

The Path Forward

For New & Growing Non-Profit Organizations



December 2007

New Tax Rules for Nonprofits

Starting in 2008, all small nonprofit organizations who have budgets of \$25,000 or less must electronically file an IRS 990-N form. The form requests the organization's mailing address, its EIN number, and the name of the principal officer on the Board of Directors. You can go to www.irs.gov/charities/article/0,,id=169250,00.html for more specific information about the new filing rules. If your organization has been deemed to be a private foundation then you must file a different form, the IRS 990-PF. Contact your CPA for advice about this and any other tax or accounting issues.

My New Online Referral Travel Agency

Go to www.teamlesleystravel.com to book your own travel on my site. It works just like the ones you are used to with one very important difference. **You know me.** You don't have to book your own travel if you don't want to, though. If you need help finding the best rates on flights, hotels, car rentals, cruises, team travel, group rates, flowers, concert & theater tickets, give me a call and I'll find what you need. I have access to consolidators, agent-only fairs and specials, and missionary rates for qualifying organizations. I purchased this online travel agency because so many of my client organizations rely on travel to accomplish their mission. This is a value added service that I can pass on to you. In the next few months I'll be adding to my certifications so that I will be able to offer your organization the opportunity to own your own travel booking site, branded with your name and logo, so that you can earn commissions on the travel booked by your donors and constituents as a fund-raising endeavor. Let me know if you would be interested in learning the details about how to get a travel website for your organization.

Grantwriting for Classroom Teachers

This is a professional development workshop for classroom teachers designed to help them learn how to find and apply for small grants. Call or email for details.

Activating Boomers and Younger Donor/Participants

Whether you are recruiting volunteers, trying to reach out to the community, or attempting to persuade new donors to give to your organization for the first time, your message must be articulated in their language. These younger donors tend to ask, "What does this have to do with me?" Unless your answer is obvious and compelling, you will lose their attention. You may never attract their curiosity again. Boomers, according to the December Guidestar Newsletter, demand four things: "information, choice, voice, and respect." They don't want to read about what you are doing. They want to read about what they could be doing. "At the core, fundraising is simply offering donors an opportunity to act on their values." (Fundraising for Nonprofits Blog, 11/23/07) Take a look at your last newsletter. Does it provoke people to connect with you based on their values? Does the information you provided there succinctly describe what you can do, have done, will do and will let them do with you? Did you let the stories of the people you serve testify to your readers that they can trust you because what they see is what they get with you? Are your newsletters, brochures, websites, and fundraising events donor-centered or are they organization-centered? It makes a big difference. New donors have a lot of giving options. They are looking for organizations that provide positive, measurable, sustainable, transformational value to the people they serve. More importantly, they want you to tap more than just their money. They want you to reach out to them in relationship and invite them into the creative process. They expect your organization to be changed because of what they bring to it and they need to be recognized, appreciated, and personally thanked and rewarded for what they contribute even if it is only a little bit. Take time during this final month of 2007 to review your literature, website, and fundraising strategies. If your efforts are less effective than you would like, ask me to help you to redesign what you will disseminate in 2008.

Making it in the Marketplace—No place for Children

A successful business owner recently told me that a lot of nonprofits just don't understand the marketplace and that is why many of them are in such chronic financial trouble. It reminded me of when Jesus criticized people for being like children sitting in the marketplace and not responding correctly. *We played the flute for you but you did not dance....(Luke 7:31 NRSV)*. Basically he was stating that the marketplace has signals that grownups understand and follow or respond to. Unlike his admonition that one must become like little children in order to enter God's Kingdom, when in the marketplace, it is not wisdom to exhibit childlike qualities. Kids in the marketplace go after shiny baubles. They don't consider quality but they look for the lowest price. They think money is endlessly available. They tantrum if told no. They may try to steal just to get a piece of candy. They can be easily taken advantage of and they do not know how to comparison shop. Jesus also applauded certain adult marketplace behaviors. He commended shrewd networking, a calculating approach, a willingness to pay what something costs, and making deals to avoid being in debt. The Bible also advises that one not be overly open about ones business goals or feelings. It suggests that we should be willing to take risks to gain riches, to negotiate for the best deals, and to consider contractual agreements binding. It also expects employers to pay the people they hire extra generously, not to abuse employees or make them have to sacrifice to satisfy the boss, and give them regular and adequate time off and bonuses. While children are known to understand the Kingdom of God, they do not understand the marketplace. Success in both arenas requires wisdom and is available to grownups who can decide whether it is incumbent on them to behave in childlike or mature ways. For nonprofit organizations to be healthy, sustainable, growing, and effective, they need to function with wisdom and maturity in business matters. After all, Jesus concluded in the same passage, *wisdom is vindicated by all her children. (Luke 7:35 NRSV)*.



**MAY YOUR HOLIDAYS BE FILLED WITH GRACE,
PEACE, AND THE LOVE OF THE GOD WHO IS LOVE
INCARNATE & EMMANUEL**

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