

DIALOGUE

A Periodic Newsletter for Development Officers

-- Bill Somerville, Editor --

Dialogue is published to help improve relations between funders and development officers. *Dialogue* was started at the request of a development officer. The questions in this issue were sent in by readers of *Dialogue*.

Q: How important is it for grant proposals to cite research articles or newspaper articles as a way to demonstrate the validity of our agency's work? Does it make a difference?

A: A citation or a short article would be useful as an addendum to a proposal especially if it mentions your program, but don't turn your request into a research paper with footnotes and all. The main thing is, do you know what you are doing and the accuracy of your presentation. The editor often gets proposals stating "this is a unique program" when in fact there are similar programs in the vicinity.

Q: How do we showcase ourselves? We want to stand out.

A: Have newsletters that are short and sweet. No in-house stuff "We want to wish happy birthday to" Get newspaper coverage of your work. This is very helpful. Send short notes to funders about interesting things at your work. Invite funders over for site visits – not for an open house. Send pictures.

Q: I am the editor of our organization's quarterly newsletter. Up to now it was not used as a direct mail piece but from here on a remit envelope is included. Can you offer some advise on what I can do to make the newsletter effective as a direct mail piece?

A: Give readers a "package" to fund. This is an idea, or program, or thing that you want to try and this is what it costs. Let people know how they can invest in your organization other than being a "Benefactor at the \$_____ level." These are the givers who will get excited from something special and then give more.

INTERESTING READING

"The New Landscape for Nonprofits" by William P. Ryan (The entry of for-profits into social services raises fundamental questions about the mission and future of non-profits).

Harvard Business Review Jan.-Feb. 1999
(800) 545-7685

Q: Are there any programs for people getting off of welfare who need small help?

A: Community foundations are sometimes willing to consider giving agencies discretionary money to meet the emergency needs of the clients they serve. The Editor has done this type of funding for 20 years and is willing to share the experience with anyone wanting to do similar funding.

Q: How do you get Boards to do fundraising?

A: Get board members to see themselves as ambassadors, to "own" fundraising. Ambassadors have many facets to their work, they can talk to people, ask for money, make calls, sell the organization; but they need to be sold themselves. Give them 'tool kits' about the organization with all the information they need to understand what it does and how it does it.

Q: How do you pay the grantwriter when you don't have any money?

A: Don't underestimate your own ability to write proposals. It isn't necessary to hire a professional right at the beginning. Never accept an arrangement where the grant writer or fundraiser gets a percentage of what they raise.

Q: I've been encouraged to meet potential funders, but how do I do that – we have only received grants from local foundations and we can't afford to go to conferences?

A: Research who potential funders might be. Write to them with something interesting about your organization and an inquiry if you would be eligible to apply. Inquire as to whether the foundation person's work will bring him/her near your area and if so would he/she like to come over for a visit. Be persistent.

ETHICS AND PHILANTHROPY

The Institute for Global Ethics has conducted a survey on foundation attitudes with respect to ethics and values in philanthropy. Copies are available from the Institute at (207) 236-6658 or their web site is: www.globalethics.org

We are searching for the best practices in fund raising, what you hope would be your legacy to your organization from the work you do as development officers.

Let us hear your ideas and experiences.

Fax (510) 645-1892

Q: I would be interested in what projects other foundations are pursuing that are out of the ordinary or unique.

A: The Wausau Area Community Foundation has initiated an all new way of giving scholarships. They hold the money until graduation and then use the money designated for the student to cancel educational loans. Contact Jean Tehan (715) 845-9555.

Note: Maybe this can be a regular feature of *Dialogue*.

Useful Resource

"Nonprofit Consultants: How to Choose Them, How to Use Them."

Center For Nonprofit Management

315 W. 9th Street #1100

Los Angeles, CA 90015

\$10.00

This 20-page book is a concise guide to management assistance.

It was funded by the Bank of America Foundation.

Q: How can we fit into a foundation's area of interest?

A: Try to think generically. Rather than thinking of your program as "serving kids after school", look for foundations under youth, girls, recreation, child care, etc. In a short letter of intent, show the foundation how you relate to its interest area and ask if you could apply.

Past copies of *Dialogue*, Number 1 (February 1996) to 14 are available as a unit for \$5 to cover the cost of copying and mailing. For a complete set send \$5 to:

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We'll Try E-Mail

If you would like to get *Dialogue* by e-mail, please send us your e-mail address. Otherwise, we'll send it via regular mail.

Our E-mail address is pvf@lmi.net

Comments on Dialogue

"Always interesting, informative, and filled with helpful ideas. The content is useful for large or small non-profits."

"I find the advice excellent and useful."

"*Dialogue* is a great tool for all levels of development professionals, I truly appreciate the subtle manner in which it is written."

"*Dialogue* is right on."

"*Dialogue* is easy to read and filled with straight forward advice."

"Your gems of wisdom are great."

"I like your no nonsense style."

Fax your questions or comments for *Dialogue* to: (510) 645-1892
