

This is your last issue of *free-range thinking*.

In hard copy, that is. Starting in January, we will begin distributing this newsletter exclusively via email.

So, if you want to continue receiving a complimentary issue each month, send a request to lori@agoodmanonline.com and be sure to include your preferred email address. Please respond by December 31st.

And as we sign off for another year, we thank you for being a loyal reader and wish you a happy and healthy 2009!

Andy



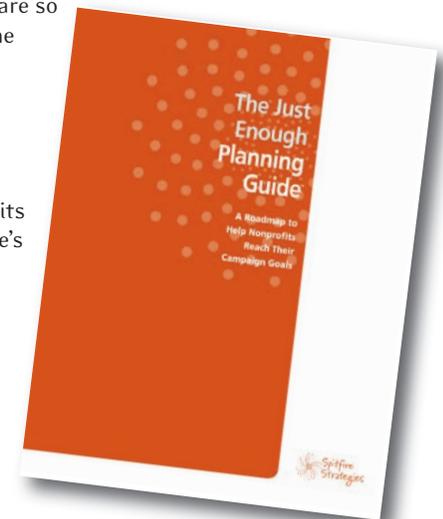
MapQuest for Campaigners

You know where you want to go, but do you always know the best way to get there? *The Just Enough Planning Guide* can help.

Periodically in the life of a nonprofit, you have to stop talking and start campaigning. Too many people are getting too fat. Too much carbon dioxide is going into the atmosphere from too many sources. Too little is being spent on education and too many kids are getting lost. So you're finally ready to leap into action, but while your goal is crystal clear, you may not be entirely sure how to get there.

If you seek help in planning your campaign, you may start channeling Goldilocks. Many of the guides available are so dense and detailed they are overwhelming. "This is too hard!" you scream. Other guides are so simplistic their entire contents could fit on the back of a napkin. "This is too soft!" you cry. So where's the guide that's just right?

Earlier this year, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation put this question to Spitfire Strategies, a firm devoted to helping nonprofits work more effectively. Kristen Grimm, Spitfire's president, looked around and concluded that the just-right version was still to be written. So, with the help of some top minds in the public interest sector, she wrote it, and inside this month we offer a first glimpse of her work, aptly named *The Just Enough Planning Guide*.



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.

► **Goodman: Who should read this guide?**

Grimm: Executive Directors and program directors of nonprofits who are responsible for waging campaigns, and foundation officers who may want to support these campaigns. This guide creates the architecture for a winning campaign, not just the communications aspect – so while communications directors could certainly benefit from reading it, they're not the primary audience.

How is this guide different from the Smart Chart, which you introduced five years ago?

This is like the sequel to the Smart Chart (www.smartchart.org). Let's say you want to plan a campaign to convince people to buy environmentally friendly products. The Smart Chart can help you figure out

what you want to say. *The Just Enough Planning Guide* can help you figure out exactly what to do – not just what to say – to create a win on your issue.

What campaigns did you study in preparing to write this guide?

We looked at campaigns in North America across a range of issues – the environment, children's health, personal finance. We studied the "Yes on 49" campaign in Oregon which was all about smart growth, "Farmed and Dangerous," which was about the future of agriculture in Canada, and several others.

The guide identifies nine stages in a typical campaign. (See chart.) Have you found one of these stages to be more troublesome for nonprofits than the others?

I think many nonprofits have a particularly

difficult time with stage three: "Chart Your Course." They know what they want, but when you ask them to map out the steps for how they're going to get there, they're not so sure. Too often, they're like a coach arriving at the big game without a playbook. In general, though, I think the biggest challenge for nonprofits is taking the time to simply stop, sit down, make decisions, write them down and commit to them.

I see many nonprofits stumble at stage 4, "Anticipate Conditions." Is that your experience, too?

Absolutely – look what just happened with Proposition 8 (a constitutional ban on gay marriage) that passed in California. I think there was a *huge* blind spot in the campaign to defeat Prop 8. The fact that African-Americans and Latinos voted in support of Prop 8 was a possible outcome that could have been anticipated, planned for, and possibly overcome. But that piece seems to have been missing from this particular playbook.

Several times in the guide you advise campaigners to check in with their "Hard Truth Squad". Who's on this squad and what is their function?

They can be people inside or outside your organization, but the key here is that they are people who don't have an agenda. They're just going to look at your plan with clear eyes, identify any broad assumptions

you've made and challenge you on them. And I'd recommend keeping this group pretty small: three to four good advisors should do it. Any more and you could get the too-many-cooks-in-the-kitchen syndrome.

The guide concludes with a fairly comprehensive appendix. What will readers find there?

The Appendix is designed to help readers with stage eight: "Operationalize Your Campaign." The resources here can help you plan a campaign all the way down to the finest details in main campaign categories like field, intellectual knowledge, government relations, communications and coalition building.

And if someone wants a free copy?

Send an email request to justenough@spitfirestrategies.com. You can also visit our website, www.spitfirestrategies.com/tools to download the guide or to work with it online. ■



Stage 7: Put a Public Face on Your Campaign

Let's take a look at efforts to reduce the number of catalogs sent through the mail and therefore reduce waste. A group started a campaign to get consumers to sign up to manage their own mailboxes. While the campaigners wanted to reduce the number of unwanted catalogs for environmental reasons, many of the target consumers were more concerned about choosing which catalogs to receive and reducing the amount of junk mail in their box than the environment. Names like EcoMailbox wouldn't get the group very far. The target audience liked to shop and wanted catalogs. The campaigners needed to convey that they weren't against all catalogs, just unwanted ones. They also needed a name that empowered consumers. Based on these criteria, they considered a number of names for the campaign. They decided on Catalog Choice. "Choice" was what consumers were looking for. The name caught on. More than 987,000 consumers have signed up on www.catalogchoice.org to manage their own mailboxes and reduce unwanted catalogs.

Excerpted from *The Just Enough Planning Guide*

