

2008 Winter Webinars

What Students Are Saying



Raising Your Eye-Q

A short course in graphic design to ensure your organization looks as good as your cause.

“I have done hundreds of web seminars and this is one of the better ones I’ve attended. Using actual materials from attending organizations made it very interesting.”

Mary Malia
The Residential Care Consortium



Storytelling iSchool

Learn how to tell stories for advocacy, development, recruitment and more.

“I thought the class was great! I have learned a lot and will be preaching the value of storytelling for the rest of my life.”

Jim Gangl
St. Louis County Public Health & Human Services



The Four Connecting Points

Plan campaigns large or small that will engage your audience.

“The Four Connecting Points gave us a practical framework that we are using in our efforts to engage people on the complex topic of climate change solutions.”

Sarah Wade
Environmental Advocate



Current Class Schedule

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Storytelling iSchool (4 hrs.) | March 18, 25, April 1 and 8 | 9-10a Pacific |
| The Four Connecting Points (2 hrs.) | March 11 and 12 | 11a-12n Pacific |
| Raising Your Eye-Q (2 hrs.) | April 22 and 29 | 11a-12n Pacific |

Visit www.agoodmanonline.com/workshop to learn more and register online.



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GOOD IDEAS FOR GOOD CAUSES

444 north larchmont blvd, suite 102
los angeles, ca 90004

Free-range thinking™ is a monthly newsletter for public interest groups, foundations, and progressive businesses that want to reach more people more effectively. For a free subscription, send your request to: andy@agoodmanonline.com or call 323.464.3956. Back issues are available on the web at www.agoodmanonline.com.

Free-range thinking™ is written by Andy Goodman and edited by Lori Matsumoto.

She Makes Messages Matter

Drawing on thirty-five years of experience in public interest communications, Rebecca Leet has produced a book that can make your message matter more.

“I didn’t want to write this book,” Rebecca Leet admitted during our telephone interview. For more than three decades, Leet had been developing messages for distinguished organizations such as the Red Cross, Ford Foundation and World Bank, and her communications consulting business was doing just fine. Along the way, she had received the Silver Anvil Award from the Public Relations Society of America, and until recently she had served as a judge on the George Foster Peabody Award committee.

set other projects aside, surrounded herself with a career’s worth of case studies, and began writing *Message Matters: Succeeding at the Crossroads of Mission and Market*, which was published in 2007.



While communications or development directors can certainly benefit from this book, they are not its intended audience, Leet told me. “The framework in the book is a strategic decision-making framework,” she said. “It’s not just for making messages, and

it requires decisions from the top.” Readers can decide for themselves: more of my conversation with Rebecca Leet and an excerpt from her valuable new book are inside.

► **Goodman:** When public interest communicators develop new messages, what are some of their more common mistakes?

Leet: They don't focus on action. They talk about *education* and *awareness*. And that's probably because when the message goal is soft, everyone can define it *their way*. Groups also tend to focus on *needs* instead of *desires*. An organization I worked with that dealt with child abuse kept telling me, "People need to be aware that there's a new way to approach prevention of child abuse." They had 6 new factors, five strategies, etc. But people in the field were swamped with work and didn't want to hear about a new strategy. They *desired* help reducing caseloads. When we started explaining that the new strategy did just that, then they wanted to hear more.

Is there a message or campaign out there now that you think is seriously flawed?

I see universities promoting their MBA programs by focusing more on themselves than the students. Georgetown University ran an ad that said, "Leadership with a global perspective." In that same newspaper, George Washington University's ad asked readers, "How are you going to change the world?" GW's message is oriented to the student, to me.

When I worked with the American Lung Association, I developed the slogan, "When you can't breathe, nothing else matters." They replaced it a couple of years ago with, "Improving life, one breath at a time." That's the perfect example of a mistake. The first slogan is about the audience. The second is about the organization.

Who tends to get the message right?

Health groups are getting it right. They tend to be in touch with what really motivates people. The "Take it Outside" campaign was right on the mark in the way it *didn't* attack parents who smoke. (See *free-range thinking*, August 2001.)

Environmental groups are starting to look inward to see how they should be changing their message. They're seeking ways to effectively engage the faith community. There's a "creation-care" argument that can be made, the faith community gets it, and that's a new message I've been seeing.



Rebecca Leet

Less is More

Excerpted from *Message Matters: Succeeding at the Crossroads of Mission and Market*

Fewer words, fewer audiences, and fewer major points result in the strategic message being more easily remembered both by the individuals who deliver it and the individuals who hear it. More often than not, there is an inverse relationship between the impact of a message and its number of words, message points, and audiences: there is higher impact with fewer factors.

There are various estimates of how long people pay attention to what they hear and see before they decide whether to engage more fully or think about something else. They spend less time making a decision about a web page than a newsletter. They tune out faster if they have never heard of the speaker than if the speaker is a celebrity they like. But all these estimates share one consistency: the time spans are all expressed in seconds.

How would you rank the messages of the Presidential candidates?

Obama's message is very clear. It's about hope and it's about change. "Yes we can" is very strong. He's saying it's not just about him; *you* (the voters) have to be involved in this change, too. I'm not sure people even realize that yet. He is developing an attitude among voters about what they're going to do moving forward, and that's very powerful.

Clinton's message is experience and solutions. When you go to her rallies, you get a laundry list of what she's going to do, but it comes without an overarching vision. Her message is: elect me and that's the last thing you're going to need to do for the next four to eight years because I'll do all the rest.

I don't think McCain has a clear message yet. He's got his foot caught in the jaws of the religious right, and that's not

where he naturally is. He's got to attract independents. If he has any message right now, it's "God, help me."

Huckabee seems like a person you could have a cup of coffee with even if you don't agree with a damn thing he says. The desire to connect is so strong right now, it's helping Huckabee, even when people disagree with him on the issues.

Besides your book, of course, do you have other recommendations for people who want to sharpen their messages?

Katya Andresen's *Robin Hood Marketing* is very good. *The Communications Toolkit* (by Hershey/Cause) is excellent, as is Gary Stern's *Marketing Workbook for Nonprofit Organizations*.

(*Message Matters* is available on Amazon.com, directly from the publisher, Fieldstone Alliance, or through a link at www.leetassociates.com.) ■