

A Web 2.0 Strategy for Nonprofit Organizations

The First Law: It Is All About Control

Internet based media is rapidly supplanting broadcast, cable, postal mail and printed media because it gives the consumer extraordinary control over what they see. Cable TV supplanted broadcast television by offering more channels, giving viewers more personal control over what they were seeing, Internet based media is supplanting cable because it facilitates infinitely greater viewer control. The Internet also adds a degree of viewer interactivity that traditional media could never approach. Comparing traditional media's "Letter to the Editor" to today's "click and respond" interactivity is like comparing smoke signals to cell phones. The overriding equation for consumers is: CHOICES = CONTROL. The Internet and digital communications provide the level of control that consumers want and that is precisely why traditional media is being eclipsed by digital media in the Internet age. From a business perspective: CHOICES = SUCCESS, but only if you're offering choices.

This situation does not necessarily have to be a bad one for your organization unless you allow it to be. Web 2.0 is, in the final analysis, only a new set of tools, and new tools can yield higher productivity if you make the effort to learn how to use them. So remember: Web 2.0 is not your problem; how you're looking at Web 2.0 is your problem. For you, Web 2.0 is your solution.

When you think about it CHOICES = CONTROL applies to organizations as well as the audience. Before the digital age your communications options were limited. With Web 2.0 and its tools at your disposal you have more control over your message. It works FOR you, not against you. CONTROL = OPTIONS. Just as control works for the viewing audience, it can work for you.

Just as Internet based media provides the audience more control over what they view and hear, by delivering information they want to view and hear through internet based media you gain an audience. You control the message, you control the frequency, and you control interaction and response to a degree unattainable in traditional media. The new media gives you the ability to locate and communicate directly with groups that share your concerns and interests and subsequently engage them in your cause. Using the new media properly can waste less effort, attract more support, and actively engage more people in your cause.

Next we are going to begin discussion of various Web 2.0 tool which may be combined to create a strategy for communicating with the outside world to promote your organization and services. Your Web 2.0 strategy, if properly executed, should result in a growing base of support, an increase in fundraising, and improved member/supporter involvement.