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## In This Issue

- Organizational Development 3
- Introduction to Marketing Research 8
- You're On the Air! 12

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*Part One*

# Organizational Development:

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## The Seven Deadly Sins

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*by Andrea Ayvazian*

*Andrea Ayvazian is director of the Exchange Project, the technical assistance program of the Peace Development Fund (Amherst, Mass.). We reprint here her booklet on dealing with the organizational issues that arise as groups move from the "kitchen table/church basement" stage into their maturity. Part One covers the issues of "Founders' Disease," Lack of Long-Range Planning, Burnout, and Growth with No Plans. In Part Two, we will look at the problems of No Clear Lines of Accountability, Poor or Non-Existent Office Systems, and Horrendous Meetings.*

### **Introduction**

What is organizational development?

Organizational development means self-consciously dealing with issues concerning the structure and management of your organization. These issues affect groups whether or not we talk about or deal with them directly. For each organization, therefore, the time comes to look at and address them honestly, in a way that will cause the group to grow and strengthen.

Organizational development issues are internal. They are either helping you in or hindering you from meeting the goals that you have put before you.

Organizations, like people, go through life changes and life cycles. And, like people, organizations mature over time. We are different from the infants we were many years ago. We have grown and changed. Even so, some things about our characters and our personalities remain with us. The same is true for groups. They mature over

time, changing as they need to while keeping their basic character and "personality."

Many social change groups were formed in the late 1970s and the early 1980s. After five or six years of meeting around kitchen tables and in church basements, activists are ready to look at internal organizational issues—and they need to do so—because there are things preventing the good work from getting done. Moreover, groups that began in the late 70s or early 80s and are past the kitchen table/church basement stage are now in another, further, phase of maturing, and also need to take a good look at how their organizations are working.

In my travels to peace and justice groups around the country, I repeatedly hear about internal issues presenting obstacles that are keeping groups limited and less effective than they might be. What I present here are the seven most common obstacles I see which are keeping groups stuck in some of their program work and impeding positive organizational development. There's no order to these seven. The first is not the most common or the most serious and the seventh is not the least common or the least serious.

### **Problem No. 1: "Founders' Disease"**

**T**he first problem is something I call "Founders' Disease." Founders' Disease is when the original people in your group cling to the way things have always been. "That's not the way to do it," people say in response to new ideas. "Oh, yes, we tried that two years ago, but that doesn't work." "That plan's not a good one. We tossed that out

three years ago." These original people have made themselves indispensable and are absolutely attached to the way things have always been.

Ironically, the founders of that original core group frequently are saying at the same time, "We want new blood. We want new members. We need to broaden our base." They're saying all the "right things" about wanting new people in the group but giving mixed messages when new people do come. They say, "Come to our meetings. We have refreshments. We're planning programs. We want your input." Once new people get there, however, the founders disempower them. The founders talk mostly to each other. They make plans with an interchange and a dynamic that leaves out new people. They welcome new people but do not give them meaningful tasks to do. There is often an in-group jargon and a sense of who has been there a long time. New people often feel they don't know how to plug in.

For those of us working in social change, there's a sharp irony here. We talk about empowering the world, empowering our community, empowering congregations, Senators, and everyone else—but we disempower new people who come to our meetings. First we say, "We're glad you came," and then we unwittingly do things to discourage them from coming back.

As much as we do not want to convey a sense of elitism or exclusiveness, we are creating it. At meetings of groups I visit, it is perfectly clear to me who has been part of that group for more than two years and who has not. I know exactly who the new kids on the block are: they sit there and they nod and they get the worst jobs.

If the symptoms of Founders' Disease sound familiar to you, raise it as an issue in your group. Have a meeting with just the founders and say, "We may be saying we want new members, but we're not acting that way."

#### **How to Help**

One way to cure Founders' Disease is to institute a buddy system. A "veteran" becomes the buddy of a new person at a meeting, and is required to have contact with the new person before the next meeting. During this contact, she or he can ask the new person how they are doing with the group: "Did the meeting make sense? What went on for you? Did you understand how we were making decisions? Was the agenda clear? What thoughts did you have?" The veteran invites the new person back and makes sure he or she is coming to the next meeting. By teaming people up, you say, "We welcome you."

A second aid is to let new people know right at the meeting, "We have realized that we have problems with this. Sometimes we're exclusive in our language. If we're referring to something you don't know, stop us. If you're feeling like we're going over your head, put a halt to that discussion. We want you here, so we really welcome your help."

A third way to combat Founders' Disease is for you to

be clear about what your meetings are about. If a meeting is for business, let new people know that this is simply a business meeting where you are going to discuss the budget or programming strategy. If it is an educational forum, invite new people specifically to come. Be sure to review the agenda early on to make sure the meeting is what newcomers expected.

Fourth, empower new people by giving them meaningful tasks early on. I joined a community peace group in 1980 that had been together for about a year. When I first got there, I did not understand what was going on. They were talking about events that had happened a year before, what had worked and what had not worked, and the information all went past me. Not until I had been to about four meetings did someone notice I had not said much. At the end of that fourth meeting this person asked if I would appear on a call-in radio program in three weeks with another member of the group. She helped me prepare for it and, although I still felt quite green about the issues and did not say very much on the show, I was buoyed up by her confidence in me. After the show, having publicly represented the group, I felt very involved with it. I felt that I had done something important. Giving newcomers that kind of meaningful task early on is what groups need to do to keep new people.

Fifth, pay attention to the social dynamics of the group. Groups meet a lot of unnamed needs for people that are somewhat extraneous to their social-change work, but no less significant: feelings of belonging and importance, feelings that the work brings together a strong community of people. We do, in fact, become family to each other in a real way. People take care of each other's kids and worry about who's sick when. It's those social ties that bring people back to meetings. Of course, they care about the issues, and they want to be informed and involved, but the people-to-people connections bring people back time and time again.

People in the group who want to be more social than others can do so. One group I know has started having supper together before the meeting. You can come if you want, or opt not to. A block away from the regular meeting place is an inexpensive restaurant, and people know that there will probably be others from the meeting there starting at 6 o'clock. Sometimes it is only three people, but that works. They have dinner beforehand and then they wander over to the meeting together. (But be careful not to start the agenda over supper, thereby excluding those who do not come to the restaurant.)

Sixth, be open to new ideas and new ways of doing the work. Old-timers have to recognize that even if you did something three years ago, somebody new in the group may have a new turn on it or a new idea, or may want to head it up differently. It does not help to respond automatically with, "We did that." Treated in this manner, new people feel both they and their ideas are dismissed.

Another approach to a familiar idea is to explore it again, point out what may have been tried that did or did not work, and why. Evaluate the idea with the new person: "This is not a good community for Christmas balls—we *think*." But try to resist making absolute responses.

Another discouragement to new people is that those who have been part of the group for a while always seem to have more information. If a lot of group veterans will be giving reports—on finances or actions, for example—then ask a person who has been there only four or five times to co-facilitate. Make up the agenda with that person's help and then put her or him up front. This puts somebody else in charge. Long-time members have to raise their hands. (That will humble them.)

Also watch for jargon. There are two kinds of jargon: alphabet soup and "lefty language." Alphabet soup jargon is easier to avoid—watch for those initials and explain them (in a non-condescending way) *without* having to be asked. Being alert to "lefty language" takes more concentration. Even words like "empowerment" can alienate some people who may appreciate the idea a great deal, but are put off by that and other in-group words.

Finally, don't simply involve new people in your group; involve your group in them. Making them feel welcome goes beyond offering them the chance to participate in the work of the organization; it means finding out how they chose to come to your group, what their past experiences have been, and what they hope to accomplish by working with you. Listen to them! Give them a chance to talk. Let the "new blood" flow through your organization and give it new life.

### **Problem No. 2: Lack of Long-Range Planning**

People working in the social change movement seem to be very good at knowing what they are doing next month—often an event of some sort. When it comes to next year, however, they really do not have any idea what they will be doing. We seem to be able to envision a peaceful, just world (the very long view), and we are able to conceive next month's event. It's the in-between—the crafting each event as a step toward reaching our vision—that is often missing. Groups do event after event, it seems, but without a sense of building toward one theme or long-range goal. Nor do they seem to build on the last success or learn from the last failure. There is a real sense of each thing being done in isolation from the others. An event is done, then the organization regroups and sort of picks up from the fatigue and goes on.

Activists need to set realistic goals for the long haul, and likewise we need to have in mind what we can realistically accomplish in a specific amount of time. The challenge is to funnel ideas into goals and long-range plans.

We need to focus on doing one or two things well. Unfortunately, however, my experience is that as a movement, we are a mile wide and an inch deep—we are trying to do everything. Ask a peace group, for example, what they are up to and you might get an answer like this: "This year we're concentrating on sanctuary work for refugees, prison work, the political problems in Central America, nuclear disarmament, and the situation in South Africa." By doing a piece of everything, groups remain *reactive*. They are merely responding to whatever is out there. As a result, they end up doing a little of many things poorly.

We need to do less and do it better. Then, when people think of your group, they think of the work you are doing on one particular issue that is making a difference. We have a big agenda and a big task, and we cannot do every piece of it. There are other groups, there are other ways—to do a few things well and go in-depth on them, so people really are moved along on the issue you choose. Use a series of programs instead of one evening or one week to focus on a whole issue. Have some continuity in your programs.

Activists also need to spend time in retreat looking ahead one year, two, and even five. The challenge for local groups today is to do a better job of strategizing and long-range planning than the national offices are doing. You have to decide what the agenda is for your group and pursue it. If you have outstanding leadership on the local level, you are doing better than most groups—local, regional or national. One of the greatest weaknesses and one of the greatest strengths of the social change movement right now is that we do not have one major leader at the top. We haven't for years. In fact, it is up to *us* to become those leaders and to set our agendas. What does your group want to be remembered for? Think about what you want people to say about your group one year from now.

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**G**roups  
need to take a  
good look at how  
their organizations  
are working.

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Pretend that somebody will have a commemorative dinner to honor your group and they will say, "This is the group that in the last twelve months . . ."—you finish the sentence. If you can say three things that you did well, you are accomplishing something in your community.

### Problem No. 3: Burnout

People are tired. I am seeing a lot of weary faces in groups I visit now. We are overusing the same people and tiring people out. Activists are working too long and too hard. People paid for quarter-time are working half-time, those paid for half-time work are working full-time, and there are those who are paid for full-time work—God bless the few out there—who are putting in fifty and sixty hours a week. It shows in their work when they are carrying on fatigued, ill-tempered and at their limits.

As a movement, we cannot afford to have people drop out after four or five years and finally get the M.B.A. they think they should have had and get a job that pays them adequately. We cannot afford to lose good people. It is a net loss for all of us working for change. When a good organizer leaves Iowa City, there is a ripple effect all around the state. I know, because I tried to track one down last year whom no one could find. We are tiring people out by taxing the same people over and over *and* by pushing ourselves too much. We need to take time for ourselves and our families and our loved ones and dancing and singing and joyful, non-work-related activity. It matters. It pays off. What shines through in people's work is less often *what* they're talking about than *the way* they are talking about it.

Understanding our own limits in social change is a big challenge. My mentor, Frances Crowe, is in her sixties and has been doing peace work since her thirties. Frances can and will carry on, I am sure, to her dying day. She has touched and changed many, many lives. If Frances had tired and dropped out at forty, after ten years of doing this work, the whole peace movement in western Massachusetts—and I think nationwide—would have been harmed. The fact that she has stayed with it over time has been a profound example to many of us. We need to see ourselves doing this work for decades, which means taking care of ourselves and each other today.

We all know the signs of burnout. We know them and we ignore them. When you have not done your favorite hobby or sport or some favorite thing in your life for months, when you are starting to feel that you give the same kinds of answers because it is easier than to think creatively about your work; when there is the sense of disengagement or not caring; when you just sit through meetings—there in body but not there in mind—you are exhibiting signs of burnout.

When people burn out they leave the movement permanently and they leave with bitterness and some sense

of guilt. Taking care now so that we can do this work over time means giving ourselves and the people with whom we work permission and support to set realistic limits. And to do things in our lives that bring us joy and nurture us.

One path to burnout is to elevate our own sense of importance, dragging ourselves to dozens of meetings and events and volunteering for too much. We do not need to be the people who take on every task. Sit in a meeting for a while with your hands crossed. If you are quiet long enough, someone in the back might say, "I'll do that." And then maybe you could help them. Or be on the committee. Maybe. But not head it up.

When we think about issues around burnout, we must remember that we are the professionals in social change work today. We all have "PhDs" in organizing on political issues by now. If we don't, who does? We need to start treating ourselves that way. Start knowing that there are limits. Let's all recognize and value the fact that we are the professional speakers and organizers and trainers in the movement and we need to keep going for a lifetime.

### Problem No. 4: Growth With No Plans

Once worked with a group whose only goal for the year was to double their membership in six months. There was no sense of how they would involve new people, or what would be useful for them to do. Bigger is not better if you do not know what you are mobilizing people for. There seems to be a mad drive for national groups to have chapters, affiliates and regional offices—with no vision of what they are going to do, how much autonomy each will have, and who answers to whom. There is a real sense of growth in the movement today, with no road map of where we are going.

A group I visited in South Carolina started with a vision that they would be a local peace group—have resources, do activities in their city. As they grew, they decided to spawn chapters in their community that they would oversee and nurture. As a member of the group explained to me, "Like a spider plant that has a mother plant and then shoots." That was the extent of their plan—to spawn chapters. And they did, getting subgroups started in churches around the community. When I went there to consult and asked what they were doing, half the group said, "We're a local peace center, doing local actions," and the other half said, "We're just a resource center, nurturing all our satellite groups." It was clear they had no idea how to spend their time, their resources, their energy. That day, each half looked at the other and said, "That's what you think we're doing?"

If you are going to grow in numbers or affiliates or chapters, know why: know what purpose the growth will serve, how autonomous each group will be, and what you will do with them in the future. ■

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*Part One*

# An Introduction to Marketing Research

**M**arketing" has become a big buzzword in fundraising, joining "computerizing," "accessing," and "networking." As with many overused words, however, the meaning is sometimes lost. Marketing—the art of targeting your product to your audience—is indeed an important activity, one that is becoming increasingly critical for small grassroots groups. This article will do two things: set the context for the importance of marketing research, and then introduce three marketing research concepts which you can put to use almost immediately. This is the first in a series of articles on marketing; all the ideas presented here will be explored in much greater depth in subsequent issues.

## *The Context for Marketing Research*

In 1984, the last year for which figures are available, giving by the private sector to 501(c)(3) organizations exceeded \$74 billion. For the past five years, giving to non-profits by the private sector (foundations, corporations, and individuals) has risen between 8 and 11% each year. As good as this record is, however, private sector giving would need to be going up 40% per year in order to keep pace with the current cutbacks in government funding. As more non-profits lose government funds, raising money becomes more difficult for all non-profits. In a 1985 survey by the Fund Raising Institute, more than 42% of fundraising professionals said that increased competition was the "greatest threat" to the success of their fundraising programs.

Most grassroots groups have responded to the increasing difficulty of raising money by a combination of cutting expenses and working harder to bring in more income. In the second category, they have sent more mail appeals, done more phone-a-thons, expanded into new fundraising strategies such as canvassing and products for sale, sought new donor groups such as churches and givers to major gifts programs, and required their Boards and volunteers

to be increasingly involved in fundraising. For many groups, these new and very appropriate fundraising strategies have worked. But with the current competition for the private sector dollar, grassroots groups will need to go further.

They must take the next step—researching their donors and prospects, and thoroughly understanding what motivates them to give. Fundraising for social change in 1986 has to be seen in light of the fact that lower income people are being increasingly squeezed financially, while they are the very group on whom non-profits depend most.

The following statistics will show what we mean:

"Only 8% of Americans born between 1946 and 1965 earn over \$30,000 and qualify as yuppies. But 74% of working baby boomers make \$20,000 or less and 40% earn less than \$10,000."

—from the *Lempert Report*, a marketing newsletter, 1985

"Among the most important facts contained in the August Census [Bureau] report: the gap between the rich and poor in the United States is now greater than at any time since the Census Bureau began collecting this information in 1947. Last year the wealthiest two-fifths (40%) of all American families received more than two-thirds of all national income (67.1%—the highest percentage ever recorded). The poorest two-fifths of U.S. families received 15.7% of all income, the lowest percentage ever recorded.

"It is particularly revealing to look at the incomes of typical rich and poor families. The median income for the poorest 40% of U.S. households is now \$470 lower than in 1980. But the median income for the wealthiest 40% of all families is \$1,800 higher than 1980—and for the top 10% of all families, median income is up \$5,000 since 1980. These figures are based on pre-tax income. If the effects of changes in the tax code are factored in, the disparate treatment of



rich and poor since 1980 becomes even greater.”

—from *Christianity and Crisis*, October 28, 1985

“Black adult unemployment stands at 15.6% today when in 1978 it was 12.3%. Black family median income is 56% of white family income. Thirty-two percent of black families lived in poverty in 1980. Today, 42% of black families live in poverty.”

—Rep. William Gray (D-PA), quoted in *S.E. Chronicle*, January 19, 1986.

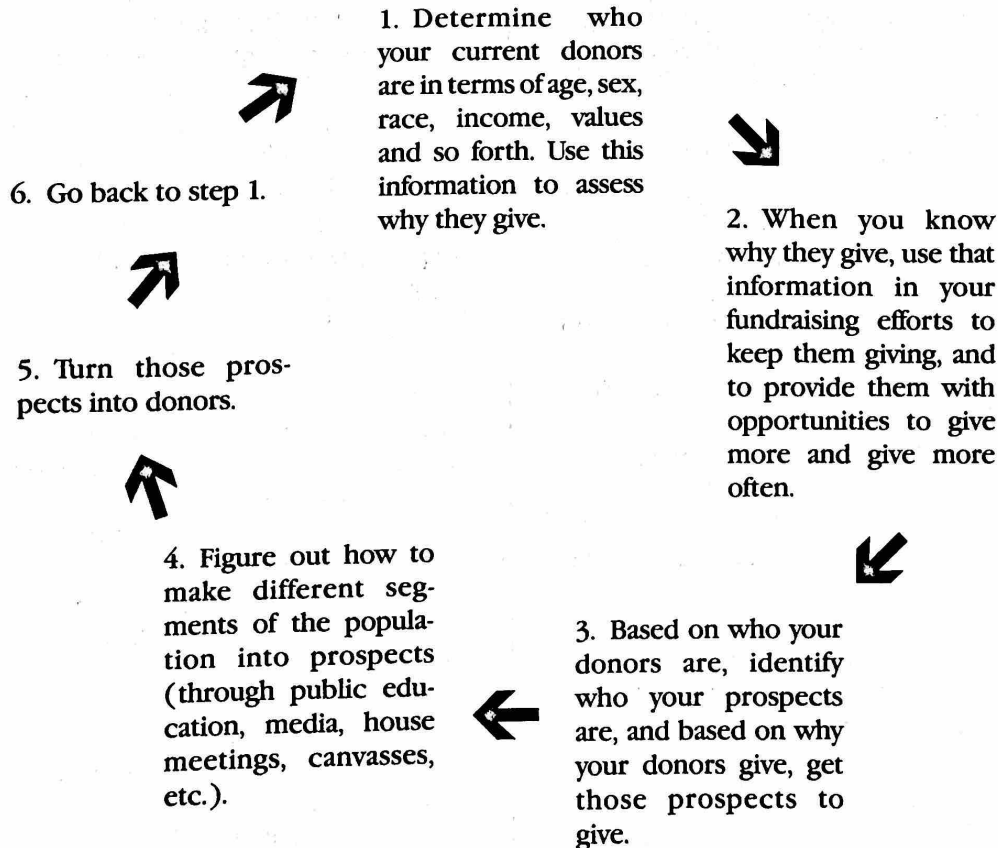
According to the United Way, 85% of all the money given by individuals comes from families with incomes under \$50,000.

According to the Independent Sector Report on Giving (1984), those families in the lowest income range (under \$5,000) give away a proportionately large sum to non-profits—an average of \$238.

The need for funds for social change and social justice work is thus intensifying at the very time that those most likely to provide those donations are losing ground financially.

### Marketing Research: The next step in effective fundraising

Marketing research, like so many ideas in fundraising, has been overmystified. It can actually be understood very simply as a cycle, which works as follows:



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The old business adage, "Work smarter, not harder," can also apply to fundraising. "Raise money smarter, not harder." Instead of continuing to do more of everything, do everything better.

### **Three Marketing Research Concepts**

There are three basic elements to understand in beginning marketing research.

**One: Giving money to non-profits is not an end in itself.** Fundraising strategies are used to raise money so that a group can do certain kinds of work in order to fulfill its mission and purpose. Knowing how to raise money, and the need for money, are "derived demands". Just as people generally drive in order to get somewhere, thus making travelling a derived demand and not an end in itself, so raising and giving money are only means to accomplish work which accomplishes the end: the fulfillment of the mission.

When a small group needs money fast, these distinctions may seem academic. But in fact, these distinctions are imperative to understand. People will support your group because of what you stand for and the quality of work you do—not because you need money or you can offer a tax deduction. Though this may seem obvious, far too many appeal letters essentially say, "Give to us: we need money and you get a tax deduction."

Your first step in marketing research is to understand why your current donors give. To find this out, you must conduct a multi-level survey to discover demographic and "psychographic" data of your donors. (Psychographic data provides you with information about your respondents' values and priorities.) (A full discussion of this survey will appear in the next issue of the *Journal*.)

The survey will ask current donors such psychographic questions as:

- What do you like best about our group?
- What other groups do you give to? Do you give more money to other groups than to ours?
- How would you describe the work of our group to a friend who hadn't heard of us?
- If you had to cut back gradually on your charitable giving, when would our group be left out?
- When you want reliable information on current events, where do you get it?

In addition, you would want to know demographic information including age, sex, race, education, income, occupation, and so forth.

The questionnaires are confidential, and the majority are done anonymously, by mail. Some information must be gathered by phone interviews as well, and some will be gathered in more in-depth interviews of key donors to your group. Donors to be interviewed in more depth will include, of course, your largest donors, but also frequent donors, donors who have given small amounts

for many years, donors who are also volunteers, and donors who have never been to your offices or have no other contact with you.

Because giving is not an end in itself, you must understand how your donors see you, and why you are an organization they support.

**Two: People are influenced at many levels at once.** In addition to understanding why people support your organization, you must understand what else they support and what influences their decisions. This is particularly important for recruiting new donors.

A survey of people who do not give to your organization finds that out. These people would include opinion makers in your community (the mayor, clergy, local business-people, foundation officials, etc.) as well as people who belong to groups similar to yours but not to your group. When you find out why people don't belong to your group, you will know how to plan your next fundraising efforts. For example, if people don't belong because they haven't heard of you, you will launch a media campaign, or a series of house meetings, or some kind of public education. If people don't belong because they think your work duplicates that of other groups addressing similar issues, you will need to clarify in your brochures, letters and oral presentations how you are different. If people don't belong because they think you are ineffective, or scandal-ridden or incompetent, you will have to change your image.

Any effort to recruit new donors will need to take into account the prospective donors' values, idols (such as media stars), politics, other priorities, and current issues. A simple example of the impact of current events on an organization's fundraising is that of a group doing research on genital herpes. They had been getting regular donations as well as research grants, had a good image in the press, and were making progress. When AIDS became well known as a critical sexually transmitted disease, however, this group began to lose money and donors, and failed to get new research contracts. The need for their work hadn't diminished, but in the eyes of their donor community, the need for AIDS research was now more important.

**Three: People tend to avoid information that is counter to their beliefs or past experiences.** According to Lovelock and Weinberg's excellent book, *Marketing for Public and Non-Profit Managers*, information is perceived accurately when it:

- conforms to past experiences
  - conforms to present beliefs
  - is not too complex
  - is believable
  - relates to current needs
  - does not produce excessive fears or anxieties
- Groups engaged in radical social justice work often fail to take into account people's inability to comprehend what

they are doing. They are often working on difficult issues involving litigation, advocacy, etc., where the problems are complicated and the solutions complex. By the time they have explained the whole problem and the solutions as they see them, they've lost their audience. They need to think in terms of simplifying both the description of the problem and the nature of the solution. Groups should not mistakenly interpret failure to understand as disagreement. Making sure that you understand what your donors, your prospects, and the public at large think you do is imperative to successful fundraising.

The current newsworthiness of anti-apartheid work is an interesting case in point. For years, anti-apartheid groups have tried to get people and corporations to divest their economic support of South African business through public education efforts about the situation of apartheid. During the last 18 months, well-placed tactics have suddenly brought media attention to the issue, and the anti-apartheid movement has become popular. In so doing, apartheid has been simplified as a concept. Most newspapers now describe it as "the system where four million whites deny the vote to 22 million blacks." Of course, apartheid is much more than the lack of a right to vote. Nevertheless, the inequality highlighted in this simplified description touches the public because it conforms to their understanding of the past and to their current values, it is not too complex, and it is believable. Consequently, it motivates them to support anti-apartheid work.

Anti-nuclear groups, on the other hand, often present information that produces excessive fears or anxieties. People turning away from the horror of the possibility of a nuclear holocaust also turn away from giving.

So, you must analyze your current information—your newsletter, brochures, fundraising appeals, booklets, speaker's bureau, foundation proposals, and so on—in light of these criteria. Ask yourself: Are you scaring away donors? Are you confusing them? Can they believe what you are saying? Can they see how their lives would be improved or their vision of the world furthered by your work?

This kind of marketing research does not need to be expensive, nor does it need to be carried out by a professional. A staff person, or a volunteer or Board committee can put together the surveys and analyze the results. Be prepared: the results of your research may challenge how you see your organization, and may imply sweeping changes. Groups doing marketing research must be willing to face the fact that their message may not have gotten across, or may be largely misunderstood, or that their cause is not perceived to be a priority. For a group that really wants to be financially stable and carry out its mission effectively, this information can only be useful.

KIM KLEIN ■

(In the next issue: *Designing Surveys and Segmenting Your Market.*)

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# You're On the Air!

by Joan Klussman

Joan Klussman is a subscriber to the *Journal*, and resides in East Holden, Maine.

In the past, non-profit organizations could count on a good bit of radio air-time because of the Federal Communication Commission's requirement that broadcasters provide a certain level of programming "in the public interest." Since deregulation legislation in 1983, however, radio stations are no longer required to give a percentage of the broadcast day to public affairs programming in order to keep their licenses. Those which continue the practice do so because they recognize a responsibility to their community's welfare, as well as a need to participate in activities that are important to the listening audience.

While deregulation has not sounded the death knell for public service announcements, as some had feared, it has intensified competition for air-time and allowed radio stations to be more selective in choosing what to broadcast.

Public Service Announcements (PSAs) are essentially the same as any other "commercial"—advertisements through which you are attempting to "sell" something, in this case your group as a worthy cause. The PSA may simply be a written release to be read by the station announcer, or it may be a pre-

recorded tape—from a simple program notice to an entire mini-drama, complete with sound effects and musical accompaniment.

Professional publicists use recognized marketing techniques in the creation of such radio messages. The small community service organization lacking the services of a publicist can still produce effective radio spots. Here's how.

## Length

Radio time is tightly controlled. PSA spots vary in length, but are usually 10, 30, or 60 seconds. A 10-second spot will contain about 25 words; a 30-second spot about 60 to 80 words; and a 60-second PSA will accommodate no more than 150 words. Any music or sound effects will subtract from the total word count. Accurate timing is important. If a station specifies a 60-second spot, do *not* turn in one that is longer.

## Content

The basic elements of the announcements are the *lead-in*, the *message*, and the *compulsion*. The *lead-in* aims to get immediate attention from the listener. It may use music, sound effects, or a provocative question. It may refer to a current happening or the needs of the season.

The *message* should have a significant, single purpose. Avoid generalities and

vague statements such as "Support this cause". Be specific. Publicize a particular event or upcoming program. Tell how much money you need, or what volunteers will be expected to do.

The *compulsion* targets action. It instructs the public: "call this number"; "send your check to this address"; "bring your donation to this place".

In developing PSAs, remember that you are writing to be heard, not read. Avoid rambling sentences. Use short, vivid, action words and phrases—"Take a bite out of crime."

Some other considerations:

- Be careful about using too many words with p's and s's. These letters make unpleasant popping and hissing sounds on the airwaves.
- Use contractions. Radio is conversationally familiar.
- Steer clear of buzz words and jargon.
- Be positive. Alcoholics Anonymous doesn't say "Don't drink"; they say "If you have a drinking problem then..."
- Consider humor. Some of the most successful marketing campaigns have been based on humor. Witness Burger King's current search for "Herb."

## Formats

It's a good idea to "browse" through the offerings of the different radio

stations in your area to grasp the type of material you should provide. Listen at different times of the day, and note what kinds of PSA's are aired, how long they run, and when they are aired—before or after certain shows, at station breaks, etc. Also notice if they are read by the station announcer or are prerecorded. As you become familiar with the station's format, it will be easier to tailor your release to their specific audience.

Possible treatments of your PSA include: straight announcements; dramatizations; dialogue; comedy; "punch" announcements (hard-sell, emphatic); soft-sell (easygoing, face-to-face atmosphere); jingles; use of a musical background; or use of special sound effects. Almost any sound effect you might need is probably available on record in the radio station's library.

Written PSA's should include a word count and approximate reading time. Your script should clearly indicate to station personnel what you want communicated and how. The script should be typewritten, double-spaced, with underlining to show emphasis on particular words or phrases.

Use normal punctuation, including periods or dashes, to indicate pauses. Avoid hyphenating words at the end of a line. Do not use abbreviations. Except for telephone numbers, write out numbers the way you want them pronounced. (1204 East Main Street is

Twelve-oh-four East Main Street.) Phone numbers should be repeated twice, and words or names that may be difficult should be spelled out phonetically. Write out the directions for any sound effects or music using capital letters.

Prerecorded spots should provide length of play information to facilitate scheduling by the radio station. When making your own tapes, use easy-to-listen-to voices. Some voices are irritating, especially when heard repeating the same message. Nasal or twangy voices, exaggerated speech patterns, monotones, or "cutesie" deliveries may

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## Radio can reach a vast audience at little cost.

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offend listeners, and actually damage your cause.

### Distribution

Make contact at the station at least a month prior to your desired broadcast date. Work through the business office even if your best friend is the local DJ, because this *is* business. Depending on the size and organization of the station, the person to contact is called the

program director, the operations manager, or the traffic manager.

If you mail materials to the station, enclose a return postcard on which the station can indicate frequency of use. (Stations often mention also how much this time would cost if you had paid for it.) Provide postage for the return of your material, or plan for personal pick-up.

Be fair: broadcasters I interviewed said they are often irritated to find an organization has purchased advertising in the print media, and then requested the same type of advertising as a "freebie" on the air. If you buy space in a newspaper to promote an event, be fair to the radio station and pay for the same information on the air.

### Conclusion

Radio gives you a recurring avenue into the community, and can reach a vast audience at little cost. Making information available to populations as large as listening audiences through newsletters or brochures would require a staggering outlay for printing and postage costs.

Effective use of radio can enhance the organization's image and develop support for the group while costing relatively little. The time and energy spent in creating PSA's of local interest can give your group the edge in the fierce competition for air-time. ■

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# READERS WRITE

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Dear Kim and Lisa:

Your December 1985 article, "How to Use the Media," was the most interesting collection of garbage and

excellence—maybe next time it will be excellence without the garbage.

I am a fundraiser for public radio. Naturally, I have my own biases. So do your authors, Rochelle Lefkowitz and Bob Schaeffer. To say, "Newspapers, radio and TV exist to make money. That means they run more ads than stories," is to ignore a whole facet that exists in broadcasting—in San Francisco, in New York, in Massachusetts—that of *public* radio and television. WXPB Public Radio, like many public radio stations, does *not* exist to make money (why do you think I subscribe?), but

rather to inform its listeners.

"Listen to the all-news radio station in your town." Where do you think we live? Isn't this *Grassroots Fundraising*? Watch your urban biases.

To say that "The goal of the media is to fill the news holes between paid ads with interesting material with as little effort as possible" is *FALSE* for commercial or public media outlets. Media people are concerned about the issues and you know it. Aren't you? If you or your authors insist on the cynical

Continued on next page

## Readers Write

continued from page 13

point of view here, perhaps you can say that, generally speaking, media people like to cover controversial subjects (because controversy is often news in and of itself). That dig about little or no effort hurts. And you're wrong.

Grassroots fundraising is more than

rallies—we don't all "fight" with large corporations—and 200 press releases do *not* cross rural media outlets every day. Short, declarative sentences are great for press releases but get very wearing for magazine articles.

I like your magazine, and I liked this article without the trash. The authors had excellent ideas on the master list,

press releases, editorial pages/time, etc.

Thank you for your time and for allowing me to express my point of view.

Sincerely,

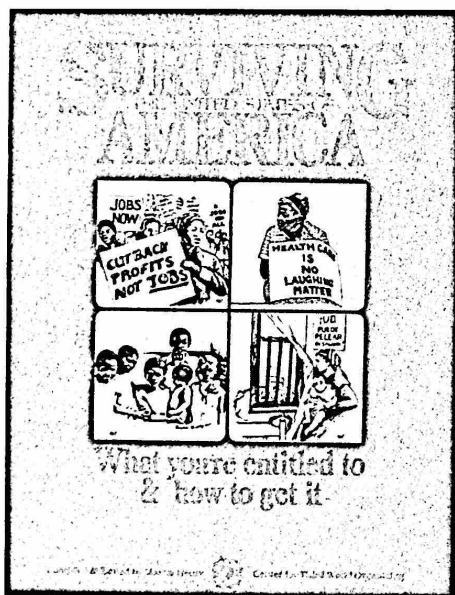
Mary Kay Foltz Sherer

Vice-President,

WXPR Public Radio

Rhineland, Wisconsin

## Book Review



*Surviving America: What You're Entitled To, and How to Get It.*

by Marcia Henry, Center for Third World Organizing; \$12.95; 190 pp.

Order from: CTWO; 3861 Martin Luther King Jr. Way; Oakland, CA 94609. Add 10% postage and handling. CA residents add 6% sales tax.

This book should by all rights be one of this season's blockbusters. It has everything—mystery, adventure, suspense, human interest—and something for everyone.

Can an older couple receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) also get an emergency grant from General Assistance if their furnace breaks and they have no money to repair it?

How do you go about applying for Veterans' Disability Benefits?

How long do you have to file a complaint about employment discrimination?

What law protects your right to remove false or misleading information from your (or your children's) school records and how does this work?

Do you have a right to remain silent if you are detained or arrested by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS or La Migra)?

As you begin to read this fascinating tale of what people like you and me are entitled to, you will hardly believe how powerful this story of people and programs is. And the calm, logical, clear voice of editor/writer Marcia Henry will speak to you at odd moments as you recall parts of this book just when you need them the most.

As you may have already guessed, this isn't really fiction. It is a book of truth about our country. It is powerful because it is filled with information.

And it is dramatic because it reveals in a down-to-earth way the long-hidden mysteries of programs and entitlements, rights, benefits and procedures. When it comes to the everyday problems and perils faced by the vast majority of us as we struggle to survive in this our native land, there has long been a conspiracy not to tell us what we might be able to get through all these programs. Even though we say we are a nation of law—and all these programs are set up under the law of the land—

ignorance of these laws is relied on to keep as many people as possible from using these programs as part of their safety net or even to enhance the quality of their struggle for justice and pursuit of happiness.

Why is this the first book of its kind?

Why aren't the rights and benefits of these important programs taught in school?

You can go from Head Start through a Ph.D. and never get any of the basic information about how the U.S.A. works that is contained in this deceptively thin volume.

Read this book and you will find rights you didn't know about. And it is not only for "them"—for those (poor, colored, other) folks. There is something here for everyone.

Do you need money, food, or health care? Do you want to know your civil/human rights in school, workplace and community? And do you want, besides the facts, some ideas about how to actually go about getting these benefits and protections you are entitled to? Then this is the book for you.

Just reading it through and then putting it on your coffee table, orange crate, bookshelf, or under your mattress will probably give you some peace of mind, status, and luck.

But in the famous paraphrase by Jim Foreman of SNCC of the famous Frederick Douglass quote that appears in the front of this book, those who won't fight for their rights ain't got no rights. And if this book helps make for more and more united people's struggles it will help us begin to dream about the next step—beyond survival. But that is a book for another season. ■

Reviewed by Tim Sampson

## Back Issues

**Volume 1: Number 2 (April 1982):** The Lisbon Area Community Organization (case study of a small business endeavor); Fundraising Events: Part One: Planning; Use of a Fiscal Agent.

**Volume 1: Number 4 (August 1982):** The August Doldrums (How to use slow time productively); Twenty Words That Sell; Fundraising Events (Part Three): Budgeting.

**Volume 1: Number 5 (October 1982):** Fundraising in Rural Areas; Advisory Boards: No Miracle Solution; Why Most Benefit Concerts Fail; In the Spirit: Fundraising During the Holidays.

**Volume 2: Number 1 (February 1983):** So You Want Your Board to Raise Money; Four Months on the Road for Peace (a trainer's experiences around the country teaching peace groups to raise money); Record Keeping (Part Two): Research.

**Volume 2: Number 2 (April 1983):** Getting Over the Fear of Asking (a series of group exercises to help people get over their fear of asking for money); Evaluating Your Board of Directors; Ideas for Expanding Your Mailing List.

**Volume 2: Number 4 (August 1983):** Grammar for Grantseekers (Putting together a readable proposal); Federated Fundraising (a case study of a federated fund); Asking Current Donors for Extra Gifts.

**Volume 2: Number 5 (October 1983):** Prospect Identification; The Cost of People (calculating staff costs in fundraising events); Tying Charity's Hands; Tax Strategies for Charitable Giving.

**Volume 2: Number 6 (December 1983):** Introduction to Phonathons; 29 Ways for Board Members to Raise \$500; Planning for

Fundraisers (Planning strategies for fundraising staff).

**Volume 3: Number 1 (February 1984):** Cash Management for Smaller Non-Profit Organizations; Using Phonathons for Renewal; Free Advice for a Price (how to hire and use a consultant).

**Volume 3: Number 2 (April 1984):** Personalizing Fundraising Appeals; Computers for Non-Profits (Part One); Setting Up a Canvass (Part One).

**Volume 3: Number 3 (June 1984):** Computers for Non-Profits (Part Two); Setting Up a Canvass (Part Two); Fundraising Luncheons (Part One).

**Volume 3: Number 6 (December 1984):** Developing a Membership Base; How to Break Through the Bureaucracy (getting access to government money); But Will They Open the Envelope? (designing carrier envelopes for direct mail appeals).

**Volume 4: Number 2 (April 1985):** The Lord Loveth a Cheerful Giver (Designing and Maintaining a Pledge Program); The Membership Brochure (Content, Writing and Graphics for effective brochures).

**Volume 4, Number 3 (June 1985):** Membership Record Keeping; If We Only Had an Endowment (What to consider in starting an endowment fund); A Community United (case study of a farming community's fundraising efforts to help a family in need).

**Volume 4: Number 4 (August 1985):** Through Rain, Sleet and Snow (the personal experiences of a canvasser); Major Donor Prospecting; Hiring a Development Director; Rapidly Growing Women's Funds; Long Beach "Friendraiser" (case study of a special event designed for publicity).

**Volume 4: Number 5 (October 1985):** Planning and Running a Phonathon; When Money Isn't the Problem; Philanthropy 1984 Summary.

**Volume 4: Number 6 (December 1985):** How to Use the Media; Grassroots Fundraising: Back to Basics.

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