



## Deepening Donor Relationships

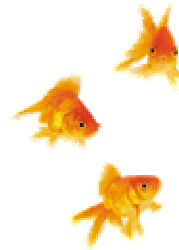
### The Evolution of Donor Communications

Association for Healthcare Philanthropy  
Tracey Bailey, CFRE  
VP, KCI April 2008



## What makes a good communicator

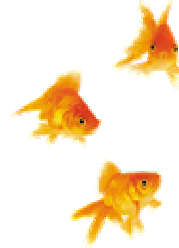
- Practice
- Your editor
- Curiosity
- Passion
- Belief
- Honesty



## > It's a different kind of writing

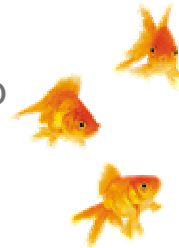
- What is the ultimate purpose of all communications in fundraising?

**Asking for money**



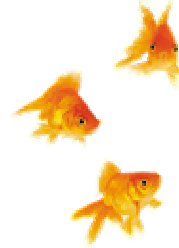
## > It's personal

- You are part of building a relationship
  - People give to people to help people
  - Trust is the heart of the matter
- Write to start a conversation, continue a conversation or bring a conversation to its climax (asking for a gift)
- Write to deepen the conversation / the relationship



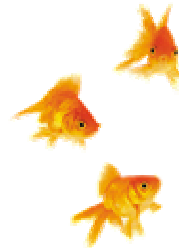
## ➤ A spiral not a circle

- Conversation not presentation
- An ever-deepening conversation about...
  - Life, accomplishments, legacy
  - Remembrance, tribute and honour
- Remember: in perpetuity is a very long time
  - A marathon not a sprint



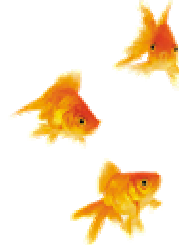
## ➤ How personal?

- Harvard guy says write love letters
- Good letters, stories, profiles are about the donor
- Fills the mind and stirs the heart
- Elicits an emotional response – joy, pride, passion, loyalty
- Tells a story that will be passed on



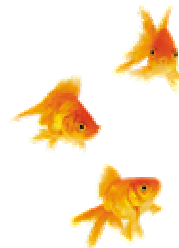
## ➤ Is the relationship with a donor like a marriage?

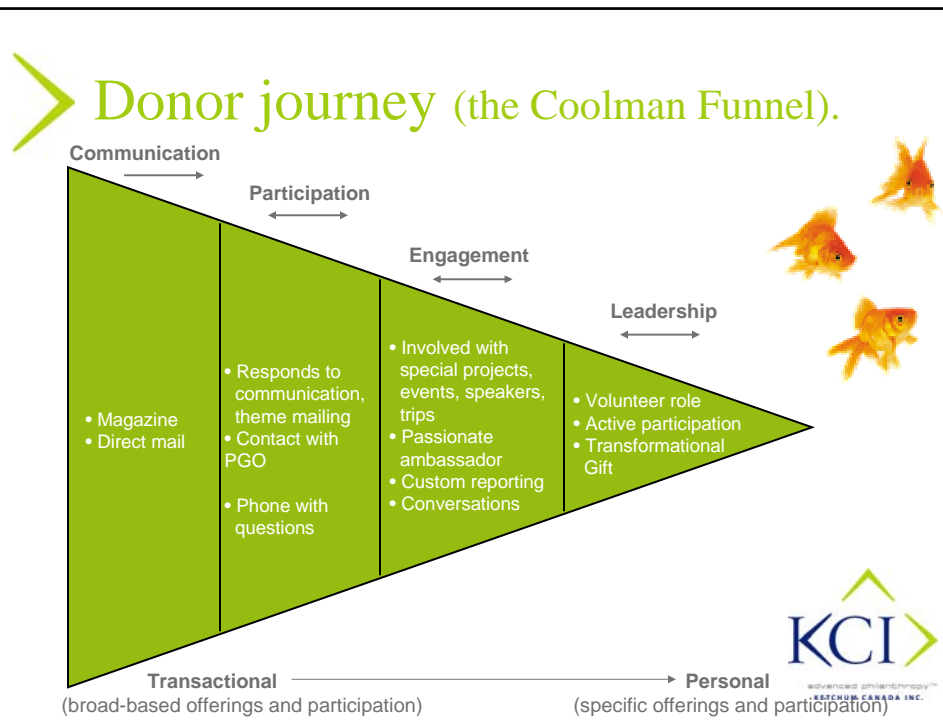
- First date – getting to know each other, making a connection, listening to each other, exploring likes/dislikes
- Courtship – long and drawn out, short and passionate, long distance affair
- Big event – promises made and a public celebration of the union, honeymoon
- Happily ever after – communication, trust, passion, agreement/compromise on issues of yours, mine, ours



## ➤ Integrated communications strategy

- What do we need all our communications to help us achieve?
  - To advance relationships from one way to:
    - Two-way communication
    - Participation
    - Meaningful engagement
    - Leadership





## ➤ Impact on everything else

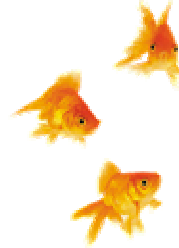
- Once the relationship is personal there is a corresponding impact on the tools, tactics, strategies we use to keep the conversation going/the relationship deepening:
 

Letters	Newsletters
Events	Website
Annual Report	Magazine

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## ➤ Donor communications defined

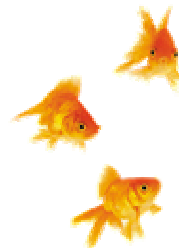
- Donor communications is a measured, strategic, sustained approach to engage donors as active participants in the mission and vision of the organization
- Donor communications nourishes the donor's experience of the institution's promises



## ➤ Who do we want to get personal with?

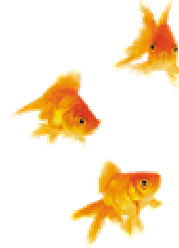


Rosso's  
Constituency  
Circle



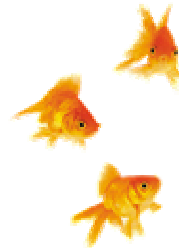
## > The challenges

- Formal communications methodology
  - Marketing
  - Media relations
  - Public relations – community relations, government relations and investor relations
  - Journalism, Feature and Magazine writing
- Not yet formal
  - Development or donor communications



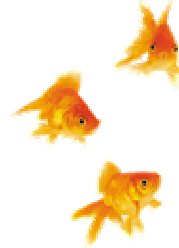
## > Changing POV

- Communications from the Fundraiser's Point of View:
  - Donor relations
  - Government relations
  - Media relations
  - Public or community relations



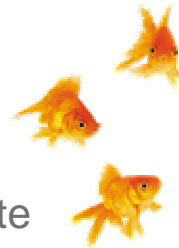
## > The 10-step communications audit

- Brand
- Goals
- Stakeholders/  
Audiences/  
Key Players/  
Power-holders
- Key Messages
- Messengers
- Delivery System
- Current  
Resources
- Gaps
- First Steps
- Evaluation



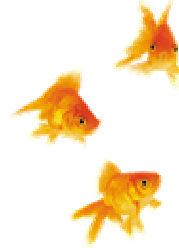
## > Building a strategy

- Strong, fresh brand
- Ongoing Case development
- Person to co-ordinate, facilitate, create
- Written strategic communication plan
- Measurement
- Collaboration among communicators to use simple, powerful key messages and unifying themes



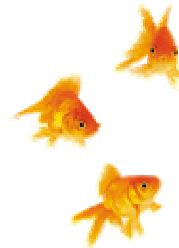
## > More of what we need

- Personal, meaningful interaction with donors, volunteers, community partners (not surveys)
  - in conversation, print, web
- Great stories and masterful, passionate storytellers



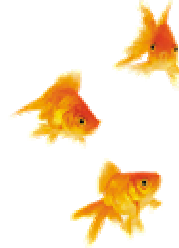
## > Know your donors

- Recommended reading
  - Foot: Boom, Bust and Echo
  - Adams: Sex in the Snow
  - Rosso: Achieving Excellence in Fundraising
  - Collier: Wealth in Families
  - Prince: Seven Faces of Philanthropy
- Websites
  - Modern Donor-Judith Nicols
  - Alan Sharpe and Mal Warwick
  - Campagne Associates



## > Are you compatible?

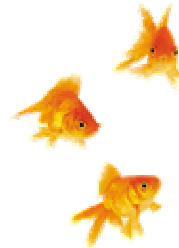
- What is the personality (characteristics and attributes) of your organization?
- What is the personality (characteristics and attributes) of your donors (audience)?



## > What are donors looking for?

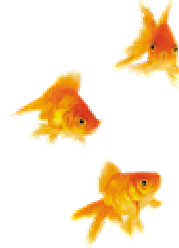
How we thought about it yesterday:

- Impact, benefits, outcomes
- Positive image and big vision
- Uniqueness, urgency, creativity
- Strategic relevance
- Strategic long-term plan
- Sound fiscal management



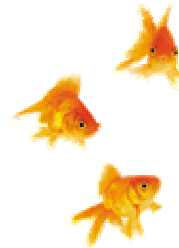
## > What your donors want

- How we think about it today:
  - To believe as passionately as you do in your vision
  - To be confident you can deliver on your promises
  - To slay dragons with you
  - To join you on the verge of greatness and help to make you great
  - To see the future you imagine and journey there with you
  - For what you do together – donor and organization – to be meaningful and to matter



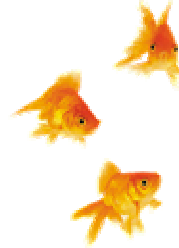
## > Where to start

- Personal correspondence
- Stop talking about goals and objectives. Instead share your dreams for fulfilling your mission and vision
- Spend less time trying to articulate results and more time telling people what it will mean
- Prepare everyone in your organization to harness and channel their emotional intelligence so people can connect through their feelings
- Tell stories



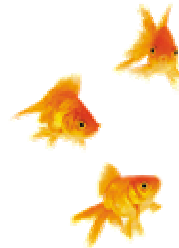
## ➤ Ten ways to make it more personal

- Think happy thoughts – “I think, therefore I am”
- Start with 2 words – thank you
- Use the words “you” and “I” a lot
- Show emotion, tap into emotion-connect through your feelings
- Start at the reader’s start line



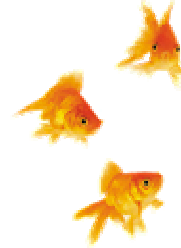
## ➤ Making it more personal

- Write in the voice of the correspondent
- Read out loud – too wordy? Take words out
- No **bold**, *italicized*, underlined or **highlighted copy** – this is not direct mail. Rediscover note paper and handwriting
- Say only what needs to be said
- Invite the reader to be part of your story – the soul of your vision



## > Bonus tip

- Immediately stop using:
  - Please find enclosed
  - Per, as per and re
  - Further to our and on behalf of....never start a letter this way
  - As you may know
  - Everything you learned in a business communicators workshop



## > Donor centred communication

An invitation to experience more deeply the promises of your organization

