



The Nonprofit Marketing Wisdom Guide

Edited By Nancy E. Schwartz

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The Nonprofit Marketing Wisdom Guide 2012!

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Introduction


Dear Nonprofit Communicator,

I am very excited to share with you the second edition of the GettingAttention.org *Nonprofit Marketing Wisdom Guide*, showcasing 219 lessons learned from your colleagues in the field.

These words of wisdom come directly from survey responses submitted by nonprofit communicators in December 2011.

Thank you to all of you who generously offered your insightful observations for this year's *Guide*. Your contributions are perceptive, pragmatic and, most importantly, inspirational. I know your fellow marketers will find them invaluable as they look forward to a successful and productive 2012.

Best regards,



Nancy E. Schwartz
Publisher, *Getting Attention* Blog & E-news
Nancy@NancySchwartz.com

Branding

Building Buy-In Is the First Step

- 1 In 2011, the necessity of a holistic approach to marketing was affirmed and strengthened for me. If a message is to be clear, compelling and authentic, it must have roots in the people, in particular the leadership of an organization. Aligning the purpose, values and passions of the people INSIDE the organization with the product, branding and ultimately the market OUTSIDE creates truly powerful communication.

Josh Sieders, Project Manager
Compass Creative Studio Inc.

Consistency Connects

- 2 It's absolutely vital to apply branding consistently across channels, campaigns and conversations!

Kathryn Bauchelle, Program Director
Literacy Advance of Houston

Do Your Homework

- 3 When you begin a branding process, read everything you can and talk to as many people as you can before starting. This could be the most important project you ever embark upon.

Nancy Kieran, Director of Development
CLASS

It's a Team Effort

- 4 Don't assume that staff will resist re-branding efforts. We had hesitated to change our outdated logo and look and to standardize our messaging because we knew that staff would resist. Nothing could be further from the truth. Staff love the new logo, and all seem to agree that the old way of messaging was not the best way to reach our various constituencies. There has been very little resistance and much positive feedback on our new brand and messaging.

Florence Tandy, Executive Director
Northern Kentucky Community Action Commission

- 5 Internal communications and culture immersion within the organization are crucial. It's hard for a nonprofit to be consistent internally or externally if they haven't fully defined who they are and how they want to evolve. Give your board and staff members the tools to help them understand the organization's unique story and make it their own.

When launching a new or revised brand identity, give your internal audience a culture book that tells them what makes the organization tick and how to deliver the core values and mission they do each day. The organization's brand is a promise made to the population they serve and benefit; culture is how staff and board live, breathe and deliver on that promise. Keep them in the loop throughout the entire marketing process because when employees are on board and know they are a part of the marketing process you can feel the difference the moment you walk in the door, which translates to a better and more consistent experience. Dedicate the time to this incredibly important, and sometimes overlooked, piece of nonprofit marketing.

Stacy Hawthorne, Communications
Center for Children and Families, Inc. (CCFI)

Relationships Are the Heart of Good Marketing

- 6 Authenticity is key. People want to connect with the folks behind the brand name.
The Wakeman Agency

Consultant to Consultant

Give Just Enough Away

- 7 Give people something for free, like a bonus to the “main menu,” and they will feel a need to return the favor in some way, immediately or in the future.

May Akamine, CEO
MA's Best

- 8 As a consultant, when you are responding to a RFP don't put so much meat in your proposal that you give to the recipient a “free” plan to follow.

John Saunders, President
Madrona Consulting Group

- 9 “The more you pay, the more its worth.” Expect a very low percentage of “free sample” customers to return as a paying customer, even with a REALLY deep discount offer.

Mike Alley, Marketing Director
Kansas City Ballet

You're the Guide

- 10 Clients often don't know what they want. They have not set quantifiable objectives, and therefore their marketing/campaign briefs are not clear and understandable. Ensure that you understand and know what the client wants. Ask questions and listen and make sure it is in line with their strategic thinking. If you (or your client) don't know where you are going, any road will take you there.

Winnifred Knight, Managing Director
TheMarketingSite.com

Email Marketing

Effective Email Campaigns Come from Thoughtful Strategy

11 Be sure to send announcements to all your contacts and ask them to share with their friends and colleagues and ask them to send to their contacts.

Patricia Bruder, Grant Development Specialist
Educational Information and Resource Center

12 Your email signature is important and should not be overlooked.

Pamela Robinson, Director, Pro Bono Program
University of South Carolina School of Law

Spend Time on Subject Lines

13 Email subject lines are as important as ad headlines. Time spent on them provides substantial returns.

Gerry Laue

Testing and Tracking Generate Results

14 You need a campaign to be active to some extent to do a split test. So you kind of have to roll it out to DO the split test, a true Catch-22.

Kathryn Blair, Marketing & Communications Manager
Lunchbox Theatre

Use an Email Service Provider to Send All Bulk Emails

15 If you are a nonprofit, utilize Constant Contact or another email service provider for your eblasts. Some providers even offer a free trial for a small list. It is amazing what professional emails can be produced in a very short time and in a user friendly format!

Gail Vertz, CEO
Grant Professionals Association

Fundraising

All Special Events Are Not Equal

- 16 There's no free lunch in event planning. Even if you've put it on 10 times before and the same people always come, you HAVE to put in the effort again on your event or risk this being that one time when no one shows up. It happens!

Anna Haigh Berry, Executive Director
World Affairs Council of NH

- 17 Don't commit to a fundraising event before you know if you'll even be able to cover your own associated expenses! Learned that one the hard way...a LOSS for a fundraising event! Yikes!

Karen Johnson, Board President
WiL Power Challenge

- 18 Start early, as soon as six months if not more for an event, even a small one.

Teena Arndt, Executive Director
Florida Center for the Blind

Express Appreciation to Valued Supporters

- 19 Remember to recognize donors (that want recognition) in newsletters, they are looking for it.

Laura Pérez-Arce, Director
Viva Sierra Gorda

- 20 Don't forget to thank your funders in a personal way.

Dyan Vaughan, Grant Writer
Mosaico

- 21 Thank your donors often.

Venus Brown, Membership Development/Events Coordinator
KXCV-KRNW Public Radio

It's About Them, Not About You

- 22 Stir your donor's imagination first before making any ask. A compelling story is only a few seconds away from a positive response.

Patty Rivera, Director of Publications and Communications
Catholic Missions In Canada (www.cmic.info)

- 23 Always focus on how a donor/sponsor directly benefits from supporting your organization—what's in it for them, from feeling good that their investment makes a difference to specific marketing benefits such as improving customer loyalty and advertising that reaches targeted populations.

Arlene Boles, Development Director
Faithful Friends Animal Society

24 The biggest marketing lesson I (re) learned this year is that it is all about the donor. Donors want to see their dollars at work. They want to know how their donation will change the world. They want to know how their donations lead to positive change. It's all about the donor.

Sherry Kirschenbaum, Senior Writer
United Jewish Communities of MetroWest NJ

25 I learned that to stay even in a sagging economy you only have to turn up the volume on one thing—the amount of donor love you pour without restraint into your direct mail. And you know what? Never turn that volume down.

Tom Ahern
Ahern Communications, Ink.

26 Biggest lesson: That telling a compelling, personal story and linking it to how a donor can make a difference with a gift is a much better strategy than quoting all of the statistics in the world. That, and making sure your thank-you is prompt and restates the impact of the donation cited in your original request letter.

Claudia Place, Development Manager
Grand Rapids Children's Museum

27 If you hope to attract prospects to join your organization, you first need to re-energize your current membership base by reminding them of what makes the group so great and celebrating the many previous accomplishments. If new prospects attend your meetings, events and service projects and are surrounded by a bunch of "Negative Nates" and "Debbie Downers," they will be turned off and steer clear of joining your organization. Too often we dwell too much on membership recruitment, and you cannot be successful at that unless you have done a darn good job of membership engagement, including communicating the many membership benefits and positive outcomes related to your mission.

Brad Boyd, Executive Director
Kiwanis Foundation of Indianapolis, Inc.

28 Always, always say thank you. Listen, listen, listen. When in doubt, always go back to what your mission is to find the answer.

Leslie Pfeil, Independent Consultant/ President
Philadelphia Scholastic Rowing Association

29 Unite your audiences behind your movement. It's not just an event, organization or cause they are supporting, it is a MOVEMENT to make the world a better place. This emotional connection engaged all our audiences for The Foundation for Women's Cancer and their signature event, the National Race to End Women's Cancer, on Nov. 6 in Washington, D.C. Being part of "a movement" energized the surgeons, patients, sponsors, donors and other supporters in a whole new way and redefined the event for everyone involved. This led to much greater media coverage too.

Karen Bate, President
KB Concepts P.R.

Just Do It!

30 I'm pretty new to this, and the thing I have learned is very basic: If you don't ask, they won't give. It's that simple.

Freda Day, Administrative Manager
Brown County Humane Society

Know How Hard and When to Push

31 Symbolic holiday giving and e-card campaigns are very resource intensive. Year-end tax time emails have a way bigger ROI.

Sarah Hall, Online Fundraising and Marketing Coordinator
The David Suzuki Foundation

Make It Easy

32 Build turnkey systems to serve your customers (and donors) 24-7. Instead of forcing donors to deal with you, give them the goods online. So many fundraising websites don't contain the following all in one place: why to give, how to give, online transactions, a human being's email and phone (w/photo) to contact about the gift, and information for advisors on how to help clients to make gift. Saying "contact us" is not enough in 2011, and won't be nearly enough in 2012!

Paul Nazareth, Philanthropic Advisory Services
Scotia Private Client Group

Projection and Planning Go Hand-in-Hand

33 If you run a "special appeal" to your donors at some point throughout the year, be prepared for it to be parasitic to your next regular campaign and lower your donation target for the future accordingly. We did this. We ran a special appeal at the end of our last fiscal year to try to overcome a projected shortfall in our fundraising budget. It worked, only to have our next "regular" appeal three months later come in much lower than expected. We believe this was because of "donor fatigue" (i.e. they just gave to us, so they didn't choose to give to us again a short time later.)

Rob Janus, Manager, Communications, Marketing & Public Relations
Victoria Hospice

34 If an organization stops acquisition for a year, losing 20 to 40% of its 0 to 12 month donors due to attrition with no plan to replace them, it's tough to come in and turn that ship around. It is a reminder of the art and science of direct mail, knowing that the one year with no acquisition will take at least three years to recoup.

Mary Steiner, Chief Development Officer
The Omaha Home for Boys

Reach Out and Touch Someone

35 Make the appeal heartwarming.

Ellen Vopicka, Vice Chair of the Board
Mercy Center

36 Execute! If you haven't been doing a newsletter or blog or have been inconsistent with your communication with your donors or community of followers due to apprehensions of one type or another (not enough content, not the right message, etc.), lack of execution can be just as detrimental. Donors are like friends; if you don't talk to them regularly, they don't stay friends. They have to get something out of the relationship too! Like knowing you care! How does it make you feel when a friend or acquaintance calls you just to see how you are doing? You usually feel great. Your message doesn't have to be long, just genuine and honest and provide them something of value. It can't be a roadblock to execution

Jeffrey Dyson, President
www.blueshoeproject.org

37 Don't allow yourself to get caught up in the conversation about the economy and fundraising. Be creative. People want to give. In polling my colleagues, I found that we all exceeded our goals this year by keeping in close communication, providing lots of ways for people to participate and give.

Gail Tyrrell, Executive Director
Ruby Heals Foundation

Who Are You Talking to? Know Their Wants and Habits

38 When marketing your planned giving initiative keep in mind that the age group that delivers the biggest bang for your buck is not the over 60+ age group. The biggest return in numbers and highest designated donation comes from the 40 to 50 year age group,

Ruth Kemmerer, Director, Resource Development & Volunteer Services
Family Service Association of Wyoming Valley

Know Your Audience

It's About Them, Not About You

- 39 If you're not listening to clients, you're not marketing.
John Williams
- 40 Always think about your target audience first and foremost. It is not about you, it is about them.
Stacy Blumberg, Director of Marketing & Development
De Paul Treatment Centers
- 41 Don't underestimate your members' ability to embrace change. (They surprised us this year when we changed the design of our professional ring.)
Judith Chrystal, Communications Coordinator
Association of Science & Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta
- 42 Remember that some words have very different meanings on one side of the Atlantic than the other. Offense can inadvertently be caused!
Philippa Willitts, Founder
Connect Communicate Change
- 43 It's not so much about getting your message out as finding out what kind of discussion your customers/clients/donors want to have with you.
Donna Maukonen, Consultant/Owner
Maui Media
- 44 Targeted and personalized communications get better response rates.
Dave Haradon, President
Web Seminar Productions
- Meet Your Audiences Where They Already Are**
- 45 Multi-media approaches work the best. Don't rely on one form of communication. Not everyone emails, tweets, reads hard copy print, etc.
Susan Marks, Director of Institutional Advancement
Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy
- 46 Know who your audiences are and be sure to budget sufficiently to reach each one with a targeted message through the appropriate medium. This is especially important with culturally diverse audiences.
Suzanne Jamison
Jamison Management and Development

- 47 Be sure to have a way to include team members who don't have email/internet access, and to recruit a diverse team to ensure that you are reaching all your constituents.

Irene Nexica

Reach Out and Touch Someone

- 48 Stay in touch with existing customers and make sure they are happy with the programs or services provided. If they are, ask them for referrals.

John Herron, CEO
Harbor City Services, Inc

- 49 Always follow up on phone messages or emails.

Linda Seime, Marketing chair
Minnesota Music Teachers Association

Relationships Are the Heart of Good Marketing

- 50 Engage you target audiences via surveys, contests, etc.

Sartaj Anand, Social Media & Web Assistant
The Melton Foundation

Who Are You Talking To? Speak to Their Needs and Habits

- 51 Segment, segment, segment what your different constituents want to hear and make the medium of the message just as important as the message.

Streetside Stories

- 52 Remember who your bull's eye (target market) is and talk to what inspires them as if you are them.

Kath Struthers, Riders Manager
Bicycle Network Victoria

- 53 As you design your pieces, clearly identify your targets or "who gets what." The same general piece will not speak to targets you will ask for volunteer time, money, legacies, sponsorship, endorsements, or in-kind donations.

Frances Whiteside, Secretary
Spay/Neuter Support Services of East Texas

- 54 Customize and personalize! Don't treat donors and non-donors the same.

- 55 You need to know who your audience is. The second most important lesson is know your own organization's own services inside out, so you can connect the two.

Daniel Brewer, CAO
The Speyer Legacy School

- 56 SEGMENTATION, SEGMENTATION AND SEGMENTATION! Don't use one message to target everyone. Segment your audience and develop custom messages for them accordingly. Divide and conquer!
Saima Hassan, Assistant Director, Marketing & Communications
OBAT Helpers Inc.
- 57 Always review with the "fresh eyes" approach. In other words, step away from it for at least 24 hours and then proof for "industry speak" and underlying assumptions. Review as if you have NEVER heard of the organization or project, making sure you don't make assumptions about what they know and how they will interpret the message.
Susan Rozzi, Associate Director
Hendricks County Community Foundation
- 58 Use a focus group of your constituents before running a major advertisement. The population that you serve may not find what you thought was humor/wit in the content and instead take offense, losing the message entirely.
Beth Elsenheimer, Communications & Development Coordinator
Kids Smiles, Inc.
- 59 Provide our audience with information and resources they actually want, rather than what we think they should have! This continues to be a challenge for us; while it seems so simple, and so intuitive, it's difficult to change long-held perceptions and practices.
Cindy Bahn, Program Director
Mental Health America of Westmoreland County
- 60 Do create personas representing your target audience. Imagining the characteristics of an individual who is part of your target audience can be such a helpful resource when crafting messages for that audience.
Britt Wahlin, Director of Development & Communications
Ibis Reproductive Health

Media Relations and Press

A Good Story is the First Step

61 When those who participate in a project are enthusiastic, they are candidates for good stories that are of interest to the media. An example is the Free Little Libraries project. People like the activity of exchanging books and being part of the project. As a result, we've gotten tremendous press coverage.

Jim Stickels, Fund Development Manager
Wisconsin Literacy

Do Outsmart, Don't Outspend

62 There are many opportunities for free marketing, especially for nonprofits. Television and radio stations will air public service announcements; newspaper offers in-kind advertising, and social media has unlimited opportunities to share your message with the public.

Kim Skornogoski, Marketing Director
United Way of Cascade County

63 Be sure to get news articles out to newspapers, community local newspapers and TV programs. They still matter!

Julie Behl, Vice President, Fashion Show Chairman
Woman's Club of Newtown Square, PA

Training Is Essential

64 Don't think that just because someone is high up on the career ladder that they know how to speak to the press. Make sure that every potential spokesperson for your organization is media trained.

Cindy Hoffman, Vice President of Communications
Defenders of Wildlife

Message Development

Authenticity Rules

- 65 It may seem obvious but be genuine in all of your communications with people. Tell your story with warmth and a bit of humor and you will connect with more people. I don't know if that means you will sell more, but I do believe that it means people will care more about what you do.

Jean Colvin, Communications Director
Wisconsin Youth Company

- 66 Your audience likes authenticity and transparency.

Anne Landers, Manager, Communications, Marketing & Public Relations
Life In Abundance International

Be Memorable

- 67 Learn how to write well. Use words like you would a paint brush, with metaphor and simile. Take the risk and be memorable, not boring or just like everyone else.

Terri Lloyd, Founder/Executive Director
The Haggus Society

- 68 Don't try to say too much...anywhere. Whether it's in print, on the website or even a verbal report, keep it simple. Make one powerful point, over and over again.

Kelli Cooper, Communications Director
Albuquerque Community Foundation

- 69 Don't be boring. Don't be boring. Don't be boring. But don't fall for puff and fluff either. It's okay to not play it safe when marketing. I've rarely read a press release that grabbed my attention. Consider how many marketing messages are bombarded at you daily (the number is in the thousands depending on where one lives.) What will you say or do to make your message compelling enough to break through the clutter and surprise Broca's area of your brain (that's your own personal spam filter)? Don't rely on visual tricks like a Superbowl beer commercial, you'll simply be entertaining, not memorable.

Terri Lloyd, Founder & Executive Director
The Haggus Society

Calling for Calls for Action

- 70 Make sure there is a clear call to action in all your communications!

Rich Greif, Director of Marketing & Partnerships
Mass Mentoring Partnership

71 Be STRATEGIC! Think about what you really want to happen, who truly makes that happen and how to motivate them to make it happen rather than simply telling people what you want them to know and expecting them to see it's importance and relevance to them and thus take the desired action. Too often we think something is important, so we assume that simply telling others about it will mean they'll see it's importance, too. That's not always the case.

Andi Cooper, Communications Specialist
Ducks Unlimited

72 Be clear in your message and include a call to action.

Karen Lathrop, Executive Director
West Liberty Economic Area Development

73 Make sure there is one, clear and concise call to action on everything you send out, whether it be solicitations, magazines, brochures, etc.

Andrea Romo, Communications Specialist
Magee-Women's Research Institute & Foundation

Consistency Connects

74 Be consistent. Whatever your message, keep it clear and consistent. Never forget the KISS principle.

Emy diGrappa, Program/Development Officer
Wyoming Humanities Council

75 Make all communication channels work together. Having a strategy that enables the organization's blogs, website pages, social media platforms, newsletters, events, and other communication channels to complement and strengthen each other during implementation will yield much better results overall.

Shai Coggins, Manager, Content & Community
Connecting Up, Inc

76 Consistency is not the hobgoblin of small minds. You need to be consistent in delivering good content and engaging your network on social channels that your audiences wants to read and respond to. And, you need to keep measuring so you know what really is working.

Beth Kanter, Blogger & Co-Author
Beth's Blog and Networked Nonprofit

77 Marketing is truly an organic process that must constantly adapt to an ever-evolving environment. Although messaging must be communicated consistently throughout each channel (both traditional and non-traditional,) speaking in one integrated voice is paramount.

Seth Katzen, Chief Executive Officer
Jewish Federation of Delaware

- 78 Maintain consistency in branding—name, logo, colors, etc. Create a strong brand and be proud of it!

Kim Kamp Leslie, Executive Director
Court Appointed Advocates for Vulnerable Adults of Oklahoma, Inc.

Fine-tuning

- 79 Read it, read it, have someone else read it, then someone else, and then read it again - all the while making sure the message you want to give out is the message that is being sent.

Leslie Clay, Chief Development Office
Hope Cottage Pregnancy and Adoption Center

- 80 Test promotional materials on people who know nothing about your organization to ensure it is resonating.

Karin Kamp, Director of Media & Outreach
The Story Exchange

- 81 Having a trusted coworker who can give you honest feedback is vital.

Mark Dessauer, Communication Director
Active Living By Design

Form Follows Function

- 82 The successful advertising world uses the Four Ps or pillars: product, price, promotion and place. If you think of the Ps as pillars of a bridge, you must fulfill all four pillars in order for the advertising to work. Then you can “cross the bridge” of success. If one pillar is missing, achieving success is difficult. In fundraising my four pillars are case for support, goal, education/awareness, ways of giving. If this formula is used in our marketing opportunities, the message should be clear for the donors to make informative decisions of support. If our pillars hold the bridge up, then hopefully, we’ll reach our goal.

Helen DeBoer-Daggett, Manager, Legacy Giving
The Scarborough Hospital Foundation

It’s About Them, Not About You

- 83 People want to be uplifted by your work, and they want to feel like they can help. If you are able to provide that, you will engage them much more quickly.

Barbara Weinstein, Director of Development
Girls Inc. Westchester

- 84 Keep messages focused on them (the readers), not us (the organization.)

- 85 Use the “You” test, circling all the “Yous” in your materials to ensure you are compelling to the reader.

Amy Matthews, Marketing & Outreach Coordinator
Association of Partners for Public Lands

86 People are hungry to be a part of the conversation. #collaboration #critical
Deborah Mersino, Founder & Principal
Ingeniosus

87 Watch the insider language. Don't assume anyone understands your structure and system.
Eileen Vizthum, District Office Manager
United Methodist Church

Less is More, and Don't Assume

88 Keep your message simple. Don't try to tell the entire story of what your organization does. Tell one story that appeals emotionally to your supporters and shows how your cause relates to their values.
Kathleen Kennedy, Program & Development Coordinator
Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection

89 Simplify—a clean, simple message is much more effective than a wordy appeal in fundraising. Telling stories makes a compelling ask.
Kathleen Gardner, Development Director
Utah Humanities Council

90 Keep your message clear and concise. A picture can say more than words in a lot of instances, e.g. in a power point presentation you can keep the attention of your audience by utilizing pictures more so then if they have to read the message.
Sally O'Riley, ECIA Director
Early Childhood Iowa Des Moines/Louisa Counties

91 People forget that the shortest way to get a message across is the best way.
Guy Arceneaux, Director of Marketing
Catholic Relief Services

92 Our association members and volunteer leaders are so busy that we began creating a style of marketing messages that are 1) extremely quick 2) easy to understand at a glance with 3) a reminder that is repeated throughout on what's in it for them and 4) a link to the details. This year, when creating marketing messages, we pretended our members were in a car on the highway and our marketing message was the billboard they just passed.
Laura McKinney, Senior Mgr, Regional Relations
Promotional Products Association International

93 Keep the message short and to the point.
Jan Cole, Director
Duncan Public Library

94 Get the message out! And KISS (Keep it Simple and Short.)
Ronni Cohen, Executive Director
Delaware Financial Literacy Institute

More Stories, Fewer Stats

95 If I hear (or see) it as a story, I will remember it.

Nancy Long, Executive Director
501 Commons

96 The story of one! Instead of talking about the mass of people you serve, focus on one individual's story. It makes it more personal and not seem so overwhelming. People can help one but feel that they cannot make a difference when talking about thousands that are served.

Jacque French, Development Director
Anna Marie's Alliance

Repetition, Repetition, Repetition

97 The biggest marketing lesson I learned this year is that consistency is the key. If you are tired and lag even a little bit, then people forget about you. Every day is a branding opportunity, and in this economy you cannot afford to be too tired to seize that opportunity. Stand by your brand every day!

Renee English, Director
First Works Child Development Center

98 My biggest marketing lesson learned in 2011—that one off adverts don't work, and a strategically placed advert every month will pay off in the end. It may take a couple of issues to work but it does. I placed the same advert in a national weekend newspaper once a month for the last six months of 2011 and got more enquiry and sales from it than I did for the last four years.

Tess Stewart, NZOQ Education Section Administrator
New Zealand Organisation for Quality

Taglines

99 The marketing process is a methodology to bring an organization back to its real self if done properly and thoroughly. Take time to understand that a great tagline does not compensate for a mission statement that has long expired. Your tagline complements the authentic mission, not a fairy tale or mission creep. Don't be afraid to do some major pruning and reworking if you find that's what is needed.

Charlotte Gallagher, EVP
NIEF, Inc.

100 Develop a tagline by following the process guided by Nancy. I am surprised about the depth of thought and review that the process and application of tagline development offers—priceless benefits for the staff, board, organization and members.

Pamela Voss-Page, Executive Director
Student Leadership Services, Inc.

101 Biggest marketing lessons learned in 2011: 1) Making a tagline is a powerful way to convey what you do in a simple form. (Source: Getting Attention's Nancy Schwartz Webinar) 2) Putting your tagline on the back of your business card and handing it out, back side up, makes people read and respond to your message ("Tell me more!") (Source: Claxon Marketing's Erica Mills 'Tune up Tuesdays' video series)
Nina Eckberg, Executive Director
Panhandle Lakes Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council

102 Get many opinions before you commit to a final tagline.
Sandy Jeffers, Executive Director
Pathway to Recovery

Think Conversation, Not Megaphone

103 Make time to listen, not just to talk.
Maryanne McGlothlin, Director of Development
Family & Children Services

Who Are You Talking to? Speak to Their Needs and Habits

104 Do your homework so you can take the appropriate approach that personalizes the message.
Steven Greenwood, Principle
SCG Consulting

Without a Plan, It's All Action and No Traction

105 Make sure your message matches your goals. If it doesn't, then either your goals or your message are off, or both!
Sybil Sanchez, Director
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL)

Planning

A Plan Positions You to Jump on Opportunities

106 Make a plan first, and write down what you're trying to accomplish!
KayAnn Rutter, Director of Marketing
United Way of Central Ohio

107 In working with my clients, the process is: Plan the work, make sure the project has executive commitment, work the plan, and communicate the status of the plan consistently with all involved.
Fred Kaplan, Chief Marketing Coach
Marketing-Sales- Assist LLC

Marketing Should Take a Strategic Role, Not a Support Function

108 Marketing is everything and everything is marketing—which means that it shouldn't be silo-ed into its own department.
Sarah Doerrer, Graduate Student in Marketing
Fletcher School at Tufts University

109 Keep reminding your leadership, staff, and board that Marketing and Development are coordinated activities that make the "plan." Development cannot be void of "marketing" strategy!
Penelope Beache, Successful Marketing and Development Director
Self-Employed

110 The biggest lesson I learned this year is that "satellite" departments within an organizations may be afraid to share their plans with marketing, and they seem unsure that we can help them at all. They are afraid that only they can own the message. They are also very suspicious of rethinking messages and are unaware of the careful thought that goes into targeting a message to specific channels of communication.
Guy Arceneaux, Director of Marketing
Catholic Relief Services

Measuring Is Planning's Other Half

111 What gets measured gets done. Set measurable goals, keep accurate records and celebrate successes.
Nancy Ostler, Senior External Relations Representative
Newmont Mining Corporation

112 Measurements don't lie. A marketing plan must have milestones that are as important as the plan. We often get so caught up with working the plan that we forget to evaluate if the plan is taking us where we need to go. We also need to remember that a marketing plan is a moving target and must be modified as we go to be successful. While we were working against milestones on our marketing, we often forgot to stop and evaluate how the plan was really working and what we needed to do to "tweak" the plan to reach our milestones in 2011. We needed alternatives to our marketing plans that were not in place to reach a larger portion of our target audience. We needed a "distraction police force" to handle the distractions that come up to sabotage some of our marketing plans. New product introductions suffered due to distractions. Projects with longer timelines got delayed because of poor management of distractions. All of this reflection leads me back to my first thought—the need for a tighter connection between our milestone and our marketing plan.

Leta Roberts, President
ASMS Products

113 If the product isn't right, no matter how much time and effort and money you put into marketing it, it will still fail. Ensure you specify a trial period with new products so you can make the decision to "jump ship" early enough for resources to be redirected to more successful/effective ventures.

Andrea Morgan, Funding & Finance Manager
New Zealand

114 The traditional business rule of "what gets measured, gets done," still holds true. Establishing reliable performance metrics can go a long way in managing organizational expectations and encouraging additional marketing/communication investments.

Jason Van Acker, Director of Marketing
Wisconsin Lutheran College

115 As someone who is new to the non-profit world, I've learned that you should not assume that metrics for your communications should be similar to that of the corporate, for-profit world. In many cases, your audience is more engaged, so responses rates could be higher.

Anne Landers, Manager, Communications
Life In Abundance International

Planning Is Powerful

116 A cohesive marketing strategy is vital. I can't wait until ours is in place.

Irene O'Neill, Secretary, Board of Directors
The Awakenings Project

Stay the Strategic Course

117 My biggest lesson of 2011 is to not stray from your primary marketing focus. For us that focus is our bequest initiative—a multi-year effort to get more people to put a charity (possibly ours) in their will or other estate plans. We have hammered away at that message for two years in various ways—stories, publications, web content, direct mail, e-newsletters, ads, media interviews, videos, speeches, social media, personal conversations, etc. As a result, just when our staff was growing a tad weary of the messaging, we started seeing a big jump in the number of people who have let us know they have included the foundation in their will. Also, additional nonprofits in our area have started encouraging their donors to include them in their wills or retirement fund plans. The more people talking about this the better. Lesson learned: Be patient and stay the course since it takes awhile to get people to embrace an idea and actually take action.

Sally Hartman, Vice President of Communications
Hampton Roads Community Foundation

118 From the position of a graphic designer, if you implement a process for a workflow, don't allow anyone to deviate from the process or they will take advantage of it and keep doing it!

Pamela Stover, Division Graphic Designer
American Red Cross

119 Don't start a project unless you have the staff and organizational backing to sustain it.

Alex Zucker, Communications & Alumni Network
Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation

120 If you are going to change your name, think about the consequences on your core market and name recognition. Sometimes an awkward acronym with history is valuable, but it depends on whether or not you are prioritizing core or new constituents.

Sybil Sanchez, Director
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL)

Without a Plan, It's All Action and No Traction

121 Have a clean plan for your marketing! If you don't, you get what you planned for—unclean information and direction and lack of donors!

Mia Roseberry, Founder
Wounded Warrior Homes

122 Without a doubt—plan the work then work the plan. Period.

Laurie Ward, Executive Director
Washington's National Park Fund

123 A marketing budget is not the same thing as a marketing plan.

Lisa Funderburg, Outreach & Communications Manager
Variety Care

124 A mental marketing plan is good; a written marketing plan is best.
Mark Bergstrom, Director of Development
West Shore Community College

125 The value of using a spreadsheet to easily manage and review our “content buckets.” Previously, we had used the “mad dash” or “oh, my God, did we remember to post on FB?” methods of managing all our various content buckets. We created a system, and it WORKS!

Jeanette Stokes, Executive Director
RCWMS

Production

First Impressions Mean Everything

126 Graphics and design are key to marketing and need to be strong. An organization's message can be compelling, but sometimes words need a little help to draw and focus the eye.

Kim Votruba-Matook, Development Officer
Discovering Justice

127 Negative or white space, i.e. silence, is as crucial as your messages in connecting with your audiences.

Sartaj Anand, Social Media & Web Assistant
The Melton Foundation

Perfect the Process

128 Create an editing checklist process when multiple staff edit a newsletter, and do it before crunch time.

Pamela O'Leary, Executive Director
Public Leadership Education Network

129 We learned to always make sure to get pictures adjusted correctly (size, color, etc.) before you send it to the printer's.

Greg De Benedictis, VISTA Outreach Associate
Streetside Stories

130 Be careful that the font with shadow features is still readable when a poster-sized promotional piece is reduced to a postcard.

Kimberly Watson, Marketing Agent
Project ACE - Africa Community Empowerment

131 Be extremely mindful of the paper quality in a print job. The type, finish, color and weight make a huge difference in the final product. Hound your printer representative to get it just right. Some companies are short changing clients to save on their costs. It happened to me, and the product was less than satisfying.

Reggi Carlson, Communications Director
Nebraska Community Foundation

Proofing Is Essential

132 ALWAYS get at least three fresh pairs of eyes to review the final proof before sending materials to the printer. I learned that one twice this year.

Beverly Mislant, Individual Giving Coordinator
Performing Arts Workshop

133 Always double check telephone numbers when printing direct mail pieces. In fact before you print a telephone number, dial it as it is listed on the piece you are printing. Do the same for websites. Sounds simple, but it is very important.

Declan Sheehy, Director, Development & Outreach
American Institute for Economic Research

134 When you get the proof from the printer, take the time to review it very carefully before approving it. We had seen the material so much before the proof, that we didn't notice some dropped lines. A donor's name was dropped from the Annual Report copy we had sent the printer, and we missed that.

Vital Vendor Finesse

135 Give yourself more than enough lead time when working with vendors. No matter how reliable, it helps to have a "drop dead" date that you share with the vendor that is about a week or two ahead of your own "actual drop dead" date. They can always hold the mailing another week if you really don't want it to go out early, but frequently that extra time cushion gets used. I've never had a mailing that didn't have a snag during the process.

Michele Wilson, Assistant Director of Annual Giving
The University of Toledo

136 Be sure to make explicit your expectations for marketing banners and signage and that the fabricator reiterates these details to ensure an accurate order before it is produced. The old adage "measure twice, cut once" comes to mind. Be sure, however, the manufacturer knows what and how to measure to your specifications.

A. Shay

Social Media

Content Drives Engagement

137 Remember the four C's when using social media: creative, current, consistent and concise.

Sherra Robinson, Outreach Director
Western Heights Dental Community Outreach, Inc.

138 Changing the message on social media content doesn't always mean more people will look/comment. Have new fresh content and engage with your audience once in awhile.

Greg De Benedictis, VISTA Outreach Associate
Streetside Stories

139 You must provide equal value for time to the recipient of any campaign. Too many Facebook posts are worse than too few.

Cullen McGough, Communications Coordinator
Maine Cancer Foundation

140 Make sure that you have a steady content stream before you fully engage in social media.

Mark Dessauer, Communication Director
Active Living By Design

Friend, Not Foe

141 Never fear failure in social media. Try, try, and try again. Push the boundaries of what social media can do to brand and connect with your constituents.

Hubert Yee, Social Media Marketeer

142 I'm an old-school print and broadcast copywriter. My big lesson was don't be afraid of web 2.0 and embrace social media. It's the way of the world, and I had to get over my sweet self!

Susan Bodiker, Creative Director
Orion Advertising

It's a Team Effort

143 Make sure you outline every little detail possible about social media messaging to staff members before you give them the keys to tweet/post. While you may know it (because you've worked on it,) others may be exposed to social media for the first time.

Greg De Benedictis, VISTA Outreach Associate
Streetside Stories

It's About Them, Not About You

144 Don't forget your audience. You'll miss opportunities writing social media and online content to appeal to only one age group, but people of all ages use the Internet.

Nicole Limpert, Social Media Manager
Catholic Charities of Madison, Wisconsin

Just Do It!

145 Regarding social media—just do it! You will make mistakes, but you will also figure out how to effectively target your constituents and turn them into advocates for your organization!

Baret Walker, Director of Development
Escuela de Guadalupe

Meet Your Audiences Where They Already Are

146 It used to be enough to go to each village, stop at the store and talk with whoever was around; go to the church, the post office, the school and put up some flyers; and give a few key people in the community information to hand out. That was the original “social media.”

Suzanne Jamison
Jamison Management and Development

More Than Just Chatter

147 Watch Twitter for opportunities. In earned-media reporters follow Twitter and it's an easy way to get in touch with them. I have connected with reporters via twitter—some of them who had not answered email or phone call pitches. I also learned of video contests via Twitter and was able to get some amplification of videos that way.

Liz Rose, Communications Director
Campaign for America's Future

Move Traffic to Home Base—Your Website

148 Integrating social media and third-party donation systems into your own website can be powerful.

Luke Miller
Virtual Abode Ltd

Planning Is Powerful

149 We're still learning how to make social media useful. Perhaps the greatest lesson is that it is not “free.” It does take focused, dedicated time and thought to do well. Many of our non-profit clients just use Twitter only now and then, when they have time; this is not a strategic approach and the medium can be so much more useful than an afterthought. Meanwhile, it is equally important to appreciate that social media, even employed properly, is not a cure-all for all mission communications; it is one of a number of useful tools.

Susan Liehe, Senior Associate
Richard Male and Associates

150 Define several categories around which you can develop social media posts, then set up a regular posting schedule for each and stick to it. The planning takes time but actually makes the task of establishing and maintaining a social media presence easier.

Laurie Wozniak, Communication Officer
Episcopal Diocese of Western New York

Relationships Are the Heart of Good Marketing

151 A social media “presence” is nothing without dialogue. Work harder to launch and nurture client, donor and stakeholder conversations on your Facebook page, in your Twitter feeds, and on your site.

Nina Rubin, Director of Parent Advocacy
GA Charter Schools Association

152 Social media (specifically Facebook and Twitter) can position us differently with audiences.

Kathryn Bauchelle, Program Director
Literacy Advance of Houston

The Voltage of Video

153 Video has become an expected component of marketing, outreach and social media participation.

Marissa Huth, Communications Coordinator
Raising Special Kids

Staff and Leadership

Build Skills at Every Level

154 Make professional development for managerial and professional staff a priority of the organization and set aside funding and time for same. This helps build a strong, well-trained and supportive team that makes the organization stronger. The best marketing strategy for any successful organization is to do a great job at what the organization is supposed to be doing.

Cathy Spackman, Board Chair
Youville Recovery Residence for Women

Building Buy-In Is the First Step

155 Make sure that everyone working within and/or alongside the organization completely understands and is invested in achieving the vision.

Bridget Ward, Business Consultant
Toledo Consulting

156 Do not ever, ever assume that directors on your board actually understand marketing or fundraising. Explain what you're doing and why as many times as they need to understand that the sole purpose of marketing is not just to sell tickets. When choosing colors and fonts for the brochures, it's not about your personal preference.

Liz Stott

157 Be sure everyone's responsibilities and roles are clearly established up front.

Paul Lagasse, Writer/Editor
Active Voice Writing & Editorial Services

Everyone Is a Messenger

158 It takes "everyone" to be part of messaging. One person, one department cannot do it alone.

Janey Sorensen, Marketing Director/Grant Writer
The Center for Mental Health

Find the Process That Works for You

159 A camel is a horse designed by a committee.

Karen Cutliff, Marketing Coordinator
Legal Aid of Western Missouri

It's a Team Effort

- 160 Include internal stakeholders at appropriate points. If you only get feedback about design, conversations end up being about graphics or word choice. There would have been more value in discussing audience and goals earlier in the process. Feelings about the color green are often less strong (i.e. distracting) when a person has had buy-in before palate decisions are made.

Alana Placzkowski, Content Manager
Association of Small Foundations

- 161 Everyone in an organization should understand the importance of marketing. It can't be confined to the marketing department.

State of The Heart Hospice

Keeping Positive Is a Plus

- 162 Maintain a consistently positive atmosphere in the workplace. By ensuring that everyone is getting their needs met and feels valued within the organization, it creates a magnetism that draws potential volunteers, clients, donors, etc.

Daniel Kirkpatrick, Director
Explorations Academy

Match the Person to the Task

- 163 Take time to match the right people with the right jobs. People are much happier and efficient if they're doing something they do well and feel good about.

Leslie Pfeil, Independent Consultant/ President
Philadelphia Scholastic Rowing Association

- 164 Choose marketing volunteers on the basis of their passion and time available as much—maybe more than—their expertise in an area where you have need. It doesn't make any difference how able someone is to do something on your behalf if they can't follow through even with a very genuine desire to help. Also, be very specific with your needs and expectations in the very first meeting with any volunteer.

Neal Kunde, Director of Public & Donor Communications
Combat Blindness International

Outside Help Can Help

- 165 While I still maintain the don't outspend, outsmart philosophy, there is a reason why the "Big Guys" can command the big price! New campaigns this year are taking us in directions not even considered in the past.

Dave Watson, President, Board of Directors
Goodwill Industries Essex Kent Lambton

166 I've reached beyond my comfort zone and skill set to partner with a graphics design department from a local university to develop an internship program to assist our organization with marketing. The result has been compelling marketing materials that have increased our visibility, particularly at regional colleges and universities where we're seeking volunteers and offering community service and internships. A team of students from Marywood University, here in PA, came up with some great, eye-catching posters and messages that have motivated many incoming inquiries and interest in giving and volunteering. And it was all done for free and approved by our board members.

Robert Hughes, Executive Director
Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

Strategy

Back to Basics Wins Big

167 Once email and social media are going well, or even if they're not, don't forget the classics. Phone calls and local events! Person-to-person contact can't be beat.

Jennifer Waggoner, Owner & President
Consult Jenny, Inc.

168 The biggest marketing lesson I learned this year is that people do not connect anymore by speaking to each other. They can easily not answer their phone, and it goes to voicemail; or they can delete a well-versed email. The lesson I learned is that you have to network and attend seminars and luncheons for the American Marketing Association and any associations that relate to your company or product. I learn a lot from these programs, but more importantly, I get the opportunity to speak one-one-one with colleagues who really understand mobile marketing, SEO, and Internet-based programs. That doesn't guarantee a sale. But you have actually talked about your work and impact with live people! Interaction is critical for success, and I have developed many relationships this year by "being out there." Get out, meet, greet, and market yourself and your organization!

Shari Greer, Sales & Marketing
Global Alert Network

169 What's old is new again.

Become a Publisher

170 Don't hesitate to create your own content about the organization. You don't have to wait for the press to write about you. Use short videos, audio interviews and photos from your events to tell your audiences about your passion and spread the word via social media. Put the reminders about your Facebook page, Twitter, Flickr and YouTube channel on your marketing materials.

Inna Lobanova-Heasley, President, Freelance Consultant
PR Perfect

Do Outsmart, Don't Outspend

171 Expensive marketing is not necessarily more effective than free advertising. Do not discount the value of word-of-mouth!

Jessica Haas, Recording Secretary / Office Manager
Native American Government

Everyone Is a Messenger

172 Word of mouth is and will always be the most effective tool in spreading our mission and all the happenings that our campus offers.

Donna Barrett, Sales & Marketing Manager
Cultural Center of Charlotte County

It's a Team Effort

- 173 Use an multi division team/committee approach to evaluate marketing strategy; do not leave the final decision to the marketing department and the CEO. The marketing department needs to make recommendations and is responsible for implementation; the global committee has the entire organization as its customer.

Lorna Morrisroe Morrisroe, Chief Financial Officer
ARDC

It's About Them, Not About You

- 174 Don't pretest by just asking internally; it's very easy to get carried away and think that your big idea is the greatest things since sliced bread and everyone else is going to think so too....and throw money at it!

Annabel Lush, Donor Development Manager
Heart Foundation

Just Do It!

- 175 It's great to take the time to brainstorm, talk, discuss and even argue why you should or shouldn't do something. But we've learned that sometimes you just need to take a (calculated) risk and jump in to try something new. This won't work for all marketing projects or campaigns, but occasionally you can afford to test the waters, toe in first, especially in the world of social media. After all, the lifecycle of a tweet is less than three hours, so what have you got to lose?

Aleeza Zohar, Communications Officer
Jean Hailes for Women's Health

Relationships Are the Heart of Good Marketing

- 176 Always get contact information from your potential fans and/or friends.

Gail Sattler, Board Chair
Arizona Women in Tune

- 177 We develop and maintain community partnerships for distributing flyers about our programs. These are low-cost and invaluable points of contact! As a community music school, it's helpful to be in contact with local private and public schools, local libraries, community centers and boys and girls clubs. Our next step in the New Year will be going door-to-door!

Wendy Kikkert, Administrator
The Neighborhood Music School

- 178 Professionals of referring facilities benefit from education so look for teachable moments. Offering assistance to help those professionals better serve their population builds trust and comfort in continued partnership for education and case referrals.

Heather Hussong, Training & Marketing Coordinator
Hope Cottage

179 After a mistake is made, make it a priority to be up front with donors and alumni. A follow-up email or conversation often provides an opportunity for transparency. It's not the mistake that necessarily matters, it's how you handle it.

Cara Augspurger, Senior Director of Development
Alpha Sigma Phi Foundation

Sometimes You Have to Spend Money to Make Money

180 You need to spend some money on marketing materials—it's worth it!

Sarah Kittle, Special Events Manager
Detroit Public Television

181 No matter how inexpensive email marketing is and how much my colleagues love to make creative email blasts, our members tell us direct mail is still the most convincing material we send them. (I was pretty shocked!)

Lynn Gerlach, Member Services Coordinator
Northwest Regional Primary Care Association

Trust Your Experience

182 Don't accept someone else's list stats as "true" without looking at what works for your own list. Industry best practices are great, but it's way too easy to just say only send emails on day x and y and not on w and v. The best advice I received this year is to know and consider norms and best practices, but remember that your list is unique, and tailor your activities to it through measurement and evaluation.

Allison Ford, Senior Manager of External Affairs
Marine Fish Conservation Network

Websites

Find Models to Guide Your Work

- 183 Spend significant time reviewing other non-profit websites when you embark on redesigning your own website.

Roberta Roth, Literacy Outreach Specialist
Project Read-Menlo Park

If It's Broken, Fix It

- 184 Check the online links—every single one of them. Do they go to current staff/updated pages/sponsor pages that are working?

Cynthia Morris, Development Officer
Auckland Grammar School

- 185 Check how your website looks across different browsers (Explorer, Chrome, Safari) to assure the look and links.

Laura Pérez-Arce, Director
Viva Sierra Gorda

Inbound Marketing

- 186 Failing to stay focused on your keywords is huge problem. Keyword research is mandatory for anyone writing content for the web, but even more important is staying focused on the results of that search. Every time I stray from those core keywords, everything sinks—visitors to my site, social media likes and retweets, incoming links from other websites. For a nonprofit organization, lower readership can result in fewer donations, volunteers, and good will. Search is still a primary way people find you. That means they are entering keywords and keyword phrases. It won't matter if they know about your organization or not; if you've got the content around those keywords, they'll find you. Now if I can just remember that!

Joanne Fritz, Writer & Guide
About.com

One Step at a Time

- 187 Make sure your beta is ready for beta signup before marketing! It's been a year of small glitches, but they're finally running and ready to improve

Citizen Software

Relevance Rules

- 188 Be sure to create a new landing page if you email a seasonal solicitation for support. You don't want people to go to the "standard" donation page if you asked them to support your efforts to help people at Thanksgiving. The landing page ought to fit the seasonal solicitation.

William Hoelzel, Managing Partner
JWB Associates (consultants)

Stay Current

189 A good website is vital. An old or sloppy one conveys negative things about your organization. (We have a brand new one this year!)

Kathryn Bauchelle, Program Director
Literacy Advance of Houston

190 Website is CRUCIAL. We redeveloped our website this year, and have had nothing but great feedback from members, partners, supporters. It's a lot of work, but well worth it, as now our constituents are going to and using our site as their first stop! After the new site launched, we heard all the negative feedback about the old site—I suppose they didn't want to hurt our feelings—and all the feedback about what a difference an easy-to-use site makes for our members, our image, and our communications strategy, both internal and external, as a membership-driven organization.

Odette Lloyd
Community Learning Network

Testing and Tracking Generate Results

191 Track and analyze data to understand what works, what doesn't, and why.

Dana Weaver, Vice President/COO
LeadingAge Kanas (Formerly KAHSA)

Work Smarter

192 If many things need updating, revamp your website first.

Sharon Owen, Exec. Asst./Fundraising Coordinator
Sisters of Mercy Services

You, the Marketer

24/7 Marketing

193 Plan ahead. Consult others. Watch your peers for new ideas but don't let them guide you. Be who you are but be responsive to comments, questions and critiques—let them strengthen your message.

Sybil Sanchez, Director
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL)

Be Fearless

194 Don't be afraid to go after something, even if it's a new strategy for the company and/or your team. Somebody's got to take some risks; it's the only way to truly grow!

Natasha Brobst, Special Projects Coordinator
Central Aroostook ARC

195 Do not judge new and different ideas too fast. Give space to innovative and creative fundraising methods and spend some time to think about them before rejecting them. Maybe something is too different from traditional ways but can really make the difference.

Maria Sureda, Research Program Manager
ESADE Institute for Social Innovation

Don't Ignore the Small Stuff

196 Small improvements done very well can make a big impact with stakeholders.

Katie Tarara, Director of Communications
Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation/Serving Leaders

Embrace Change

197 If you resist change, you resist improvement.

Laura Coyle, Marketing & Communications
Meals on Wheels PLUS & The Food Bank of Manatee

Everyone is a Messenger

198 Use every opportunity to talk about your organization so you get the word out about it.

Maria Cone, President
The Jonathan Wish Foundation

Expect the Unexpected

199 In 2011, I re-learned the value of having a solid Plan B in place for every scenario, especially when it comes to using technology as a marketing or communication portal. For example, I hold a quarterly conference call with more than 200 stakeholders from all parts of Florida that generally goes very well and produces great customer service results. The call held in the last quarter of 2011 was a minor disaster: I had no Plan B in place for everyone else on the call to continue with the agenda when one participant left the call on “hands free” and evacuated the office during a fire drill. Once the warning claxon began, that’s all that the rest of us heard. I quickly instructed the rest of the participants to hang up and then sent out a blast email of apology. However, that could not make up for the verbal contributions of one participant who was in the middle of speaking when the fire alarm began blaring. Now, I have a telephonic Plan B in case that should happen again.

Lytha Belrose, Statewide Medicaid Liaison
Florida Department of Juvenile Justice

200 NOTHING goes according to plan. RESULTS usually produce 50% of expectation. TACTICS are like crowds; you don’t know how they’ll react so stack the deck. RELATIONSHIP FIRST, sell second. GENIUS isn’t what comes out first; it’s usually what is born after its siblings, mediocrity and apathy, have been sacrificed on the altar of commitment.

Anthony Dimasio, Partner
American Business Writers

201 There is always a return on your investment, but it doesn’t always return the way you expected it or in the time frame you wanted. So just be thoughtful about your decision making regarding the value of your efforts.

Rebecca Krause-Hardie
AudienceWorks

It’s About Them, Not About You

202 The biggest marketing lesson that I re-learned in 2011 is the power of listening. Nothing’s more important.

Pamela Grow

Keep on Keeping on

203 Just do it. Don’t put off doing marketing until you get it just right. It’s an ongoing process that needs to stay in motion at all times.

Andi Counts, President
Veridian Design Group

204 You can’t do it all. Choose your focus/goal and stick to it!

Julie Paavola, Executive Director
The Einstein Project

205 You need to do twice as much as you planned to do. To get the result you're hoping for, you'll need to do twice as much as that twice as much, actually. Just make sure your marketing manager has enough coffee.

Judith Haemmerle, Director
Digital Game Museum

Learning Should Be Part of the Plan

206 There's always more to learn, and sharing information among nonprofits is the way forward.

Angie Hua, Marketing Coordinator
South Australian Museum

207 Remain open to new forms of media sharing, social networking and cause marketing.

Ellen Bilney, Director of Development & Donor Relations
Animal Friends of the Valleys

208 Always keep learning, there is always something new.

Suzanne Reily, Community Relations Manager
Children's Association for Maximum Potential

209 Pay attention to the lessons and wisdom of others (like via Getting Attention!)

Mark Dessauer, Communication Director
Active Living By Design

Organization Opens Doors

210 When faced with a large, daunting project, start by breaking it into bite-size chunks. I tell myself I only have to do one thing: make a pretty, colorful chart with all the detailed steps and pertinent information I need. Once I'm done with that, I'm ready to tackle the project.

Sheri Holm, Communications Director
West Central Initiative

211 Don't hesitate, procrastinate, or carelessly delegate.

Ronni Cohen, Executive Director
Delaware Financial Literacy Institute

Relationships Are the Heart of Good Marketing

212 The biggest lesson for me in 2011 was "people first, profits second." This will become more true as 2012 moves forward. Have you seen LinkedIn's new section, "Volunteers & Causes?" It is merely one more bit of proof that no one can afford to ignore online networking, and now LinkedIn has made it even easier. Get on board, people!

Victoria Ipri, CEO
Modello Media, Inc.

213 There's no job training like experience, and MAKE SURE to keep up your relationships with media/suppliers, customers/patrons etc.
Kathryn Blair, Marketing & Communications Manager
Lunchbox Theatre

214 Spend the time finding and connecting with the network mavens! It's the best investment of your time.
Project Australia

Repetition, Repetition, Repetition

215 It takes time and constant follow-up. You can't do something just once and expect a result. You need to keep plugging away, even when you think you are not getting results.
Leslie Clay, Chief Development Officer
Hope Cottage, Inc.

Sometimes You Have to Fail to Learn

216 Here's one I seem to re-learn every year—teach yourself and your people how to embrace failure and keep experimenting.
Marc Sirkin, Chief Community Officer
Autism Speaks

Time Is a Precious Resource

217 The biggest marketing lesson I learned in 2011 was to not bite off more than you can chew. At the beginning of the year, I was writing a monthly director's desk column for our website, a weekly news article for the website, and daily Facebook posts. In addition, we added a monthly e-newsletter to the mix! This was just way too much for one ED to handle, so I started delegating. I was very strict about reviewing copy before it was posted, which helped my staff improve their writing skills.
Amanda Womac, Executive Director
The Hearing and Speech Foundation

218 Cut out the clutter and instead of doing many things poorly, do a few things well.
Anna Keith, Communications & Marketing
Habitat for Humanity Saint Louis

219 Although my business is not a marketing-based one, I spend 90% of my time marketing it. To simplify what I want to change for 2012: Outsource and delegate more to free up time for some personal and family time.
Teri Blaschke, Operator
Hidden Valley RV Park