



Tracks to Success - A Weekly Primer on Grants Development

Re-Igniting the Passion for Your Mission

by Terry Axelrod, CEO Raising More Money

Part Three - Re-Ignite the Passion for Your Mission

Rediscover why you are involved with the organization and learn to re-inspire others.

As you grapple with getting the latest grant and the day-to-day duties of nonprofit work, it's easy to feel removed from what you are causing in the world. But once you can rediscover why you are involved with your organization, you can learn to inspire others. This simple exercise will help you re-ignite the passion for your mission.

First, take the time to consider what it is that has attracted you to your organization's mission. Ask yourself: Why did I get involved with the organization in the first place and why have I stayed involved there? What is the real reason that this organization is important to me?

Be honest with yourself and write down your answers. It is crucial that you stay in touch with whatever it is about the organization's mission that moves and inspires you. That may mean taking a break from the mundane, everyday tasks every once in a while to reconnect with your passion. If you are involved at a school, this may mean visiting classrooms and spending time with the students; if you are involved at an animal shelter, it may mean spending time with the animals.

For a powerful experience of re-igniting the passion of others involved with your organization, consider incorporating a "Passion Retread" exercise into a group gathering.

Most nonprofit organizations do very little to nurture their board members, volunteers, and staff. For many board members, board meetings and occasional committee meetings are the only times they really think about your organization during the year. Staff members and volunteers may be so caught up in mundane tasks that their initial enthusiasm is waning as well.

Passion Retread is a simple exercise that reconnects people with their initial passion for your mission. It retreads the tire of your passion that may have worn a little thin. It can be done in a group, one-on-one, or all alone.

The most natural venue for the Passion Retread exercise is at a retreat or informal group meeting where there is some initial time for socializing. It doesn't need to take long or get sappy. A good leader or facilitator can keep it moving along. Without making a big deal of it, the group will be re-energized and reconnected to your mission quickly.

As people sit down to begin the formal part of the meeting or retreat, ask them to introduce themselves and to say why they got involved with the organization in the first place and why they have stayed involved.

People will rarely say, "Because my boss made me." They may even surprise themselves by blurting out the real reason they're here: "My wife has this disease we are working to cure," "My son had a drug problem like this," "I was once a

single mom and terrified of being homeless," etc. The truth just spills out, and in the process a deeper connection is made between the members of the group.

Some of the stories may be very personal and moving, whereas others may be amusing and even silly. All participants will gain a deeper respect for each other. People come to appreciate—and be more tolerant of—the quirky or challenging members of the group.

In the end, all who participated in the exercise will have renewed energy and enthusiasm for telling the story of the organization to the community. They will be reminded of just how important the work of this organization is and why they want to help out.

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This is the second in a six-part series on “Re-Igniting the Passion for Your Mission” by Terry Axelrod, founder and CEO of Raising More Money Inc., a Seattle-based organization that has trained and coached more than 2,000 nonprofits in a system for building sustainable funding from individual donors. [Click here](#) for more information.