

# Giving Missions Meaning

October 29, 2013



# Today's Conversation

- Getting on the same page
- Motivation for giving mission meaning
- Set in stone or stuck in sand
- Assessing your statement(s)
- Moving things forward



# Definitions Drive Meaning

- **Mission**

- purpose of the organization
- intention

•It Adds Up to an Ideology

- **Vision**

- desired accomplishments for the organization
- action

- **Values**

- shared ideas/values that guide people's actions
- impression



**:: POLL ::**

# **How well do you know your organization's mission statement?**

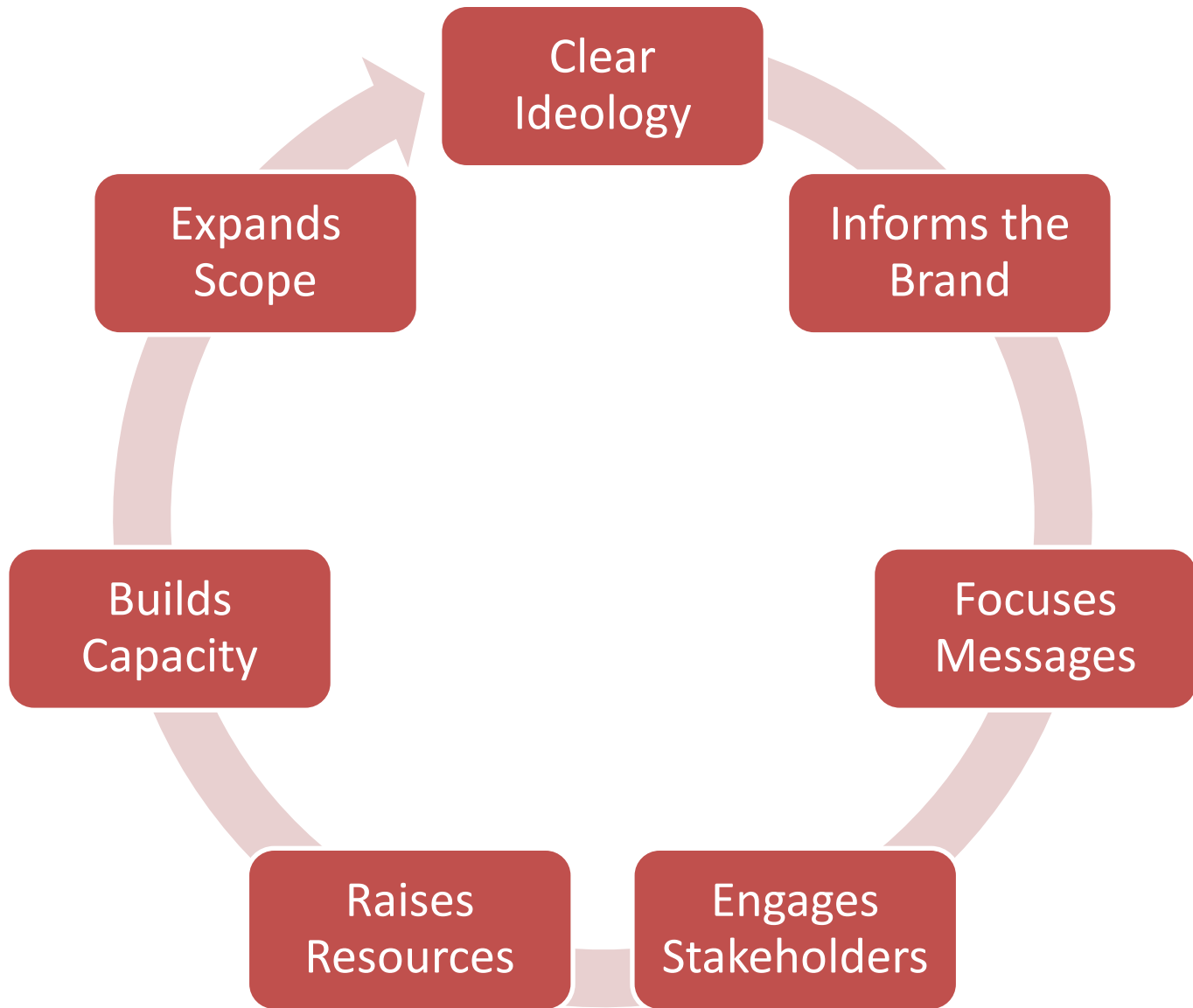
- A. I know every last word.
- B. Does the 80/20 rule apply here?
- C. Wait, I'll go get the bylaws.



# Missions with Meaning ...

- Inspire
- Inform
- Engage
- Focus
- Are clear
- Are for stakeholders
- Are current
- Are intentional





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# Why Do People Engage?

- Personal **connection** to the nonprofit (38%)
- Someone they know **invited** them (36%)
- Opportunity to **grow** prof/personally (36%)
- Organization's reputation & **stature** (24%)
- Field **expertise** to contribute (18%)
- The **mission** fits their interests (81%)



# Language Matters More than Length

- **(verb) + (target) + (outcome)**
  - Less than eight words
    - Save endangered species from extinction

•There is No Magic Formula

- **(purpose) + (business) + (values)**
  - Paragraph in length
    - Dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry and racism in America, our organization promotes understanding and respect among all races, religions and cultures through advocacy, conflict resolution and education.





# Mission Reflects Intent



*Provides a forum for sharing resources and developing creative programs that prepare students to participate successfully in the free enterprise system of our global economy.*



Delivers resources and programs to help students in Madison develop an understanding of business fundamentals.



# Vision Reflects Hopes

It can be **long**:

As the school looks ahead to 2016, it is respected as an institution that prepares students for future success in their professional and personal pursuits. It is a national model for the supportive way in which it educates students in the arts, sciences and humanities. The school continues to grow capacity to educate students by inspiring involvement and support from a broad range of individuals, families, educators and organizations. Its students and staff are more diverse and there are mutually beneficial relationships among stakeholders. The school is financially sustainable and its facilities are both an extension and reflection of the organization's ideology.

It can be **short**:

Build a sense of community and grow stronger families within the neighborhood we serve



# Values Shape Actions

- *Equality*
- *Respect*
- *Empowerment*
- *Responsibility*



- **Equality:** being seen as comparable and of the same value or worth as another
- **Respect:** consideration for others' opinions and thoughtful regard for individual worth and ability
- **Empowerment:** instilling more control of one's destiny
- **Responsibility:** intent to carry forward an assigned task/action toward a successful conclusion



## **:: POLL ::**

# **When is the last time you reviewed your org's mission statement?**

- A. We haven't written it down yet
- B. We word-smith it every few months
- C. We take a good look every few years
- D. I ponder it once in a blue moon
- E. But, the founder wrote it...



# Missions Matter

when they are **understood**

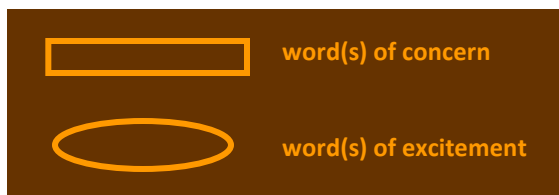


# **Mission Statements Should Not Be Sacred Cows**



# Tool: A Conversation For Clarity

- This is my nonprofit's **mission** statement and **it relays** the purpose of our organization to our internal and external **stakeholders**, usually front-and-center in our grant applications, sometimes in our marketing materials and we'll **occasionally** reference it when making decisions about **what we're doing**.



# Insights Inform Ideology

- What is one thing the organization does **exceptionally** well?
- In a **perfect** world, the organization would ...
- How would you describe the organization in 15 words **or less** ... and what is the single most relevant word in your description ... why?
- What should the organization **not** be doing?
- What gets in the way of **greater** success?
- What is the thing of which you are **most** proud?
- What does the organization need to do to reach its **full** potential?





# Use the Process to Engage & Align Your Stakeholders



Engagement  
Earners  
Commitment  
which Fuels  
Communication



Ourselves or ignore  
Others (BALANCE)  
Leading, not following  
Active in  
World

A <sup>SS</sup>passionate, Christ-centered faith in an accepting  
community that produces resources and which maintains a  
balance between looking outward and inward.



# Missions Matter

when they are **communicated**



# Your Ideology Informs Your Brand

PLATFORM FOR  
COMMUNICATION

BASIS FOR  
DECISION-MAKING



*Intentions*

➔ *Actions*

➔ *Impressions*

# Branding

is

- emotional
- experiential
- integrated
- shared
- linked to ideology

{the brand building journey}

Intention → Action → Impression



# Spark Brand Curiosity

- How would you capture the legacy without words?
- How does the experience smell? taste?
- What's the soundtrack to your nonprofit's story?
- Picture your 'collective stakeholder' — literally



# Building A Brand Framework

**Traits set the stage for the desired impression**

	themes	messages	colors	fonts	image direction
<b>Collaborative</b>	Responsive Professional Flexible Proactive Facilitative Driven	Because our role is to build bridges that strengthen the workforce, we are driven to identify, nurture and evolve partnerships that deliver solutions for businesses, workers and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #193d7c; margin-right: 5px;"></span> pms 286</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #a6b8d9; margin-right: 5px;"></span> pms 658</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #d9c07c; margin-right: 5px;"></span> pms 714</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #5d3d3d; margin-right: 5px;"></span> pms 491</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #f0e68c; margin-right: 5px;"></span> pms 128</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #8c9c7c; margin-right: 5px;"></span> pms 451</li> </ul>	Garamond  ITC Bookman  Avenir  Univers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one-on-one shots</li> <li>• sense of team and community</li> <li>• open crops</li> <li>• enthusiastic engaging people</li> <li>• natural lighting</li> </ul>

**Messages provide context to understand the meaning**

**Font choice lends emotion**

**Themes provide direction on intent**

**Color theory reinforces intended impression**

**Image Direction guides visual consistency**





**:: POLL ::**

**What's the most challenging word  
in the nonprofit vocabulary?**





**One of the most challenging  
words in the nonprofit vocabulary:**

**No**



# Missions Matter

when they are **a basis for decision-making**



# Leverage Ideology for Decision-Making

- Does the “it” help **advance** the organization’s purpose?
- Does the “it” help **achieve** the organization’s vision?
- Can implementation of “it” **reflect** the org’s values?

•Yes or No – be decisive



# Does 'The It' Advance The Ideology?



## Mission

We strengthen lives in our community  
In fulfilling our mission, we:

- Cultivate a sense of place and belonging among neighborhood residents
- Engage people of all ages with programming that lifts their spirits and fosters their success
- Mobilize resources to build the strength and confidence of those in need
- Celebrate diversity and seek to bridge differences
- Forge connections that support personal growth and community development

## Vision

As we look ahead to 2014:

- We will have inspired others to redefine community as inclusive and connected.
- We will have capitalized on success, expanded horizons and met ever-changing demands.
- Staff will be recognized for their vital roles in fostering growth and advancing the mission.
- The Center will still be a beautiful and safe space.

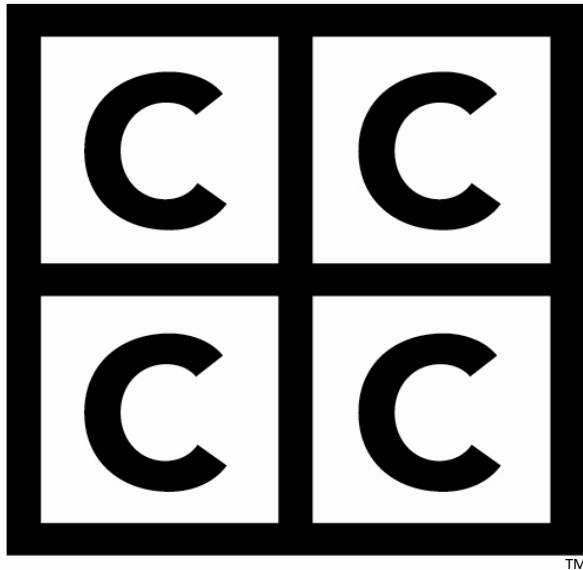


# Missions Matter

when they **affect you**



# Signs That Your Mission Matters



- Provides **clarity**
- Sparks **curiosity**
- Garneres **commitment**
- Fosters **communication**



# Continue the Conversation

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