Fundraising Tips, Winning Hearts and Minds:
Becoming a more welcoming organization

Saturday, December 2, 2017
Saratoga Springs, New York

What we will cover this morning (as a buffet...)

Tips and Ideas to enhance what you are already doing:

• Common sense
• Suggestions to create a strategic, integrated, strategy
• Low-cost, simple ideas, to keep people inspired and build broader support for parks and trails

12 Tips to be more welcoming, inspiring, and engaging

| Fundraising requires strategy, systems and vision | Fundraising expands the team |
| Webisats | Thank you letters |
| Plan it out | Video |
| Databases | Be Friendly |
| Stories of Change | Who is being left out? |
| Social Media (Facebook) | Strategic programming |
| Appeals | Thank you notes |
Goal:
Find one or two things that might be helpful to enhance your efforts in 2018

Gaining USA 2017, 2016 Trends

Fundraising, Sustainability, Relevance...

72% and 8% = 80% of charitable giving from Individuals

Total 2016 contributions: $390.05 billion

Giving USA 2017, 2016 Trends

Concentric Circles of Closeness
Notable decline over the last four decades:
"I was shocked...We have the perception that we’re getting through to people. But at least compared to previous eras, we’re not."
Jean Twenge, a psychology professor at San Diego State University

Task at Hand:
Moving (or keeping) parks and trails from a perceived luxury to a daily necessity
Are you pushing people away?

- Do you feel like a club?
- Do you LOOK like a club?
- Do you talk like a club?
- What do your materials feel like?
- How do people FEEL appreciated for their help or donations?
- Check ALL systems/channels.

#1. Websites

FEELINGS NOT ANALYTICAL THINKING DRIVE DONATIONS.

Storytelling for good
Shared Values: What do you want people to...

- Feel?
- Do?
- Remember?

Lord Ponsonby:
“How do you speak to the natives?”
Lord Snot:
“In English, of course”?
Lord Ponsonby:
“What if they don’t understand?”
Lord Snot:
“I speak louder”

Trending: Re-learning what it means to “connect”

Neuroscience has documented that our brains “have trouble separating the trivial from the important, and all this information processing makes us tired.”

- Daniel Levitin

Friends of Knox Farm State Park

#2. Create a Quarterly Plan

Date before you ask someone to marry
Establish a simple Rhythm of Communication and Engagement

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#3. It’s connected: Donors, Databases, and Retention

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Inspiration and Memories, Parks and Trails Changing Lives
#4. Stories of Change

So What? Who Cares?

Sounds great, what’s the push-back?

• Know your audiences
• Weave in messaging to start addressing concerns
• Lead with examples they can relate to, personally
• Facts and figures don’t change many minds

Interesting

• Stories about people
  • Relationships
  • Celebrities
  • Heroism
  • Life drama
  • Life-affirming thoughts
  • Practical help
  • Photos of people

Not Interesting

• Statistics
• Opinions
• Lectures
• Statistics
• Bragging
• Photos of buildings

How do people read, absorb information?

Graph from One Spot.
How you frame the story, the impact, is important. Giving is emotional...we have to relate.

The singularity effect

Make the organization the supporting character of the story...

Story of Change:

Once upon a time...
Every day...
One day...
Because of that...
Because of that..
Until Finally...
(see handout)

WIFM?

So What, Who Cares?
How does this change depending on your audience?

Friends of Saratoga Spa State Park

Economic Benefits of the New York State Park System

Friends of Peebles Island State Park
Become a more welcoming organization: Start with shared values

a. Those who already support you
b. Those who you want to support you

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#5. Visuals matter

Words are processed by our short-term memory where we can only retain about seven bits of information (plus or minus two).

This is why, by the way, that we have seven-digit phone numbers.

Images, on the other hand, go directly into long-term memory where they are indelibly etched.

— Dr. Lynell Burmark, Ph.D., Thornburg Center for Professional Development

“We live in the age of information overload.
A wealth of information creates a scarcity of attention and thus a need to efficiently allocate attention.”

—Clarification, August 2017
A recent guide to visual storytelling practices reveals that when information is presented orally, people tested 72 hours later remember only about 10%.

That jumps to 65% when pictures are added.


#6. Social Media Simple Strategy:
1. Awe
2. Awww
3. Amazing (as in appreciation)
4. Helpful tips
5. Change

Social Media
• It’s an important part of your engagement and retention program.
• It’s a key part of the integration.
• Know where your people are...
• Boost your posts, post at least twice a week

Facebook Posts with images see 3 times more engagement.
http://buzzsumo.com/blog/how-to-massively-boost-your-blog-traffic-with-these-5-awesome-image-stats/

I need a smile, I need to relate, I need good news, I want to belong...
Putting together a team as a Friends Group

MONTH X

Mondays: Sue (beautiful views from and of trails)
Tuesday: Bob (Trails and dogs)
Wednesday: Jane (Water and Wildlife from trails)
Thursday: Amanda (Throwback or fun related to trails)
Friday: Sal
(Appreciation for those who make it possible; families and trails; jobs related to trails)

#7. Appeal letters
When you’re fundraising are you pushing people away?
How would you frame the need?

By the time they get the “ask” they should be inspired...

Write to me...

“...The generosity of you, our donors, is one of Catholic Relief Services greatest blessings. Your support gives us the resources we need to bring innovative solutions to tough humanitarian problems. Your compassion transforms lives.”

Friends of Knox Farm State Park

CANVA
Easily create beautiful designs + documents
Use Canva’s drag-and-drop designer to make professional designs for social media, presentations, and more.
https://about.canva.com

Tom Ahern
Old Letters:
Validating, Reporting, Hard to Read

Parks & Trails NY; J. Anderson, Community Consultants; judy@community-consultants.com; 12/02/17
Appeal Letters
Figure out what people care about

- Changing lives
- Transferable values
- Solving a problem that I CARE about
- Close to home, relevant
- Be visual
- Tell a story-short at the beginning to illustrate the need

Judy: Include visuals
#8. Tips for Better Thank You Letters: Connect with People

1. Conversational tone
2. From one person to the donor
   NO “Dear Friend”
3. What change have they made, will they make?
4. Tell a short story of change at the beginning, extrapolate

Tips for Better Thank You Letters, continued:

1. Conversational tone
2. From one person to the donor
3. What change have they made, will they make?
4. Tell a short story of change at the beginning, extrapolate
5. Send within one week, two weeks maximum
6. Consider an enclosure, visuals
7. Write when you write your solicitation

Example thank you letter

See handouts on Thank You Letters

- Visuals are important.
- Font no smaller than 12; use serif fonts
- Real signature
- Try an make it personal if you can.

Call them, thank them

1. Thank them.
2. Call them for their gift—ask what they care about.
3. Invite them to a program or event.
4. Ask if they’d be interested in sharing photos of when they are out on the park/trail and if so, tell them where to email it or send it.
#9. Video:
Are you making people happy? Inspiring them to share?

Video Tips:
- Shorter now, up to two minutes max (unless a captive audience)
- Not fancy, but something that will interest people
- Stories, examples, before and after, in-the-moment, etc.
- Sound and stability (lack of wiggling) is important

What to we feel like? Who are we listening to?

Who are we currently serving?
Who has been left out? What can we do about that?

What’s holding them back?

#10. Be Friendly
Walks, talks and other community programs...

1. Who greets people, and makes them feel welcome?
2. Who talks to them now and then, before, during and/or after the program?
3. What do you bring to share?
4. Who does the follow-up, and makes people feel appreciated?
Appreciation Tips:

For each event or program establish:
1. The greeters
2. The chatters (could be live posting as well as live chatting)
3. The thankers (notes, social media, thank you calls, gift delivery)

#11. Don’t send Lame Thank You Notes

#12. Press

Try submitting monthly with “deep impact captions” and compelling images to your local press

Example:
A recent study by the XXXX has found that trails, within a 15 minute drive from someone’s house, increase better health by reducing the risk of heart-attacks, lowering diabetes, and reducing Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Trails like the Harlem Valley Rail Trail will help provide many of these benefits with its 22 miles of trails and proximity to schools and villages.
Example Feedback for Mendocino’s integrated approach (small nonprofit)

Lapsed major donor re-engaged:
“The communications coming out from the land trust are so much better than they used to be. They are coming from the heart and I feel like you’re really engaging with me instead of talking about the organization.”

City Manager’s office:
“Linda and I love your newsletter!!! So much so that we would like to emulate it for City news.”

Current major donor:
“The newsletter/update was terrific! Tell the staff I loved it. And I “shared” it on FB. Thanks for what you do.”

“People will forget what you said
People will forget what you did
But people will never forget how
you made them feel.”
-Maya Angelou

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What tips could you build on in 2018?

Questions?
If you’d like tips on how to take the welcoming concept deeper into fundraising...