

# The Path Forward

## For New & Growing Non-Profit Organizations



July 2008

### [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)

Surveys allow an organization to get quick feedback from a wide variety of people so that you can test fundraising strategies and materials, get a sense of what programs are needed or what products people use. It is the kind of research that saves time and money later. Survey Monkey has a free component where you can poll up to 100 people with up to 15 questions. There are also various levels at which you can subscribe with monthly fees for more options.

### [www.churchmarketingsucks.com](http://www.churchmarketingsucks.com)

Whether or not you are a faith based nonprofit this blog is always filled with ideas, free downloads, and links to information that you can use to promote and market your organization. Check it out!

### [www.grantmapper.com](http://www.grantmapper.com)

Would you like to learn the grant-seeking process? I am Your Grant Mapper at [grantmapper.com](http://grantmapper.com). In the role of instructor/expert I am teaching a series of telewebcasts beginning Tuesday, July 8, with an overview. You can sign up for free if you use the coupon code on the site even if you are not a teacher. The overview gives enough information for really motivated people to write and submit competitive proposals to receive grants. It is designed as the introduction leading to a longer workshop. This one is four sessions –all Tuesdays- designed to coach classroom teachers so that at the end they will have a proposal to receive a grant ready to submit to a funder. If you are a classroom teacher, a school administrator, or a pre-service teacher, you will learn how to get grant money for your school and class. I'm not talking about big grants like the federal ones whole districts receive. There are many small grants—\$100-5,000– which are designated for individual classroom teachers. If you are not a teacher you'll get step by step directions that you can apply to your own organization. The process involves planning, research, writing, and a specific protocol which will help anyone involved in a nonprofit organization who needs to learn how to get a grant.

**Want to know what I'm reading?**  
Go to <http://readforwork.blogspot.com>.  
Feel free to add your comments there too.

**Asking for Money.** One organization sent a special appeal for emergency funds that included the sentence, "Believe me, no one wants to ask for money." An experienced freelance fundraiser commented, "I just love asking people to give money." I encountered both statements the same day. Which is more likely to result in a fundraising effort that succeeds in meeting its goals? Some individuals are givers by nature– they look for opportunities to participate in the causes they feel strongly about by donating money, time, expertise, and in-kind items. Others have adopted giving as a discipline, value, or religious obligation. They are looking for ways to maximize the impact of their gifts. Others give when they believe in what you are doing but don't have the time or skills to do it themselves and still others give because their friends set the expectation and somehow dare them to match it. Every 501(c)3 tax exempt organization was awarded the status by the IRS because it promised to fulfill a mission that serves the public and it is expected that the public will support it (and benefit by the tax perk). Asking for someone's money is the way to alert the public that there is an opportunity for them to help you change the world today. The most important consideration for new, transitioning, and expanding nonprofit organizations is to grow the donor base so that you are in relationship with more and more individuals and funders who are not your personal friends and relatives but instead, are intrinsically motivated to give to your organization out of a shared passion for your mission and cause. This implies the existence of a long-term fundraising plan, good promotional materials, and trained volunteer or paid fund-raisers– usually your board members. This also builds your organization's capacity in a way that will ensure the interest of major donors and grant funder organizations. If you don't have a long-term strategic fund-raising plan in place, give me a call and we can meet to brainstorm together and come up with one.

**Nonprofit organizations have advantages.** Your donors get tax deductions for their contributions. Your organization is exempt from many kinds of state and federal taxes. You are eligible to receive grants from private foundations. The advantages are often the reason that an organization decided to get the IRS to award them 501(c)3 tax exempt status in the first place. This is especially true when an organization has been an informal group doing an important mission-driven service and found it needed more money to expand or take advantage of a great opportunity. Other nonprofit organizations were intentional about designing themselves and so selected the structure of the 501 (c)3 public foundation as the best way to achieve their mission. Whether you originally intended it or not, now that you are one, here are two important considerations that go with the status. While I hope this is a review for you, it is worth thinking about every so often.

- Even if the inspiration behind your organization was envisioned by your founder, once incorporated, this person can no longer be the one "driving the bus." The organization is governed by the board who has legal, fiscal, and ethical liabilities that can extend to each member's personal finances if something goes awry. It can be very difficult for a founder to relinquish control of the vision but it is important for everyone to recognize that an organization cannot be the extension or the embodiment of one individual. The organization, once incorporated, is its own entity legally and financially. Sometimes founders own too much of an organization's vision and confuse the concerns expressed by board members with issues of personal loyalty. An organization is like a nation. It is meant to last longer than the reign of any one king or president.
- Board members have three main roles: governing, fund-raising, and lending their areas of expertise to the organization. Board meetings must follow the agreements stated in the bylaws and there must be minutes kept. In fact, in the event that the IRS audits your organization, they will read the minutes to see that the financial decisions match the books. Board trainings are helpful to everyone so that the people responsible for the organization realize their roles and rights. Call me to set up your next board training or retreat.



© 2008 by Lesley Barker  
*She Writes!*

Email: [teamlesley@sbcglobal.net](mailto:teamlesley@sbcglobal.net)  
Phone: 314-422-5572  
[www.teamlesley.com](http://www.teamlesley.com)

*Serving Nonprofit Organizations with: Grantwriting, Annual Reports, Program Design, Training, Board Retreats, Brochures, Web Content, Newsletters, Fundraising, Endowment Campaign Literature, Research, Consultation, Capacity Building, Donor Relations, Event Planning, Seminars, Articles, Motivational Speaking, Press Releases*