

# Nonprofit News

## Enhance Your Nonprofit's Public Presentation

By Esther J. Hughes, Sisters U

At a time when nonprofits are numerous, one of the main ways that nonprofit leaders can better convey their mission to increase donor generosity and stand out from their 'competition' is to publicly present their organization in an outstanding way.

What many non-profit leaders miss in the midst of fulfilling their programs and charitable mission is the absolute necessity to connect with their audiences who are typically made of donors, potential donors and volunteers. Conveying a message is imperative to effectively communicating with audiences, but often nonprofit spokespeople lack the important skill of public speaking.

**Why is public speaking important to nonprofits?** Publicly delivering messages is a necessity for nonprofits due to the economic climate and increased competition for funding. Therefore, if nonprofit spokespeople are delivering an unorganized message with little or no passion, the important mission of the organization may be misunderstood or not deemed viable by potential donors. Non-profit leaders must invest in proper training for their staff to publicly present their mission by having organized messages, passionate deliveries, and approachable personalities. A nonprofit who wants to gain visibility and maintain credibility must create a platform that will convey the mission passionately, purposefully and persuasively.

**How can you improve your nonprofit's public presentation?** Evaluate the individuals who represent the organization based on their skills, commitment to the mission, and their personality. Because of tight budgets, some nonprofits have adopted the approach to 'take anyone' and put them in whatever role is available rather than reviewing whether the person is capa-

ble of efficiently fulfilling the duties of that position. When it comes to taking the mission of the organization before an audience, often times, the nonprofit may send someone who is not magnetic enough to persuade the audience that they should become involved with the organization. The organization's credibility is at stake and their mission dismissed if they are unable to create the necessary excitement.

Consider the **personalities** of individuals within your organization when looking for a public representative to 'preach' your mission. Choose someone who has a contagious and warm personality. This does not mean the organization should find the most outgoing or charming individual. What it does mean is that an organization's representative needs to be able to influence the audience by exhibiting genuine warmth and passion for the mission.

Some organizations have partnered with celebrities to instill excitement and backing for their mission. However, smaller nonprofits cannot go to the lengths of gaining celebrity endorsements and, thus, rely solely on those intimately involved behind the scenes. This is where offering training for those invested in your organization is imperative.

Dale Carnegie has trained countless business professionals to be better speakers for 100 years, and they have been highly effective in teaching even the most introverted people how to clearly, confidently and concisely deliver an effective and enthusiastic speech. Carnegie says, "We are evaluated and classified by these four contacts: what we do, how we look, what we say, and how we say it." So consider your organization's mission, consider how it looks—our society is outward

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focused which means a speaker's looks are as important as their ability to speak. That does not mean you find the best looking or best dressed person to represent the organization; however, it does mean professional appearance is just as appealing as a well-developed and delivered message.

**What's in a message?** Consider the message being delivered. Is it canned, or is it uplifting, informative and persuasive? Nonprofits should create effective messages that are similar to successful sales pitches because not only are spokespeople educating audiences about their mission, but they are usually looking for support for their organization which necessitates the need to similarly 'close deals.' The difference between business deals and nonprofit missions is often in the ability to inspire feeling or to pull on the heartstrings with a compelling message.

Evaluate the **expected outcome** for the organization. If the outcome of publicly speaking about the organization is to generate interest and gain visibility, then ask yourself if you want that to be just mediocre? Of course not; yet that is what many nonprofits do. They send an untrained speaker out into a public forum to share a message as important as the mission and expect a great result. Mediocre messages should not be acceptable for any credible organization.

**Concluding thoughts.** Centuries ago, Aristotle said, "*In making a speech one must study three points: first, the means of producing persuasion; second, the language; third the proper arrangement of the various parts of the speech.*" Times have changed, but the fundamentals of effective communication have not. When considering how to most influentially stir passion and support for your nonprofit, evaluate the importance of the platforms you are welcomed to and decipher how you will best persuade your audience to partner with your organization.

Most importantly review the individuals who are currently presenting your organization and decide if they are as effective as they could be. Public speaking training is an inexpensive necessity for nonprofits and should be considered one of the most important aspects of the organization's growth strategy.



Thanks to the generosity of MileStone Bank, registration fees for the Spring seminars are waived.

To Register:  
visit the  
Training and Events  
page of  
[www.catalystnonprofit.com](http://www.catalystnonprofit.com)

Seminar location:  
PA Center for  
Biotechnology  
3805 Old Easton Rd.  
Doylestown, PA

## 2012 Catalyst Center's Nonprofit Management Training series

*April 24th 8:30-12:00 pm* **Speak Up and Be Heard: Communicating Effectively**  
Esther Hughes, Sisters U

We all have areas of strengths and weaknesses; however, if we have no self-awareness and do not seek the proper training, we limit our ability to be effective messengers, which in turn can affect our (and our organization's) credibility. During this session we will explore ways you can write or speak your message more clearly.

*May 22nd 1:00-4:30* **Planning for Financial Sustainability**  
Cindy Bergvall, CPA Bee, Bergvall & Co./Catalyst Center for Nonprofit Management

The first step toward financial sustainability is an understanding of what your numbers are telling you. Understanding financial statements, the annual budget and the organization's 990 are just a few critical skills for both executives and board members to have as they plan for the future sustainability of the organization. During this session we will look at a number of tools and indicators to assess your financial health.

*June 5th 8:30-12:00* **Successful Mergers and Collaborations**  
Nancy Burd, The Burd Group & Laura Solomon, Esq. Founder, Laura Solomon & Associates

As more organizations face the challenges of our economy, sometimes the only prudent course of action is a collaboration or merger. A well executed merger of two organizations with complementary missions, values, and constituencies can achieve economies, efficiencies and synergies that the organizations are unable to achieve alone. During this session we will look at key elements of a successful collaboration or merger from both a planning and legal perspective.

## Good public speaking isn't a science. It isn't even an art form.

By Larry Checco

*"Before I begin, I'd like to make a few disclaimers: I've lived and worked in the Washington, DC, area for more than 30 years, but was born and raised in New York. I'm a type A personality, a certifiable ADHD adult--AND I'm on my fourth cup of coffee (laughter/pause). You're confronting the perfect storm, folks (more laughter)."*

The best speakers know how to humanize themselves so that they can personally and emotionally connect with those they are addressing. It's more than establishing a rapport. It's about creating a bond of trust and respect between you and your audience--and doing it quickly!

**Why is this important?** Public speaking is one of the best ways to promote your organization, raise funds and elevate the visibility and value of your brand. It's a high profile, word-of-mouth opportunity to let people know who you are, what you do, how you do it--and why they should care enough to support your organization. But you'll squander the opportunity if you don't own your voice and make the necessary connections to engage your audience.

Fifteen years ago I couldn't do what I do today--namely, speak in front of large groups of people and actually believe that they were interested in what I had to say. That's because I didn't own my voice. I was trying to be a professional public speaker instead of myself. Well, I've since thrown that approach out the window. As a result, public speaking is now fun and something I look forward to instead of being a fate worse than death.

Here's what works for me--and may work for you:

**Clear your throat.** Even after all these years, I still wrestle with butterflies before speaking in front of an audience. So at the outset of all my speaking engagements I use the same disclaimer that I used to begin this article. It accomplishes several things for me:

- I've got it down pat, so there are no worries about stumbling over my opening lines.
- It personalizes and says things that are true about me.
- It can be taken humorously and lighten the atmosphere in the room, which most often is the case.
- It gets people listening to what else I might have to say that may amuse or entertain them.
- Probably most importantly, it helps to clear my throat and pin down those butterflies.

**Dress comfortably.** For me, that's often somewhere between Donald Trump and Steve Jobs, namely business casual.

**Know your subject matter.** Although I often use PowerPoint when I speak, I never read from prepared text. The slides simply emphasize for my audience the major points I am trying to make in as few words as possible, as well as provide me with visual prompts as I proceed with my presentation. I know my subject matter inside and out--and so should you yours.

**Use stories to make your points.** "Let me tell you a true story about..." will almost always capture the attention of your audience and bring to life--and make more memorable--whatever points you are trying to put forth.

**Take every opportunity to connect with your audience.** In smaller venues I make a point of never standing behind the lectern, but rather I mill about the room, walking up to and interacting with people who may have a question and, if it seems appropriate, encouraging dialog among audience members. Anything to keep people listening, if not to me, then to themselves in short bursts. If you use this strategy, however, be sure you're in control and that your audience doesn't hijack your presentation.

**Modulate. Modulate. Modulate.** Nothing will turn people deaf more quickly than a monotone voice. In addition to modulating my voice, I often will clap my hands or make some oversized gesture to recapture my audience's attention, especially after lunch when everyone's blood sugar is haywire and eyelids are beginning to droop.

**Entertain as well as educate.** We live in an age when people are used to being entertained. In fact, they expect it. There's a fine line, however, between being funny and cornball. Know where that line is, and make sure whatever humor you inject into your presentation is appropriate and not offensive.

**Be passionate.** There's no substitute for passion. It's infectious, inspirational, motivational--and cannot be faked!

*Larry Checco is Principal of Checco Communications and a nationally sought-after speaker on branding and leadership. His latest book is [Aha! Moments in Brand Management: Commonsense Insights to a Stronger Healthier Brand](#)*

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As a follow up to our previous article on Unrelated Business Income, here is some additional information on the topic.

## Activities Excluded From UBIT

- As a nonprofit manager, you've probably heard of the term unrelated business income tax (UBIT) and, chances are, you aren't too fond of it. We have some good news for you: There are plenty of activities that are excluded from UBIT!
- Here's a quick recap of the rule: According to Marci Thomas, CPA, MHA, and Kim Strom-Gottfried, Ph.D. in their book "The Best of Boards," UBIT applies to any income from a trade or business that is carried on regularly by a nonprofit when the purpose of the activity is not related to the mission. Even if the net proceeds from the activity will be used to further the nonprofit's mission, it is still subject to UBIT.
- Now on to the good news. There are at least five activities that are excluded from UBI taxes. Thomas and Strom-Gottfried list them as:  
Volunteer work force. If the activity is conducted with volunteers, then the income is not UBI even if the business is regularly carried on and not related to the organization's tax-exempt purpose.
- Convenience of members. If the activity is operated for the convenience of members, students, patients, officers, or employees it is not UBI.
- Sponsorship payments. When a nonprofit receives a payment from a sponsor and the only benefit the sponsor gets is the inclusion of his or her company's name or logo or use of products.
- Selling donated merchandise. When substantially all of the merchandise being sold in a business activity is donated.
- Telephone Pole rental. Pole rentals are not considered unrelated trade or business when rented by a mutual or cooperative telephone or electric company described in section 501(c) (12).

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