Catalyst Center for Nonprofit Management

Your growth is our mission

Nonprofit News

Is A Mastermind Group Right for You?

Before you can answer that question, maybe the first one to answer is "What exactly is a Mastermind group?"

Mastermind groups are groups of peers whose purpose is to meet on a regular basis and provide advisement, accountability as well as encouragement to one another.

Napoleon Hill was an author and one of the earliest pioneers of 'personal success literature'. His most famous work, *Think and Grow Rich* is one of the best sellers of all times and was born out of a series of articles about famous, successful men. One of the concepts to come from the book is the idea of a mastermind group. According to Hill, Andrew Carnegie attributed much of his success to such a group.

During a newspaper interview with (Andrew Carnegie), I asked him to what he attributed his success. He replied:

> *"Well, if you want to know how I got my money, I will refer you to these men here on my staff; they got it for me. We have here in this business a master mind. It is not my mind, and it is not the mind of any other man on my staff, but the sum total of all these minds that I have gathered around me that constitute a master mind in the steel business.*
>
> *I have been many years gathering these men around me and building this mind. Each man contributes an important part to the building of this mind. I do not always agree with all the men on my staff, on all matters, nor do they always agree with me. Perhaps some of us do not like each other from a personal viewpoint, but I know that I need these men and they know that they need me in the maintenance of this master mind that is necessary in carrying on this steel business.*

Hill's conclusion was that "No two minds ever come together without thereby creating a third, invisible intangible force, which may be likened to a third mind."

Mastermind groups have developed over the years and now can be found in virtually every industry. Vistage International is the world's largest group of CEOs and senior executives and perhaps the most well-known.

Vital to these groups is what they offer to the individuals who join them. Members challenge one another to set goals, work through issues and achieve success in an atmosphere of trust and respect.

Finding the right group is key. You want to join a group of peers where the members are passionate about success and willing to put in the time and commitment. Members of mastermind groups will find that what they give to the group can be just as meaningful as what they get from the group.

The Catalyst Center for Nonprofit Management is pleased to announce a mastermind group for Executive Directors and CEOs

PINNACLE GROUP

Achieve excellence through goal setting, accountability, peer coaching, and support.

Winter 2014

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7 Ways to Integrate Stories into Your Non-Profit's Donor Stewardship Strategy

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Donor retention is an on-going conversation in our sector and any time it comes up, people start to panic. We all know what we have donor retention troubles. But what are we actually changing in order to fix the problem?

Donor stewardship is a great place to begin making changes that can impact your donor retention rates. You see, one of the key problems–especially for annual giving portfolios–is that there are lots of donors; hundreds, if not thousands of donors that would require our attention. Providing them with high impact touch-points is ideal. But when you have lots of donors to talk to, it's important to find ways to scale your efforts to maintain your sanity while reaching all of them. For instance, it would be unreasonable to expect that you could personally call 7,000 donors to thank them and provide them with an organization update. If you find yourself in a similar position, it's time to look at storytelling as an option for scalable donor stewardship.

Take a Cue from Major Gifts While most major gifts folks would probably tell you that nothing could replace the value of an in-person visit or phone call, the real magic of those activities comes for the opportunity to tell the donor a story. A story about a need, a story about someone who has been helped, etc. The good news is that stories can be told in a variety of mediums and are a great addition to donor stewardship.

Donors consistently tell us through surveys that they want to hear how their gift was used and what kind of impact they have had. Let's give them more of what they want. Stories are a great way to highlight tangible impact and emotionally connect with the donor.

It's More Than Just Another Thank You Everyone likes to be surprised. I think this is especially true for donors. They have voluntarily parted with some of their hard-earned money in an act of good will to support a cause they care about. Conceptually, when making a donation, you expect nothing in return. But receiving a thank you and feeling appreciated are essential to donor retention. The effects of both can be amplified when stories are added to the donor stewardship mix.

Here are seven (7) ideas to consider when mixing in stories to your non-profit's donor stewardship.

1. Start a thank you letter with a story No one really wants to read yet another thank you letter that begins with, "On behalf of XYZ organization, I'd like to thank you for your recent gift." BORING! Imagine opening a thank you letter that instead began with a quote from a heart-warming story of a person who benefited from a service that that gift funded. That's a much better way to hook your reader and focus on articulating the impact they are a part of.

2. Share a profile story in a newsletter. Newsletters are a great way to keep donors apprised of what's happening at your organization and to cultivate their continued interest in the cause. Instead of just the usual updates, consider adding in a story that profiles an individual who has benefited from a program or service that you offer. Or profile a donor about why they give to the cause.

3. Create a "donors only" page on your website. Donors and prospective donors are accessing non-profit websites at increasing rates each year. In addition to having a standard donation page and a page that talks about your organization's needs, consider adding a page that showcases special "insider information" just for donors. It's a great place to include stories for clients or staff members. This could even be a page that they are redirected to after they have made a gift online. Talk about instant gratification!

4. Change up your thank you phone call script. Now I know that earlier I suggested that we would all go crazy if we had to call every donor in our portfolios, but I hope that doesn't completely deter you from making phone calls. They are a great tool for connecting with donors when used wisely. If

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you've got a donor on the line, be sure to go beyond the standard thank you and tell them a story about someone (or something) that they have helped.

5. A postcard is worth a thousand words. Well, actually the picture on the front of that postcard is. The copy on the back can complement it and tell a short, fun story. You can also give donors a website url to visit if they want to know more about the story.

6. Shake up your annual report Are donors actually reading that annual report that you send them? Hook them in this year by telling them stories from last year. Rather than sharing factual program highlights, think about sharing highlights from your year in story form.

7. Host a storytelling time event I don't know about you, but as a kid I loved story-telling time at the local library and at school. As an adult, that hasn't really changed. All over the country there are a storytelling events popping up that people can attend to listen to stories and connect with others. Let's bring this concept into the non-profit world. You already know that your organization has lots of great stories. What better to appreciate your donors and connect with them, than to invite them to a storytelling time event.

These are just seven simple ways that your non-profit can begin to use stories as a part of your donor retention strategy. But the real magic of stories is in the consistency. Don't just tell one story and expect landslide results. Be consistent with your message and stories told to your donors. They are making a real difference and they deserve to be reminded of that.

Read more about storytelling for the sake of donor retention and what other npExperts have to say in the new eBook all about donor retention! (this is a FREE download)

See more at: http://www.npengage.com/interactive/7-ways-integrate-stories-into-your-nonprofits-donor-stewardship-strategy/#sthash.4JKTB0jP.dpuf

PINNACLE GROUP

Achieve excellence through goal setting, accountability, peer coaching, and support.

The Pinnacle Group is structured so members can achieve success as nonprofit leaders through the wisdom and counsel of their peers. "Success" is defined by each member.

Some objectives of the group include:

- Sharing goals, success stories and obstacles to moving forward
- Mutual growth of mind and spirit in an atmosphere of total trust
- Holding each other accountable for achieving the goals set
- Offering knowledge and advice, as well as perspective
- Sharing best practices

The Catalyst Center for Nonprofit Management offers two group formats, facilitated by Liz Vibber. Liz has over 25 years experience in the nonprofit sector, and a Master's Degree in Organizational Dynamics.

The Pinnacle Group

- Membership: President/CEO of not-for-profit organizations, with budgets of at least $1 million.
- Group meets in person
- Time Commitment: 2 hours per month; 12 months commencing April 2014*
- Time: 8:30 to 10:30 am
- When: 1st Tuesday of the month
- Group size 10-12

The Pinnacle Group-Online

Offering flexibility and a pre-set time commitment.

- Membership: President/CEO or senior staff of not-for-profit organizations.
- Group meets virtually
- Time Commitment: 1 hour per week; 6 week session
- Dates & Time: TBD
- Group size up to 15

For more information on the schedule and fees for either group, contact Liz Vibber 215-343-2727, lvibber@bbco-cpa.com

* initial meeting of the group on April 1, 2014, additional members may add through out the year.

Hold the Date

Nonprofit University-June 9, 2014

Bucks County Community College
Newtown Campus
8:30 am—4:00 pm

- Come be part of the morning's networking event: The Generocity Marketplace

- Participate in one of our three educational tracks
    - Grantsmanship
    - Sustainability
    - Leadership

- Mix things up and attend three of nine cutting edge seminars

Thanks to our sponsors, registration will be $30 pp including breakfast & lunch for staff and board members of NPOs

Partnering Sponsor: **First Savings Charitable Foundation**

Gold Sponsor: **MileStone Bank**

Sponsorship opportunities available
Liz Vibber: lvibber@bbco-cpa.com or 215-343-2727

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