lastly, Best says audiences need to be exposed to hashtags repeatedly before they're aware they exist. Using too many hashtags reduces the chances someone will remember.

"In addition, because hashtags should be memorable and easy to type on a mobile phone, they shouldn't be long." ◆

Source: Sarah Best, CEO/Chief Strategist, Sarah Best Strategy, Middleton, WI. Email: sarah@sarahbeststrategy.com. Website: www.sarahbeststrategy.com

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Is Your Story Newsworthy?

A situation your organization considers newsworthy may not seem so to local and national media. Ultimately, your pitch — whether it be about a person, place, event or happening — should make reporters feel the urge to dig deeper in the narrative you present on behalf of your nonprofit.

"Start by thinking about what defines 'news,'" says Malorie Brooke Paine, a former journalist and the current communications manager for Farming for the Future Foundation (Plover, WI). "News aims to provide fresh information — it may reveal information that already exists in a new light or unveil something truly novel, and it should aim to provoke a strong reaction in the reader."

According to Paine, eight elements make a story newsworthy. To determine whether your nonprofit's story may interest reporters, ask yourself the following questions:

- **Impact.** Does the story impact readers or my nonprofit's community at large?
- **Timeliness.** Is the story relevant now, or is it evergreen in nature?
- **Prominence.** Does the story involve a celebrity or someone local of stature?
- **Proximity.** Is the story location-based, or does it relate to a certain region/community?
- **Bizarreness.** Does the story speak to something unusual or unexpected?
- **Conflict.** Does the story address a conflict between publicly known groups?
- **Currency.** Does the story have a viral or shareable component that engages the public?
- **Human interest.** Does the story give a human face to a wider issue?

Once you've identified your story's newsworthy qualities, consider how and when to make your pitch. Some components may merit a need for immediate media engagement, while others may align better in the future. For example, stories that demonstrate impact, timeliness, proximity and human interest might be perfect features to explore right now. That said, if something like prominence is lacking, it may benefit your communications team to wait on the pitch until after your nonprofit is more established or when there is someone important linked to your cause. "If your story only checks the box for bizarreness, it may be one to avoid unless necessary," Paine warns. "You don't want to become known solely for weird news — that's not to say there isn't a place for this sometimes, but it really is a case-by-case situation."

Circling back to those eight elements will help your nonprofit analyze which pitches are likely to go the distance and which ones need more time to simmer. If it turns out your idea isn't as compelling to external audiences, don't get discouraged. Nonprofits make the news every day — you just have to know how to look out for it. ◆

Source: Malorie Brooke Paine, Marketing and Communications Manager, Farming for the Future Foundation, Plover, WI. Email: mpaine@fftf.us. Website: https://www.fftf.us/news

BRIEFS

MANAGING FOR RESULTS

Clearly Spell Out Staff Expectations

If you want the best from those who report to you — staff, volunteers and others — clearly delineate what it is you expect from them. In addition to regularly reviewed position descriptions and quantifiable goals, spell out expectations for items such as:

- Publication production schedules.
- Calls on external contacts.
- Work arrival and departure times.
- Level of community involvement.
- Events that require their attendance.
- Accountability procedures.
- Budgetary parameters.
- Planning requirements.
- Actions that require prior approval.
- Management of certain programs.

Spelling out expectations will help others better do their jobs and keep you more informed as well. ◆

Avoid Surprise Interviews

If a reporter calls you at an inconvenient time, or asks you questions you're not prepared to answer off the cuff, ask for an emailed or faxed list of possible questions to discuss when you call back. The additional prep time will make for a better interview. ◆

Ask a Surrogate To Defend Against Negative Publicity

Bad news happens, but preparing for it can help mitigate the damage. The best way to defend yourself in a negative story is to have someone else do it for you. Independent, third-party surrogates are ideal since they can appear unbiased. Rely on those with whom you have already developed a close relationship. The ideal surrogate should have a special status, minimal connection to your organization and a reputation for offering a balanced perspective. ◆

COMMUNICATIONS IS THE MEANS TO THE END

Keys to Planning Flexible Communications

A communications plan is just that — a plan. Things come up. Plans change. That's just how it is.

"I've seen over time how detailed communications plans can get tossed out the window, even five minutes after the CEO signs off," says Rick Cohen, chief communications officer and chief operating officer of the National Council of Nonprofits. "You just never know what's going to happen from day to day. The best plans are those that have flexibility built in so it's not an issue where you come up with something and then it's gone. Rather, you've come up with something that can be adapted to meet the demands of an ever-changing world."

Cohen has worked in the communications field for more than 20 years in roles across the nonprofit and political sectors, and he says a flexible plan is always the one you need. Here he shares guidance for building a communication strategy that works in any situation:

1. **Let your mission drive the message.** "The mission of the organization — whether that be helping people, preserving the environment or spreading love of the arts — has to be your North Star. It's the one thing that you don't deviate from," Cohen says. "Always tie things back to the community you serve, and from there consider how your audience has changed or whether you need to shift your message to reflect new realities."
2. **Meet your audience where they are.** "Communications plans should transform to match the tools people are using to get their information today," Cohen suggests. "That could mean engaging your target audience on a newer social media platform like TikTok. You may discover an e-newsletter isn't getting the same open rate it used to. Take steps to change that. Whatever you decide, have a plan for measuring success."
3. **Be open to experimentation.** "A big part of having a flexible plan is understanding that some things are not going to work, and that's okay," Cohen says. "Trying, experimenting, learning and adjusting are all part of doing business — try new messaging, explore fresh images, adopt a revamped logo. Some will resonate as you'd hoped, and others won't. You'll never know without trying first."
4. **Band with others who share your passion.** "Recently there's been a real outpouring of generosity, and that shouldn't go unnoticed," Cohen says. "Take stock of the individuals and organizations who aim to help the same audience as you (and which are perhaps already operating through a nonprofit structure). These are the types of partners who will spread the word about your mission and multiply your impact."
5. **Listen to constituents.** "Engage your stakeholders in conversations and truly listen to what *they* need rather than looking for something in their words that reinforces what *you* want to do," Cohen says. "What they have to say *today* should be at the core of your communications." ◆

Source: Rick Cohen, Chief Communications Officer/Chief Operating Officer, National Council of Nonprofits, Washington, DC. Phone (202) 962-0322, ext. 118. Email: rcohen@councilofnonprofits.org. Website: https://www.councilofnonprofits.org

NETWORKING TIPS

Get Comfortable in a Room Full of Strangers

Feel a bit anxious and unsure of yourself when attending a function where you don't know anyone? Just remember, there are plenty of others feeling the same way.

Here are three approaches to break the ice and put your networking skills to use:

1. **Approach individuals who are standing alone.** Often times, these people are as pleased that you approached them as you may be to find someone with whom to visit.
2. **Show a genuine interest in those you meet.** By being sincerely interested in others, you will be perceived as interesting.
3. **Listen more than you speak and make eye contact as you listen.** Learning about those you meet may be useful at some later time. ◆

GIVE YOUR MISSION LIFE

What's Your 'Perceived' Mission?

Perception is not necessarily reality. How the public perceives your mission — through your programs and services, marketing and outreach — may differ from your stated mission. If so, you need to address the issue.

Perhaps your mission has changed over time and needs to be rewritten. If that's the case, update it and make sure everyone in your organization is aware of the change. If that's not the case, you need to refocus on your mission and make sure everyone in your organization is aware of it.

Be sure to include your mission statement in all of your publications, mailing and marketing efforts. ◆

STRIVE FOR THE BEST

Know How to Hire the Right Photographer

You'd be hard pressed to find a nonprofit communicator who thinks it's acceptable to distribute marketing materials with glaring typos or grammatical errors. So what's up with the double-standard regarding subpar photography? We've all encountered a newsletter or brochure with photos that are out of focus, poorly lit or pixelated. This is a common outcome when organizations fail to hire professionally skilled photographers.

"Nonprofits are quick to invest time and money into their verbal storytelling, but it's somehow difficult for them to invest in the visual component," says Nancy McDonald, principal for Leapfrog Group, an industry leader in communicating the brands of nonprofits. "That's an interesting conundrum because visuals are generally the component that lead someone to read your messaging in the first place."

Limited resources and lack of experience should not keep marketing teams from working with credible photographers. When planning yearly budgets, hiring a photographer should be one of your priorities. The images they take help to tell the story of your mission and in turn elevate your brand.

"If you want to capture day-in-the-life type shots, a photojournalist may be a good option," McDonald suggests. Alternatively, if you just need someone to capture photos of donors and supporters enjoying themselves at your gala, a seasoned event photographer could be the ticket. Regardless of your photographer's areas of expertise, he or she should have — in addition to a clearly defined skill-set — a sense of how to weave a powerful narrative that reflects your organization's mission and vision.

McDonald says nonprofits should work with photographers who:

- Have pursued professional training or completed a photography-related degree.
- Are patient and possess people skills.
- Have advanced editing skills.
- Understand how to color correct their images.
- Provide full usage rights.
- Work hand-held and with available light.
- Have good references and work portfolios they are willing to share ahead of time.
- Provide a quick turnaround time.
- Have an eye for candid or engagement shots (rather than strictly posed/staged photos).

"The next time you create advertising, brochures or other marketing materials; remember, it's an extension of your organization," McDonald says. With that in mind, your photography should be as inspiring as the work you do in your community. ◆

Source: Nancy McDonald, Principal, Leapfrog Group, Erdenheim, PA. Phone (215) 704-6119. Email: nancy@thinkleapfrog.com. Website: https://www.thinkleapfrog.com/

GARNERING VISIBILITY

Tips for Writing a Letter to the Editor

One way to generate interest in your organization's work is to submit a letter to the editor of your hometown newspaper. And it's free! Here are some tips to remember:

1. Know the paper's policy for printing letters, including length and contact information requirements.
2. Study recent letters to get a feel for the style the paper prefers.
3. Draw on recent news, events, editorials and public awareness campaigns. Refer to the name and date of the article at the beginning of your letter.
4. Keep it simple. Make sure your first sentence is short, yet compelling. Don't be afraid to be direct, engaging and even controversial. Keep your letter brief.
5. Demonstrate local relevance with your letter. Use local statistics, personal stories and names to make your point.
6. Don't be discouraged if your letter isn't printed. Keep trying. You may want to submit a revised letter with a different angle on the issue at a later date. ◆

MANAGING YOUR PRESENTATIONS

Dealing with Disruptive People

Although people generally behave respectfully during presentations, you may occasionally encounter someone with a sarcastic comment or differing opinion. If someone tells you he or she totally disagrees with your point(s), you can try to refute his or her claim. A better call might be to open the debate to the wider audience where, more than likely, others will defend your position for you.

Remember, your job is to simply present ideas and information in a compelling way, not to get into arguments with one audience member at the expense of others. ◆

MARKETING BUDGETS

Account for High-Quality Photography

Exhibitions rotate, events evolve and new constituents constantly enter your nonprofit's orbit — and with those facts, it's time to accept that every photograph has an expiration date.

"Consider professional photography as a budget line item every year, because every year is special," says Allison Hall, director of marketing and communications for Malvern Preparatory School (Malvern, PA). What was once considered a stellar shot may already be overused or out-of-date. In the post-COVID era, this statement is especially true — your audiences won't want to look at masked faces forever. Instead, invest in photography annually as a way to build a strong portfolio of relevant, high-quality photos that can be used on your website, social media feeds, printed marketing materials and digital outreach efforts.

Hall instructs marketing directors to calendarize their year to see the potential ROI that can be reaped from such an expense. "Will your nonprofit enter a year-long celebration of some kind? Will important alumni or supporters be on your campus?" she offers as examples that may reveal themselves during this routine task. In addition to annual traditions, unique moments or other important milestones your nonprofit may want to capture, make sure your photographer also collects seasonal exterior shots that can be used throughout the year. ◆

Source: Allison Hall, Director of Marketing and Communications, Malvern Preparatory School, Malvern, PA. Phone (484) 595-1100. Email: information@malvernprep.org. Website: www.malvernprep.org

TIPS TO CALM THE NERVES

Remember: The Reporter Wants You to Shine

For the camera-shy among us, there are few tasks more daunting than sitting for a recorded interview. However, it's important to remember the reporter on the other side of the conversation wants you to look and sound your best. When you shine, their segment does too.

"It's okay to tell them that you feel nervous, and always ask if it's permitted to repeat a question if an answer doesn't come out the way you intended it to the first time," says Tara McLain Manthey, executive director for Denver Indian Family Resource Center, a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to strengthening vulnerable American Indian and Alaska Native children and families through collaborative and culturally responsive services. Unless you are being interviewed for a live broadcast, most crews will be more than happy to roll back and capture another take. If the interview is live, be sure to rehearse your responses to anticipated questions ahead of time.

Manthey insists, when all's said and done, it's likely only you and your closest loved ones will remember "that one time" you were on television. "So, talk directly through the camera to your friends and family," she offers. Doing so will lend an authentic and relaxed tone to the entire exchange and leave you feeling comfortable from the start. ◆

Source: Tara McLain Manthey, Executive Director, Denver Indian Family Resource Center, Denver, CO. Phone (720) 500-1020. Website: https://difrc.org/

MEDIA RELATIONS

Ask How Your Words Will Be Used

Prior to any formal interview with a media member, gather a clear explanation of how your words and perspectives will be presented in the final piece. Consider whether audio will be included alongside written copy. If the subsequent article is only a print exclusive, you'll want to confirm the deadline in case certain factual items change before the scheduled publication date. And if a live broadcast is in the cards, you'll obviously want to know so you can show up prepared to look and sound your best.

"Don't forget to ask the outlet this simple question: 'How are you going to use the information provided?'" says Malorie Paine, a former journalist and the current communications manager for Farming for the Future Foundation (Plover, WI). "The response will serve as a good reminder for both you and the journalist as to the central purpose of the interview. Usually, they'll even go one step further to tell you exactly when the story will run, which can be extremely helpful internally when the time comes to navigate any necessary follow-up." ◆

Source: Malorie Paine, Marketing and Communications Manager, Farming for the Future Foundation, Plover, WI. Email: mpaine@fftf.us. Website: https://www.fftf.us/news

ENGAGING YOUR CONSTITUENTS

Onboard More Subscribers to Your E-Newsletter

By Megan Venzin

Even as technology evolves in the digital age, the e-newsletter remains an effective vehicle for engaging nonprofit constituents. For many organizations, bringing someone onto its subscriber list is the first step in building a lasting relationship that may lead to donations, volunteerism, event attendance or other meaningful actions.

Ephraim Gopin, founder of 1832 Communications, visited 100 nonprofit websites with the intention to sign up for their e-newsletters and then determine the best and worst practices for utilization based on his subsequent experiences. He shares his findings in the free ebook, *Getting Your Foot In the Door: How to Onboard Subscribers to Your E-newsletter*, along with high-level onboarding tips, such as the following:

1. **Remember, a bigger subscriber list isn't always better.** "I don't care how large your list is — what I care about is whether people are reading, clicking and converting," Gopin shares. "If your list is small, but you have a high click-through rate, then you're doing something right." Deliver relevant information on your website, and you'll likely attract subscribers who value what your organization has to offer — those people will stick around.
2. **Sign-up form goes at the bottom.** "You need to provide value before someone will consider signing up for your newsletter," Gopin explains. Use the body copy of your web page to explain what you can do for your visitor, and then place your newsletter sign-up form right above the footer — and be sure to do that on every page of your website. "Each page is another opportunity to invite that person to learn more," Gopin adds.
3. **Only collect email addresses.** "Asking for additional information adds friction to the sign-up process," Gopin shares. "If you must ask for a name, keep it to the first name only and be prepared to personalize all or most email engagement from that moment forward. People tend to get upset if you ask for their personal information and neglect to use it."
4. **Welcome emails should arrive immediately.** According to a 2019 GetResponse study, the average open rate for a welcome email was 82 percent. For that reason, it should arrive immediately before too much time has passed; otherwise it may be buried in the recipient's inbox.
5. **Avoid starting with an ask.** Consider the first email as an opportunity to make a good impression and begin to build a one-to-one relationship with the subscriber. "It's better if the emails that follow aren't straight asks either — there's so much great content you can share, as well as opportunities to get people involved," Gopin continues. "If every email includes an ask, then you'll start to become predictable — that's when people stop engaging." ◆

Source: Ephraim Gopin, Nonprofit Fundraising and Marketing Expert, 1832 Communications. Email: ephraim@1832comms.com. Website: https://1832communications.com

BRIEFS

TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS

Plan Your Week Around These Three Rules

To make the most of your time, earmark a certain day and time of the week to map out plans for the following week — every Wednesday beginning at 3 p.m., for instance. Then use these three rules as your weekly time management guide:

1. Develop your own *weekly management report* that spells out your plans in writing. It should include space for: 1. a summary of what you accomplished the previous week, 2. status and specific follow-up actions for your current projects, 3. appointments (dates and times) for the upcoming week, and 4. a listing of secondary tasks you can work on if time permits.
2. Plan your week around what most needs to get done — meeting with key media contacts, completing copy for a key marketing piece or whatever matters most.
3. Establish regular times during the week to deal with matters that otherwise might become obstacles — setting aside one hour at the end of every day to return phone calls or complete reports, for instance.

Although plans oftentimes get interrupted, you will be much further ahead by getting in the habit of routinely mapping out priorities and sticking to them. ◆

Third Time's A Charm

People tend to remember things in threes — including marketing messages. The first time people are exposed to your message, they ask, "What is this?" The second time, they think, "I've seen or heard this before." It's not until the third exposure that they remember what is being communicated and perhaps act on it. So in your next presentation, focus on three main points. Do the same in your correspondence, reports, plans and goals — anything you want to make memorable. Remember — third time's a charm. ◆

MAINTAINING A POSITIVE PUBLIC PERCEPTION

What Goes Into Creating a Reputation?

A wise man named Warren Buffet once said, "It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently." So think about it: Is your nonprofit taking steps to foster a positive reputation and, perhaps even more importantly, preserve it?

"Make your mission about the mission of the cause and those that you are serving, not about yourself. Engage. Listen. Communicate," says Clark Dumont, principal of Dumont Communications (Las Vegas, NV). The former journalist and renowned C-suite communications leader has worked in fields as varied as health care, aerospace and defense, and hospitality and entertainment. He has found those who follow these instructions will emerge as reputable entities people trust.

Here Dumont shares what goes into creating a reputation and the steps nonprofit communicators must take to maintain a positive public perception for their respective organizations:

Q: How is reputation created?

A: "Reputation is earned and bestowed by others; it is not declared by us. What we think of ourselves is interesting but not necessarily relevant. What matters most is what people — our organizational stakeholders: our communities, our donors, our clients, our employees — think about us.

"Reputation and trust are the yields of anticipating, seeing and understanding what needs to be done, and how we and our organizations can help and make things better and be a reliable partner."

Q: What factors lead to the creation of a positive reputation? What about a negative one?

A: "Reputation starts, and stops, with organizational character that is framed and guided at every decision point by core values that emanate from the age-old, tried-and-true ethos of doing the right things at the right time in the right way. The core values need to be authentic by being embraced and demonstrated across the organization. The talk needs to be walked. Nothing will kill a reputation quicker than being inauthentic."

Q: *Do you have an example of a nonprofit that effectively created a favorable reputation? What did they do right?*

"The Red Cross and PBS are prime models of best practices in reputation and trust. Both are rooted in mission, vision and principles and core values. The Red Cross mobilizes its lifesaving and assisting services night and day largely through a rich cadre of volunteers who live the mission. PBS is a 'trusted window to the world' and 'empowers individuals to achieve their potential ...' through nonprofit and member-supported programming and other informational, educational and cultural services. They are consistently among the most trusted organizations because they are focused on doing the right things right, and in the right way."

Q: *What advice would you give to a nonprofit that is trying to build a good reputation?*

A: "In the words of Stephen Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, 'Do the first things first.'

"Start with an assessment of the organization. Undertake strategic thinking and planning starting with a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis. Be as inclusive with participants in the process as you can including employees, leaders, donors, members, clients, partners, the community. Let the SWOT assessment guide the decision-making of maximizing the strengths; moving weaknesses to strengths; leveraging the synergies of opportunities; and anticipating, mitigating and minimizing the threats that can undermine the organization and its reputation.

"Ultimately effective individuals and organizations follow these three instructions:

1. Prioritize and decide what you are going to do.
2. Don't overpromise and under-deliver.
3. Do what is possible and deliver with reliability and consistency." ◆

Source: Clark Dumont, MS, APR, Principal, Dumont Communications, LLC, Las Vegas, NV. Phone (603) 809-1467. Email: clark@dumontcommunications.com. Website: https://dumontcommunications.com/

INTERNAL EDUCATION

Tell Fellow Employees What Your Office Does

Do you ever give talks to your fellow employees about the roles and responsibilities of the people in your department? If you don't, give it some thought. Although the presentation may be for the benefit of other employees, you win, too, by:

1. Providing your organization's employees with a greater understanding and appreciation of what goes on in your department — and how their jobs relate to it.
2. Forcing yourself to articulate what it is you do also helps you (and other members of your department) gain a better grasp of your overall responsibilities. The process of preparing your presentation and hearing yourself describe roles and responsibilities actually points out strengths and possible weaknesses that may need more attention. It's like stepping back and observing your job functions from a distance. ◆