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Nonprofit Communications Report

MONTHLY COMMUNICATIONS IDEAS FOR NONPROFITS

Inside

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Position Descriptions And 'The New Normal'

Clear expectations are at the heart of any job description, whether you are hiring someone to lead a one-off project or to become a full-time member of your staff. However, not all blurbs are created equal, as some nonprofit managers have learned the hard way while onboarding new team members.

"Writing a job description for someone who will be a remote worker is much different than writing for someone you will see every day in the office," says Max Muller, principal for Max Muller & Associates, LLC (Overland Park, KS). "An employee who works from home needs to possess a number of different abilities and skills in order to be successful." Not everyone is an expert at self-managing, and that's okay. But for that reason, the person compiling the job description must be careful with his or her selection of words.

"Think about 'the KASO's' — knowledge, abilities, skills and other characteristics someone would need to complete the required tasks — and make a list of relevant keywords to use in the description," Muller suggests. For example, the candidate will likely need to have experience using or a willingness to learn how to use video conferencing software and other work-from-home tools.

A description for a remote position might ask someone to:

- Know Zoom, Webex and similar video conferencing software.
- Be comfortable using Slack, Google Hangouts, Chanty, Microsoft Teams, RocketChat and similar communications apps.
- Have experience managing projects on a platform like Asana or Monday.

They should have:

- Strong verbal and written communication skills.
- Excellent time management skills.
- The ability to self-manage.
- Access to reliable, high-speed internet.
- Access to software such as Microsoft Office, Adobe Suite and/or whatever systems your office uses.

"Before writing any job descriptions or postings, search existing job boards that hire specifically for remote workers such as Flex Jobs, Remote.com, Remotive, Working Nomads and We Work Remotely," Muller suggests. "This will provide a starting point to help you hire the person best suited for this type of work." Another starting point is to review how the job in question is described on the Bureau of Labor Statistics O*Net OnLine website (www.onetonline.org).

Source: Max Muller, Principal, Max Muller & Associates, LLC, Overland Park, KS. Phone (816) 536-5173. Email: max@maxmullerassociates.com. Website: https://www.maxmullerassociates.com

Business Alliances Can Be Mutually Beneficial

How many relationships exist currently between your nonprofit organization and businesses? Can you identify them?

By identifying all existing relationships between your organization and various businesses, you can examine ways to build on them and further develop mutually beneficial relationships. And by evaluating them as a group, you can better prioritize where the greatest potential exists.

Begin by listing an inventory of all current relationships with businesses. Next to each business, list the relationship that currently exists. Once you do that, you can start to consider expanding potential strategic alliances among key staff, board members and your top supporters from the business community. ◆

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WILEY

IDEAS YOU CAN ADAPT

When Your Message Is Wellness, Stay the Course

By Megan Venzin

The Oxford Dictionary recognized "blursday" as one of its defining words of 2020. The term refers to the phenomenon the world felt during the pandemic as days began to meld into one another without distinction. This sensation was a by-product of many factors including a widely adopted work-from-home culture, a switch to virtual schooling and feelings of boredom that accompanied shelter-in-place orders. The emergence of blursday (while a clever play on words) had a dramatic impact on the American routine.

"During this pandemic we realized that we had to help people maintain their health regimen and inspire them to treat every Monday as a fresh start," says Cherry Dumaual, PR and partnerships director for The Monday Campaigns, a nonprofit initiative that promotes wellness-driven concepts such as Meatless Monday, Move It Monday and DeStress Monday. "Our research shows that if you begin a habit on a Monday, it helps you modify your behavior for the rest of the week."

The initiative lives by the motto, "Monday is the day all health breaks loose." And they're sticking to it. "It is more important than ever to remind people to take care of themselves, to remind people that in terms of public health, Monday is the day to reinforce positive behaviors," Dumaual explains.

To make their message resonate even louder in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, The Monday Campaigns decided to:

1. **Create accessible resources.** Think about your expertise and services and share products or promotions that are relevant to the current moment. For example, The Monday Campaigns created a package to highlight immune-boosting foods to cook on Meatless Monday and featured on their website yoga practices that could be completed in bed or sitting on a chair for DeStress Monday.
2. **Build partnerships.** "We're working with the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation so they can inspire people of all ages and abilities to use the outdoor spaces during Move It Monday while observing social distancing," Dumaual explains. "One of our goals is to get like-minded organizations to use our concepts so they can encourage broader audiences to consider the importance of health."
3. **Solidify their role as a team player.** "Other nonprofits can use our materials and customize them with their own logos to bring our message to their own teams," Dumaual says. "We can help promote their efforts on social media or collaborate via webinars."

Not every organization will have a mission that's already so closely aligned to the pandemic, but there are steps they can take to make their messages resonate. Dumaual offers, "Keep them simple. Keep them practical. And be cognizant that these are hard times. You can't minimize what's going on, but it's important to encourage hope." ◆

Source: Cherry Dumaual, PR and Partnerships Director, The Monday Campaigns. Email: cdumaual@mondaycampaigns.org. Website: www.mondaycampaigns.org

PRESENTATION SKILLS

Know How Body Language Impacts Your Presentation

Intent. It's what people care about. When listening to a presentation, audience members are unconsciously asking themselves, "Is this speaker sincere? Does he or she truly want to be here?" The answers to these questions are found in the presenter's body language.

Nick Morgan, president of Public Words, Inc. (Boston, MA), says, "Body language is where we get the intent. In many ways, it's more important than the specific wording. If body language is at odds with what you're saying, then we believe the body language and body language always trumps the content. When body language supports what we're saying, then we can be an effective communicator."

When it comes to body language, Morgan has some specific dos and don'ts for presenters:

1. **Concentrate on having a warm, strong connection with the audience**. Instead of worrying about yourself, focus on your message and the audience.
2. **Avoid "happy feet."** Prior to speaking, most people get a boost of adrenaline. This extra energy can result in excitement — or nerves. When filled with extra energy, some people have a tendency to wander around the stage, but pacing all over can easily annoy an audience.
3. **Maintain affect**. With the adrenaline spike, your mind will likely begin to race, and, in turn, you may lose facial expressions. When appropriate, consciously remember to smile, nod, raise your eyebrows and so on.
4. **Be aware of your voice**. "When people get nervous, their vocal cords constrict, and their voices tend to go higher," Morgan says. "We humans are very sensitive to shifts in other people's voices, even when we have never heard their voice before. We can hear tension in voices."
5. **Avoid clasping your hands**. Because most are self-conscious when speaking in front of a group, we often find ourselves portraying self-protective body language. While it may feel good to us, the audience views this as closed off and/or lacking confidence.

Of course, Morgan says rehearsing and practicing are the best ways to ensure you follow these recommendations and your body language matches your intent. ◆

Source: Nick Morgan, PhD, President, Public Words, Inc., Boston, MA. Phone (617) 930-0499. Email: nick@publicwords.com. Website: www.publicwords.com

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

How to Communicate When Morale Is Low

***Q** What approaches have you successfully taken to boost internal morale during down times?*

"The biggest thing we've done to maintain and boost internal morale is continuing our daily trending topics meetings, during which we discuss the latest news from the integrated marketing world and how it might affect what we do for ourselves and our clients, on Zoom. There's obviously a practical purpose for it, but discussing and debating what we think about this or that ad, the latest change to Instagram, etc., and actually seeing each other's faces, is a great way to start the day — just as it was when we were in the office.

"We've also implemented regular Zoom coffee chats and continued celebrating each staff member's work anniversary and birthday through Zoom parties — themed get-togethers that include sharing digital cards and memories, telling stories, etc. Lastly, we've also quickly adopted Slack, where we not only communicate through specific client channels but also share funny content or thoughts under channels such as #tcapets and #random.

"Taking stock of the last year, it's safe to say that doing all we can to maintain regular communication far beyond our email inboxes has proven a huge success in boosting each other's morale and maintaining our biggest asset: existing as and working as a truly integrated team."

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"Our team is generally cheery, but 2020 threw so much at us — the loss of family and friends from the COVID-19 virus, overt acts of racism and the disappointment knowing we couldn't see our beloved students at our teaching farm until, well, until the virus was no longer a risk. We had to protect the team's morale. One of the ways I did this was to protect salaries as long as possible to mitigate fear. We also leaned into joy — each week at our staff meeting I have everyone report on a low and high part of the week. The lows remind all of us that we are human and also help us to process those lows, while the highs get to be shared and celebrated as a team. These things remind each person on the team they are valued and important and that they're not expected to be perfect when the world is topsy-turvy." ◆

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MESSAGING ESSENTIALS

Understand the Link Between 'Key' and 'Persuasive' Messages

Every organization has a story to tell. Seasoned nonprofit professionals can relay hard facts and anecdotes that exemplify the work behind their cause, but turning a nonprofit's tale into a call to action requires something more. It starts with understanding the difference between key and persuasive messages.

"Key messages help your staff and board members tell your organization's story," says Lila Tublin, senior copywriter for Big Duck, a communications agency that helps nonprofits develop strong brands, campaigns and teams during periods of significant growth and change. "Persuasive messages help you reach specific audiences and inspire them to take specific action, such as donating or signing up."

Here she shares insight into how key and persuasive messages complement one another and how to make the most of each:

What is the purpose and content of key messages?

"Key messages tell the overarching story. They are used internally and contain high-level points about a nonprofit's work, wrapped up in a narrative that's easy to understand. They should be used as the basis for writing and speaking in most external contexts. Key messages also build internal clarity, helping staff see their work in context of a larger whole. When asked, 'What does your nonprofit do?' you can be sure that everyone who uses the key messages will answer with (roughly) the same story."

How can well-organized key messages benefit a nonprofit?

"Having the important parts of your nonprofit's story in one place helps maintain consistency and cohesion across every communications touchpoint. With key messages, nonprofits save time and energy when creating organizational materials (e.g., avoiding the daunting blank page), on-boarding new hires and unifying staff and board. Plus, audiences gain a clearer picture of what the organization does and why."

How do persuasive messaging and key messaging work in tandem?

"Persuasive messages answer the question, 'Why should I support you?' and often complement and build on key messages. A persuasive message is a single, internal resource with language crafted to inspire specific audiences to do a specific thing. Unlike key messages, which should be made available to all staff and used in all contexts, persuasive messages are typically used by just one or two departments that have specific audiences and a clear goal. They can also be tied to a campaign (e.g., a capital campaign or recruitment campaign)."

How can departments work together to build stronger persuasive messages for use among staff?

"Strategic audience segmentation and research inform the language and structure of persuasive messages. Creating audience personas factor into the process as well. When departmental staff have persuasive messages and audience personas to work with, they should be able to make a more strategic and compelling case in response to questions like, 'Why should I support you?' or 'Why should I participate?' no matter who's asking."

For help identifying key and persuasive messages for your organization, see www.bigduck.com. ◆

Source: Lila Tublin, Copywriter, Big Duck, Brooklyn, NY. Email: hello@bigduck.com. Website: www.bigduck.com

NEWS STORY POSSIBILITIES

Seven Tips For Pitching Radio

Each media format has its pros and cons, and one major advantage radio has over other forms of traditional media is it's everywhere.

"With access to radio outlets from our vehicles, smart home devices and smartphones, listeners can consume their favorite program content from essentially anywhere," explains Zach Seidenberg, account director at Strauss Media Strategies, Inc. (Washington, DC). "Radio can be a very effective outreach tool for nonprofits looking to reach a targeted local, statewide or even national audience."

But to do so successfully, you must perfect your pitch. Seidenberg shares seven effective strategies for sending your pitch:

1. Include a compelling subject line. If it's poorly worded or confusing, your email will likely be deleted. To avoid this, ask yourself, "Would it make you want to open it and read it?"
2. Know the outlet. Do your homework. Learn what you can about the reporter or host, as well as the show itself.
3. Know when to pitch. Timing is everything. Unless there is breaking news, do not pitch your story just before a program or newscast is scheduled to begin.
4. Be timely. Does covering this story now make sense?
5. Follow up. When you've pitched an evergreen story, begin with an email. Then contact the reporter or host by phone.
6. Keep your pitch short and simple. When possible, stick to one page or less. Just be sure to address the who, what, when, where and why.
7. Don't give up. "If one show or producer at a station turns you down, dig a little deeper," Seidenberg says. "There may be another program that is a better fit for your story. If you have a personal contact or connection at a station, try that person first. They may be able to shop your story around to colleagues." ◆

Source: Zach Seidenberg, Account Director, Strauss Media Strategies, Inc., Washington, DC. Phone (202) 638-0200. Email: zseidenberg@straussmedia.com. Website: www.straussmedia.com

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Do Your Homework Before Accepting Speaking Engagements

By Yvette Boysen

Before you say "yes" to your next request to speak at an event, make sure you collect plenty of information. For the past four years, the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce (Denver, CO) has used a comprehensive speaking request form that asks basic questions like contact name and number, date and time, as well as questions about media presence, speaker role, audience count and audience demographics.

"Although the nature of speaking engagements is obviously different right now with the pandemic, the form enables us to best prepare for each speaking opportunity," explains Jennifer Kostka Beck, communications and marketing director.

For the chamber, location, timing and audience are the most pertinent questions. While you may know the location of the requesting agency, it's never safe to assume the event or meeting will be held at that same location. When it comes to timing, there are a lot of details a speaker needs to know — everything from arrival time to the event's start time to how long the speaker is expected to talk. By asking about demographics (occupation, age range, interests, etc.), speakers can tailor their speech to the audience, thereby ensuring what Kostka Beck calls a "more impactful and relevant speech."

As you are working on your organization's request form, remember there is no need to reinvent the wheel. There are several forms available online, so do your research and use the questions most helpful to you and your organization.

"Each form will be different for everyone based on how the speaker prepares, their personality and what the organization's internal teams need," Kostka Beck says. "Don't hesitate to have questions that may not apply to all events or speaking engagements. It is easy for people to skip questions on the form if they are not applicable, but it can be harder to keep gathering information all along the way." ◆

Source: Jennifer Kostka Beck, Communications and Marketing Director, Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, Denver, CO. Phone (303) 263-4561. Email: jennifer.kostkabeck@denverchamber.org. Website: https://denverchamber.org

ENHANCING YOUR DIGITAL PRESENCE

To Improve SEO, Just Remember to E-A-T

Are "Site Admin" or "Staff Member" the top bloggers of your organization? If the answer is "yes," that's a problem. Posting from a generic author account may save a moment or two as you publish, but this practice can wreak havoc on your website's SEO.

"Google wants to know the author behind each post," says Justin Seibert, president of Direct Online Marketing, a firm that helps clients drive quality traffic to their websites and transform visits into meaningful actions. "Make sure you always include an author box that explains the credentials of the writer. Doing so will help you build up the credibility of your site. It's good for your organization, and it's good for the author too."

Seibert, whose agency is one of Google's Top 200 Partners in the world, says one of the easiest ways for associations and other nonprofit organizations to turn content into money to follow the E-A-T concept:

E – Expertise
A – Authority
T – Trustworthiness

"Treat the box like a mini résumé for the author and include information like designations, degrees, papers published and conferences where they've presented," Seibert suggests. "Doing so provides an explanation of their expertise, establishes them as an authority and proves they are a trustworthy source." Many blogging tool templates offer the option to include author boxes. For templates that do not, simply copy and paste a detailed line or two at the end of the article with a link back to the author's bio or staff member's web page.

"By focusing on E-A-T, Google is aiming to emulate the user experience," Seibert explains. "If something is good for the user — in this case useful information from credible sources — then it's good for SEO as well." However, Seibert cautions against expecting immediate results from implementing the use of author boxes. "Your traffic won't triple just because you posted two blog posts from renowned doctors, but it will build up over time. It will depend on how often you're posting and how big the authors are, and all standard SEO best practices."

In addition to using author boxes, Seibert recommends nonprofits follow other basics to improve SEO and reinforce themselves as reliable resources. "Make sure your contact information and address appear on every page, and confirm that the copy on your blog posts and website are keyword optimized," he offers. ◆

Source: Justin Seibert, President, Direct Online Marketing, Pittsburgh, PA. Phone (800) 979-3177. Email: justin@directom.com. Website: https://www.directom.com/

LEARN TO EMBRACE CHANGE

Take a Lesson From the Butterfly

Instinct drives a caterpillar to weave its cocoon, but the creature has no understanding of what lies ahead. Those days or weeks inside the chrysalis are critical — this is a period of growth and transformation. And finally, when the little bug pops its head back into the sun, breaking through its shell with help from no one else, it is no longer the grounded larva that crawled on dirt and leaves but instead a majestic, winged butterfly.

In a year like 2020, we may feel a bit like that transitioning caterpillar and find ourselves unsure of what life will look like in a post-pandemic world. And that's okay. However, this quiet season is also an invitation to build healthy habits, as well as new perspective and useful skills.

"We have the opportunity to better ourselves, and we've been given a lot of free time to do it," says Peter Shankman, global keynote speaker and author of the best-selling book *Faster Than Normal*. "Companies that focus on their marketing, promotion and PR during a recession could come back much stronger when the economy recovers."

During times of change, Shankman has drawn inspiration from the story of the butterfly. Now, he suggests nonprofit communications professionals embrace it too. Here he shares a few ways to use this unexpected downtime to your advantage:

1. **Build your brand.** Have you been considering a new logo? a new website? something else? "We've been given the gift of time to work on growing our business — use it," Shankman says.
2. **Clean up your lists.** "Nonprofits live and die on their database, and now is the perfect time to start cleaning those out," Shankman offers. "You can generate much more revenue when you have a current database, and, not to be morbid, but it's possible your lists may have shrunk over the past several months."
3. **Hone in on messaging.** News alerts and concerning headlines are pulling everyone in a thousand different directions. Nonprofits can combat the noise by creating content that's highly relevant to their audience. "Speak directly to the needs they have right now," Shankman advises.
4. **Enrich your skillset.** Take a course. Begin to learn a new language. Explore certification or continuing education options. Ask yourself: "What skills can I develop today that will make me a better contributor to my organization?"
5. **Take care of yourself.** "We're going to get through this somehow, and it's okay to be upset about the situation," Shankman explains. "Everyone's mental state has been affected. If nothing else, take care of yourself physically. Exercise, cook and remember to eat a vegetable every once in a while." ◆

Source: Peter Shankman, Global Keynote Speaker, New York, NY. Email: Peter@shankman.com. Website: www.shankman.com

STAGING VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Offer Zoom Backgrounds That Support Your Mission

An easy way to raise awareness and bolster support during this pandemic is to create backgrounds for your constituents to use during their Zoom meetings.

"We first launched Zoom backgrounds back in March 2020 at the start of the pandemic," says Dana Williams, director of marketing and communications for Feeding San Diego (San Diego, CA). "When most companies went virtual, we decided to take the opportunity to create colorful Zoom backgrounds that would help raise awareness for the hunger crisis in our community that is being made worse by the pandemic."

The hunger-relief and food rescue organization currently has 12 bright and colorful backgrounds, most of which feature pictures of nutritious foods like green apples, lemons, broccoli and red cherries. There also are three backgrounds with several small versions of Feeding San Diego's logo. Although the backgrounds are always changing, each has the nonprofit's logo prominently displayed. During the holidays, the organization also offered two holiday backgrounds with a special "Give Hope, Share Joy" image in the corner.

Available under the Get Involved drop-down menu, anyone interested in using one of these backgrounds can simply save the image of their choice and then upload it to Zoom.

"A lot of people have told us that they love our backgrounds and are using them for their Zoom calls," Williams says. "They also garnered the attention of our parent organization, Feeding America, which was inspired to create some fun Zoom backgrounds of its own."

Source: Dana Williams, Director of Marketing and Communications, Feeding San Diego, San Diego, CA. Phone (858) 768-7429. Email: dwilliams@feedingsandiego.org. Website: www.feedingsandiego.org ◆

PLANNING PROCEDURES

The Anatomy Of a Strategic Communication Plan

By Megan Venzin

Game-changing marketing campaigns rarely materialize out of thin air. They are the result of effective communication plans backed by research, action-oriented goals and a team of key players who bring knowledge and perspective from different parts of the organization.

"A strategic communication plan codifies and prioritizes all of our marketing ideas into a single overarching document which serves as a roadmap for our unit," says Dave Larsen, communication coordinator for University of Dayton's College of Arts and Sciences (Dayton, OH). "The purpose is to provide a set of goals, strategies and measurements to increase awareness of the college and to improve relationships with internal and external stakeholders." Larsen's academic unit is the first at the institution to implement such a plan.

Though no two organizations will share the same set of goals, it's safe to assume their strategic plans will exhibit a similar structure. The College of Arts and Sciences' plan is a comprehensive, 38-page document, which undergoes an annual review to accommodate shifting objectives and audiences. Larsen shares the anatomy of a strategic communications plan at a glance:

- Foundational documents (mission statement, vision statement, etc.).
- Situational analysis (SWOT).
- Primary and secondary audiences.
- Communication goals.
- Audience matrix (connects communication goals to key target audiences).
- Policies and guidelines (stylebook, disclaimers, etc.).
- Channels for execution.
- Evaluation metrics (Google analytics, social media analytics, phase of completion, etc.).
- Action plans (including tactics, priority level, deadlines and metrics for measuring success).

"The situational analysis is a big part of my plan, and it really drives the communication action plans at the end of the report that guide our communication strategy for the next academic year," Larsen explains. "Each year we conduct a SWOT analysis which helps us identify our unit's communication strengths (what we did right), weaknesses (the obstacles we must overcome), opportunities (resources or situations in our environment from which we can benefit) and threats (dangers in the marketplace or current social or political climates that could have an impact)."

This collaborative step includes input from the dean,

Target Audience

Communication Goal

Communication Goal	Current Students	Prospective Students	Parents	Faculty	Staff	Alumni	Donors	Advisory Council
Advance the Liberal Arts and Sciences	•	•	•			•	•	•
Encourage Outstanding Scholarship, Artistic Production and Performance	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Strengthen Experiential and Community-Engaged Learning	•	•	•			•	•	•
Realize Inclusive Excellence	•	•	•	•	•		•	•
Expand Global Learning	•	•	•	•			•	•
Promote Stewardship of Resources and Space				•	•	•	•	•

Image credit: Dave Larsen, University of Dayton

associate deans, and leaders from the university's marketing and communications team. "This allows us to see how the plan is advancing the college's goals, as well as those of the wider university," Larsen adds. And that should be the intention of any strategic communications plan — to further the mission and vision of its organization while using the most relevant marketing materials, channels and media outlets available. ◆

Source: Dave Larsen, Communication Coordinator, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Dayton, Dayton, OH. Phone (937) 229-2086. Email: dlarsen1@udayton.edu. Website: www.udayton.edu

NETWORKING SKILLS

Lasting Connections Start With Knowing How to Work the Room

Networking events can provide invaluable benefits. You can meet the potential clients, donors, members or volunteers needed to fulfill your organization's mission. But just showing up isn't enough.

Networking expert Lucy Rosen, author of the book *Fast Track Networking: Turning Conversations into Contacts* and chief solutions officer for Smart Marketing Communications (Bluffton, SC), says years of networking, and watching others network, has given her valuable insight on how to approach these events. She says the one tactic that's worked 99 percent of the time is acting like you're the host of the event:

- **Show up early to get the best spot**. Rosen recommends showing up at least 15 minutes early to see where the positions of power are, typically by the door or bar if it's an evening event. She says if you set yourself up at the door, those entering automatically see you as the host or hostess. "I act as if it's my job to be sure people who attended get their needs met."
- **Start the conversation and ask questions**. Introduce yourself to each guest and ask questions like their name, how they spend their day, the best part of their job and to whom you can introduce them. Rosen says the answers will give you a starting point for a new relationship.
- **Listen to their answers and offer to help**. If the person you're speaking with is in need of a service, use your networking skills to find someone you can refer them to, even if it's not that night.
- **Don't get stuck**. You want to try to speak with everyone, so spend only 8 to 10 minutes making a new connection. There are times when you might get trapped by someone who won't let you go. "My trick is I wait for someone I know to walk by, and I stop them and introduce them to the person I was speaking to and gracefully exit the conversation."

Rosen says acting like the host works even if the event is virtual. She suggests putting together your own networking group. "Invite the people you used to network with prior to the pandemic to join you for a great hour or hour and a half (not more than) to network and exchange ideas, information and resources." ◆

Sources: Lucy Rosen, Chief Solutions Officer, Smart Marketing Communications, Bluffton, SC. Phone (888) 587-4593. Email: ellen@smartmarketingcommunications.com. Website: https://www.smartmarketingcommunications.com/

Put Your Best Foot Forward

Networking virtually is not quite the same as in person. It can be difficult to make those connections, but it's not impossible, says Lucy Rosen, chief solutions officer for Smart Marketing Communications (Bluffton, SC). Rosen says it's about presenting yourself in a good light and focusing your turn to speak on the other guests.

"The first tip is you have to 'look' like you are at a networking event, so getting dressed is important. Lighting is key, and if you don't have a ring light and you are planning on spending any time at all on Zoom or in networking sessions online, spend the $40 on Amazon and get one.

"When it's your turn to speak, it's the same as if you were at an event only a little quicker, so talking about what you can do for others is a lot more effective than you talking about yourself or your business. People will actually listen to you if you talk about how you can help them or what you bring to the table."

ANNUAL COMMUNICATIONS

Bring New Life to That Stale Annual Report

Let's be honest. Many annual reports are so boring they receive little of the attention they deserve. To increase readership of your annual report, give it "life" by incorporating any of the following ideas:

- Include handwritten (appearing) notes and signatures of clients (or those served by your organization) printed on pages as a way of personally thanking donors.
- Include action photographs that depict the everyday life of your organization — your mission in action.
- Repeat your mission statement on various pages followed by an accomplishment that illustrates how you and your supporters are addressing the organization's mission.
- Include a chronological timeline of your organization's accomplishments during the past year, pointing out how each accomplishment impacts those you serve.
- Scatter Q&A trivia questions throughout the publication — interesting tibits about your programs or services or organizational history of which the public may not be aware. ◆