



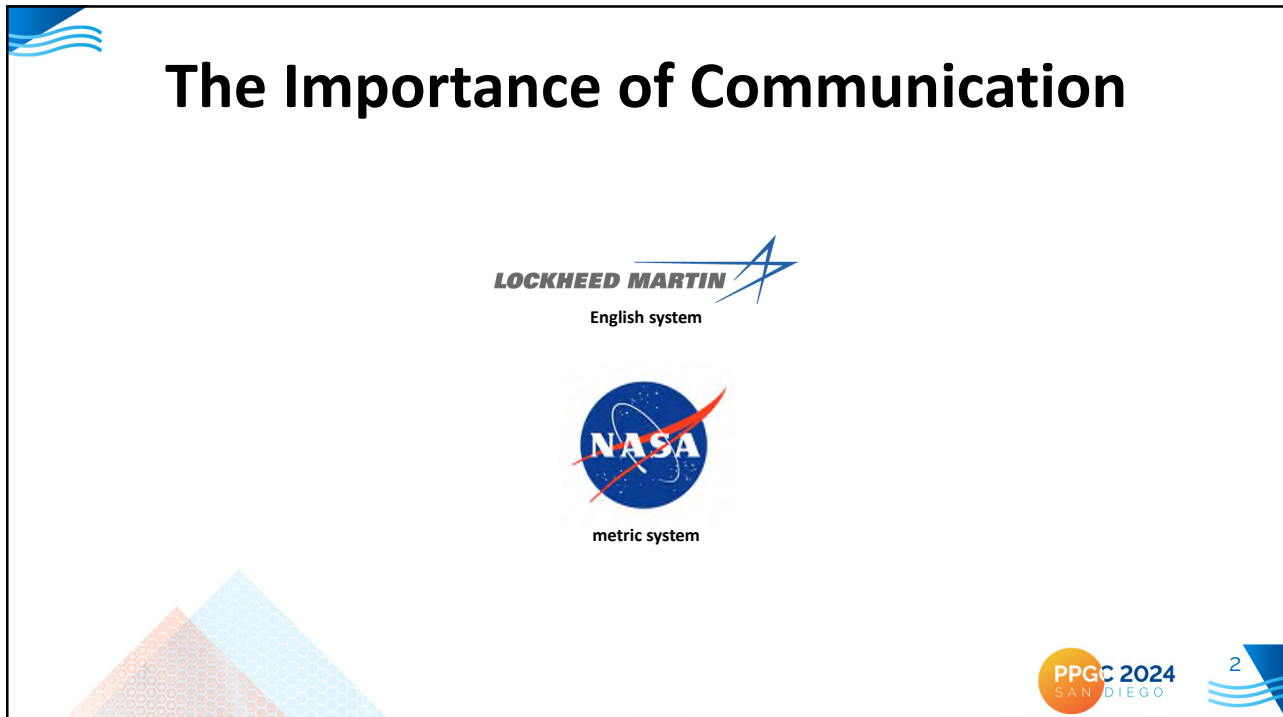
**PPGC 2024**  
SAN DIEGO

**The Art of Listening –  
Hearing the Messages  
Your Donors Want you to  
Know**

**Wayne Olson**  
Chief Development Officer, The Washington Times

**Crescendo**  
Integrated Marketing for Planned Gifts

1



# The Importance of Communication


**LOCKHEED MARTIN**  
English system

**NASA**  
metric system

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2

2






## Smoking Can Help Czech Economy, Philip Morris - Little Report Says



Cigarette Smokers' Frequent Early Deaths Offset Federal Medical Costs, Study Finds

July 16, 2001

Philip Morris officials in the Czech Republic have been distributing an economic analysis concluding that cigarette consumption isn't a drag on the country's budget, in part because smokers' early deaths help offset medical expenses.








3





## Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Disaster

“There’s no one who wants this over more than me. I want my life back.” -- Tony Howard, CEO

4





## AAA Newsroom

September 10, 2020


**AutonoDrive** – upbeat training, emphasizing systems capabilities and driver convenience.

**DriveAssist** - emphasized limitations and driver responsibility.

	AutonoDrive	DriveAssist
The system would make them feel more comfortable eating while driving	65%	27%
The system would make them feel more comfortable using a handheld cell phone	45%	13%
The system can take action to avoid a collision when a vehicle directly to the side begins steering into it to change lanes	42%	4%
The system can automatically reduce speed on a tight curve without the driver doing anything	56%	27%






5




## Three Goals

1. A Common Framework
2. The Language of Donors
3. Success Steps




6




# The “Competition”

1,365,744 Charitable  
Organizations in the United  
States of America

Source: IRS.Gov August 26, 2024






7




# The “Competition”

3,880 “Wish” organizations






8




# The “Competition”

1,589 organizations dedicated  
to model trains






9




# The “Competition”

12,918 relate to theme parks






10




# The “Competition”

21 are dedicated to  
needlepoint






11




# The “Competition”

43,064 have “animal”  
in the title






12




# The “Competition”

10,962 have “fun” in the title






13




# The “Competition”

153 have “boring”  
in the title



14





**“Foundations...lack a clear narrative about what the philanthropic sector does,...and leaves people with questions.”**

“Philanthropy’s New Voice, Building Trust with Deeper Stories and Clear Language,” – The University of Florida, April 2024

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15

15



**“Everything we believe comes from a story we have been told.”**


“Philanthropy’s New Voice, Building Trust with Deeper Stories and Clear Language,” – The University of Florida, April 2024

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16

16






**“Americans have positive views on philanthropy, but don’t understand the charitable sector or the role it plays in their lives.”**

“Philanthropy’s New Voice, Building Trust with Deeper Stories and Clear Language,” –  
The University of Florida, April 2024

17

17




**“Foundations’ use of jargon and borrowed metaphors obscures their role...”**

“Philanthropy’s New Voice, Building Trust with Deeper Stories and Clear Language,” –  
The University of Florida, April 2024

18

18




**“Mean what you say and say  
what you mean.”**

“Philanthropy’s New Voice, Building Trust  
with Deeper Stories and Clear Language,” –  
The University of Florida, April 2024

19

19





**“Narratives...invoking the ‘foundation  
as the hero,’ weren’t as successful in  
building trust as those that  
showcased foundations as nimble  
partners.”**

“Philanthropy’s New Voice, Building Trust  
with Deeper Stories and Clear Language,” –  
The University of Florida, April 2024

20

20



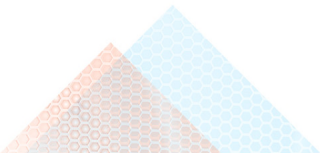

**“Humans learn through stories, not just data.”**

“Philanthropy’s New Voice, Building Trust with Deeper Stories and Clear Language,” –  
The University of Florida, April 2024

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21

21





**“Bring authenticity to your story with mundane details that show change isn’t magic.”**

“Philanthropy’s New Voice, Building Trust with Deeper Stories and Clear Language,” –  
The University of Florida, April 2024

**PPGC 2024**  
SAN DIEGO

22

22





# **“Eliminate ‘philanthropspeak.’”**

“Philanthropy’s New Voice, Building Trust  
with Deeper Stories and Clear Language,” –  
The University of Florida, April 2024

**PPGC 2024**  
SAN DIEGO

23

23




# **“Employ metaphors that reflect abundance...[rather than] scarcity or zero-sum mindsets.”**

“Philanthropy’s New Voice, Building Trust  
with Deeper Stories and Clear Language,” –  
The University of Florida, April 2024




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SAN DIEGO

24


24






**“An effective fundraising story triggers visualization producing social emotion. This is the engine that drives giving.” — Russell James, “Fundraising Myth & Science,” Newsletter on LinkedIn, May 2022**



25



**“Donors give to the magic of an idea.” — Panas, Jerold, *Asking*, Emerson and Church 2010**



26




# Three Goals

1. A Common Framework
2. The Language of Donors
3. Success Steps




27



**“Hearing is merely picking up  
sound vibrations. Listening is  
making sense of what we hear.” —  
Stephen P. Robbins, *The Truth  
about Managing People*.**






28




**A priority for us may be known to our donors as a passing comment.**

**Donors only pay attention to what is important to them.**






29




**Fundraising**

**Vs.**

**Getting Money**






30




Donors never give to us.

“They want to give through us.” - Tom Ahern






31




**John Haydon, *Donor Care***

“Donors don’t give because they’re generous. They give because it feels great.”






32






“You don’t build it for yourself. You know what people want and you build it for them.”




-Walt Disney




33






“Bore, n.: A person who talks when you wish him to listen.” – Ambrose Bierce




34






“Listening, not imitation, may  
be the sincerest form of  
flattery.” – Dr. Joyce Brothers



35



“It is better to keep your  
mouth closed and let  
people think you are a fool  
than to open it and remove  
all doubt.” – Mark Twain



36




**Want a reputation as a great  
communicator?**




**Listen more than you talk!**




37



“Courage is what it takes to stand  
up and speak, courage is also  
what it takes to sit down and  
listen.” - Sir Winston Churchill






38




- Listen to understand, not respond.
- Slow down.
- Dominate the listening.

– Joe Tumolo, *Go See People*



39






## Any missing words?


Dear Wayne:

Enclosed is a receipt from the University for the final distribution from ██████'s Trust/Estate, in the amount of \$500,000. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



40






## To Get More Gifts Think Like a Donor

“Write thank you notes to donors.”

“I don’t have time to do that.”


“That’s a lot of work. I have more important things to do.”

“I shouldn’t have to do that.”



41

41



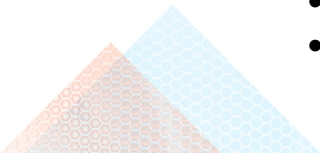


## “Thanks” have an expiration date

After a donation, the clock begins ticking.


Then it becomes a matter of:

- How quickly (when) we thank
- How sincerely we thank
- Who is sending thanks
- Who is receiving thanks
- What we say in thanks
- How we say thanks



42

42






When we say:


“We need your help.”

What they hear:

“We are helpless.”






43



No one wants to save the sinking Titanic! This is why you do not want to talk about your organization's needs.

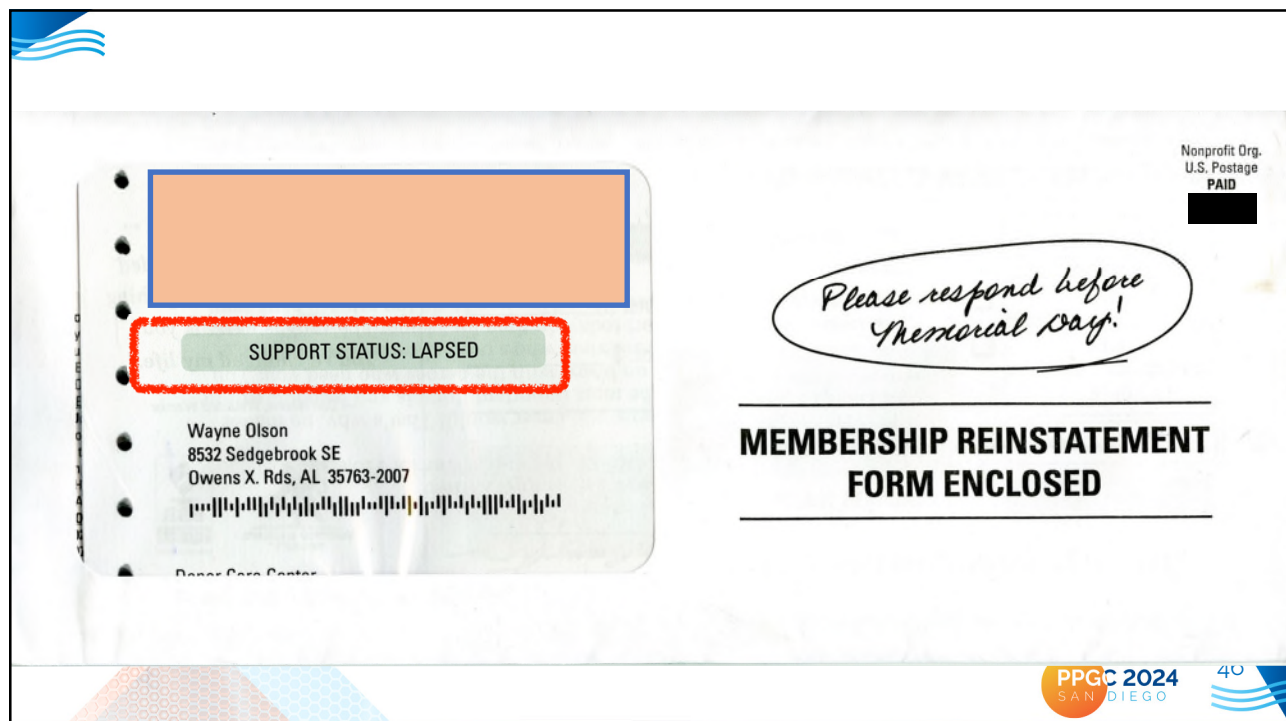
– Panas, Jerold, *Asking*, Emerson and Church, 2010



44



45




46




# “That’s not my department.”




-Heard at fundraising convention



47

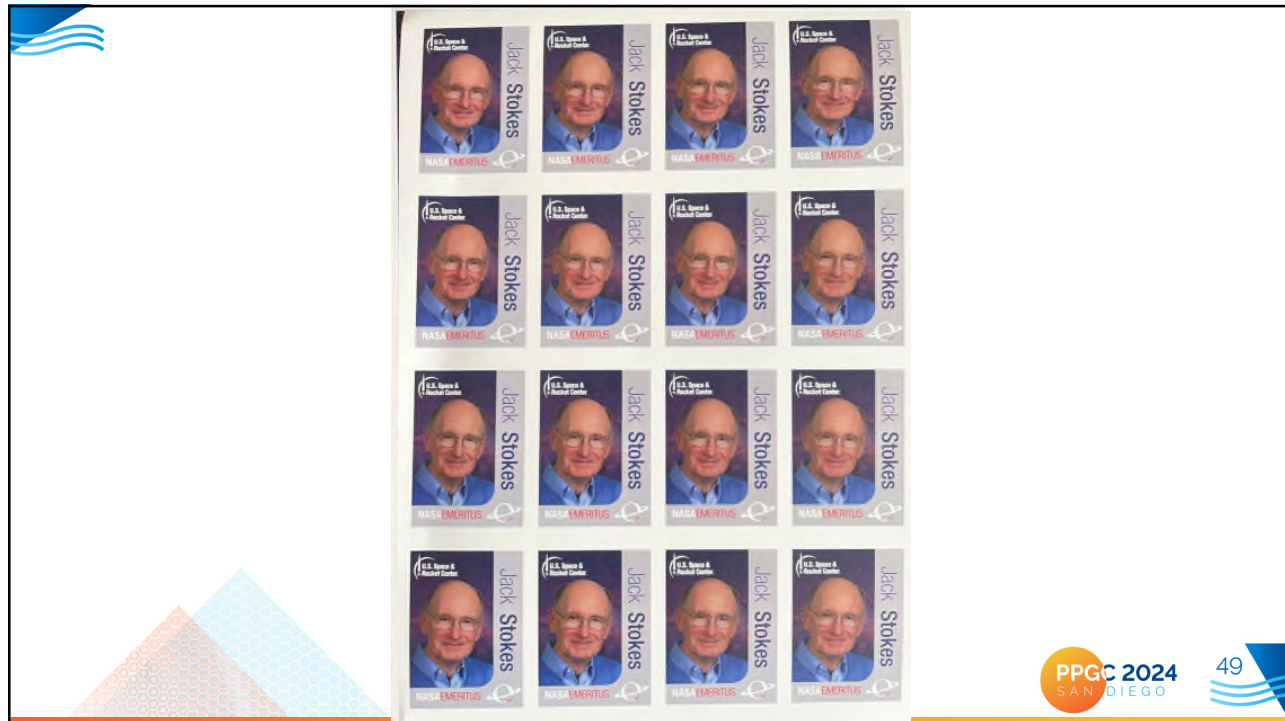


# “That’s Horrible.” – Jeffrey Gitomer

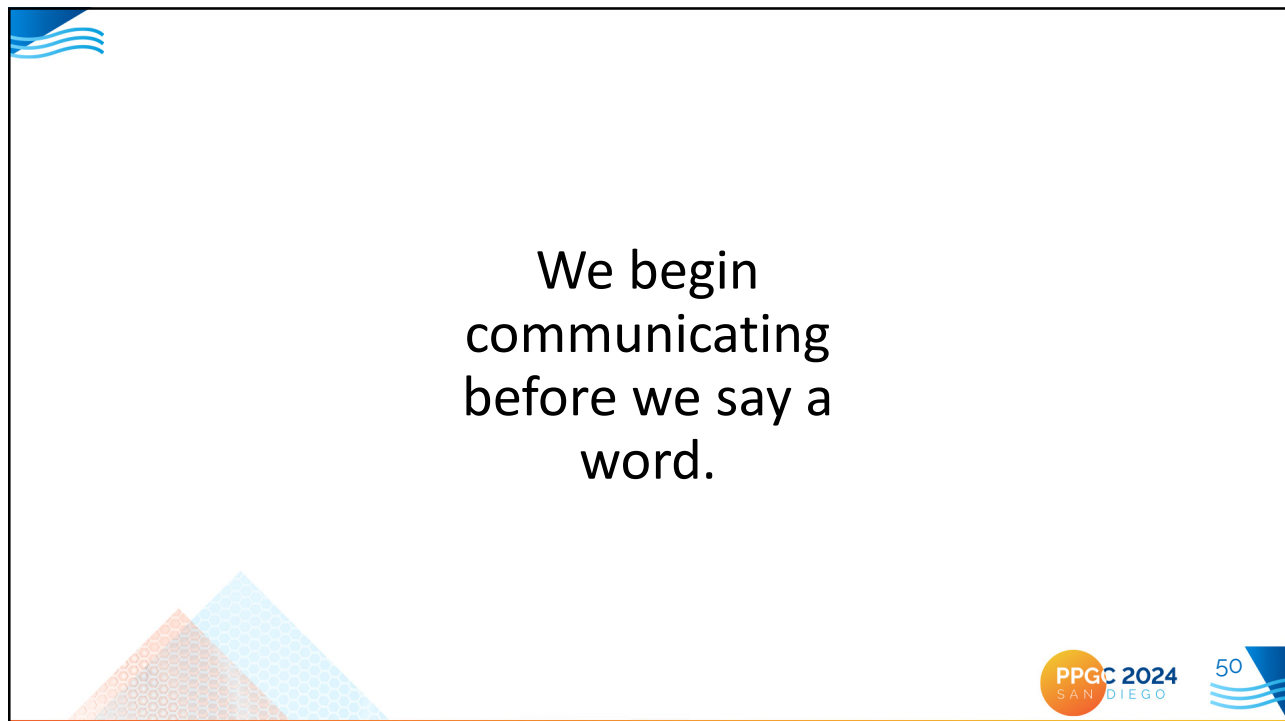


48





49




50

## Illness or Emergency

We are counting on you to guide or enhance the experience of all of our visitors. Many times groups will be counting on meeting you and hearing your experiences.



If an illness or another emergency prevents you from meeting a volunteer schedule, please call the Volunteer Coordinator or Emeritus Program Manager at least one hour prior to your shift. Earlier notice is helpful for finding a replacement. During times of inclement weather, please call security personnel at 256- or check the local news channels for more information.

# Bigger Print



## Friendlier

## Respectful






### Not feeling well or have an emergency:


If an illness or another emergency prevents you from fulfilling a scheduled volunteer opportunity, please call the Volunteer/ Emeritus Liaison or Guest Services Manager at your earliest possible convenience. The sooner you are able to contact us, the higher the likelihood we will be able to find a replacement.

51

We can never listen the wrong way  
but we can often say something the  
wrong way.





52




# **Society Tries to Convince Us:**

Listening is passive.






53




# **Society Tries to Convince Us:**

Fundraising is about showing a need to donors, and asking them to fund it.






54




## Society Tries to Convince Us:




If I don't say anything, I will look dumb or unprepared.



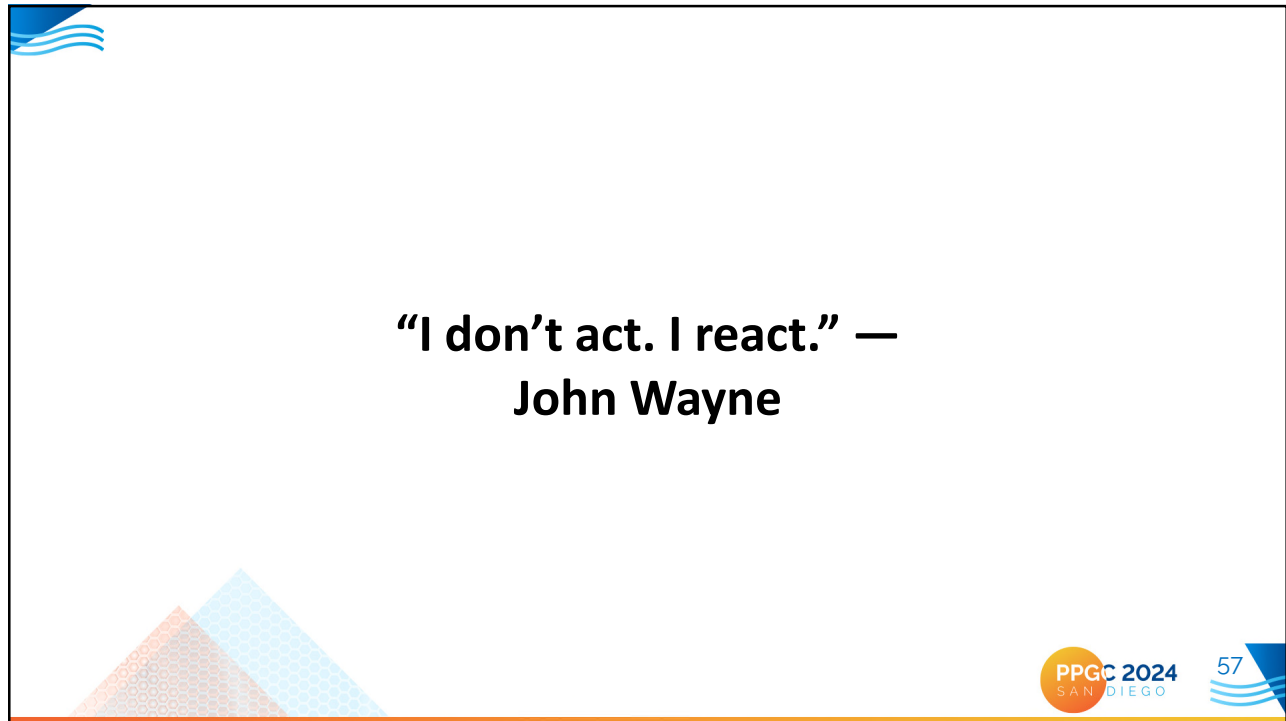
55



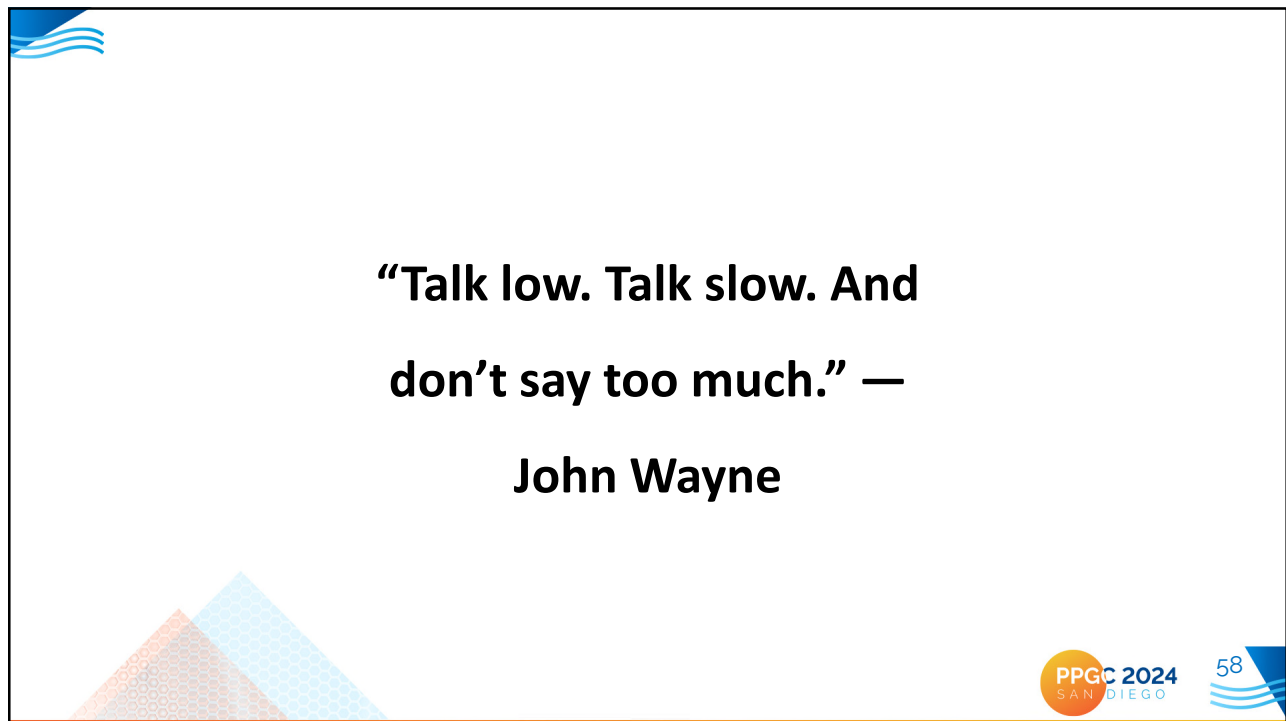
Be bold enough to put yourself aside.  
For a moment, your words are worthless and the other person's words are priceless.




56






57




58



**“One look that works is better than twenty  
lines of dialogue. Let those actors who  
picked their noses get all the dialogue, just  
give me the close-up of the reaction.” —  
John Wayne**






59




**Always tell the truth.**

**A little white lie is a lie.**






60




“No psychology of dealing with people really works unless we are genuinely and truly interested in other people. All else is trickery and sooner or later will fail.”

Brydon DeWitt, *The Nonprofit Development Companion*, Wiley, 2011








61




## A New Look at Communicating

What they used to say	What they say now
Gambling	Gaming







62




## A New Look at Communicating

What they used to say	What they say now
Liquor	Spirits






63




## A New Look at Communicating

What they used to say	What they say now
Customer	Guest






64






## A New Look at Communicating

What they used to say	What they say now
Employee	Team Member








65




## A New Look at Communicating

Instead of	Try This
I will return your call at my earliest convenience	I will call you as soon as I am able








66




## A New Look at Communicating

<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Instead of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Your call is important to me</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Try This</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Please leave a message or call me on my cell phone</p>
--	--









67




## A New Look at Communicating

<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Instead of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Charitable Remainder Unitrust</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Try This</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Family First Trust</p>
---	--









68




## A New Look at Communicating

<p>Instead of</p> <p>Estate Planning</p>	<p>Try This</p> <p>Legacy Building</p>
--	--









69



## A New Look at Communicating

<p>Instead of</p> <p>For gift annuities: You get payments for life</p>	<p>Try This</p> <p>You cannot outlive the benefits</p>
--	--



70



## A New Look at Communicating

Instead of	Try This
For gift annuities: After you die	After you reach philanthropic maturity



71




## A New Look at Communicating

Instead of	Try This
For gift annuities: After you die	After a lifetime of payments to you






72



## A New Look at Communicating

Instead of	Try This
We need your help	Together we can make a difference



73



## A New Look at Communicating

Instead of	Try This
Don't take it personally	To be fair to everyone



74




## A New Look at Communicating

Instead of	Try This
It's our policy	To be fair to everyone






75




## A New Look at Communicating

Instead of	Try This
No problem	You're welcome






76




## Lee Cockerel, The Customer Rules

“Words create a picture in our minds, for better or worse, that lasts forever.”

- “I have a dream...”
- “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.”
- “One small step for man..”






77




## Lee Cockerel, The Customer Rules




“The words you use when you speak to or about your customers should signal respect and concern.”




78



Why would a lion tamer  
enter the ring with only a  
chair and a whip?






79




Communicating means the listener  
hears what we intend them to hear

We are people first and experience the world  
through five senses. Just because we are  
hearing doesn't mean our other senses can't  
interfere.






80






Communicating means the listener  
hears what we intend them to hear

Communication happens when the  
message we intend to send is received  
and interpreted by the listener in the way  
we intended.






81




Communicating means the listener  
hears what we intend them to hear

The best fundraisers don't ask  
for money. They tell the story of  
the organization's mission so  
well, that others cannot wait to  
support it.






82



Communicating means the listener  
hears what we intend them to hear


We connect with the heart first  
and mind second.

The heart makes the gift, and  
the mind justifies it.






83

83




## Three Goals

1. A Common Framework
2. The Language of Donors
3. Success Steps






84

84




# The Donor is the Center of the Universe

## \$8-\$15 million campaign






85




# The Donor is the Center of the Universe

## Why do you think you are here today? What do you think I am going to ask you?





86




## The Donor is the Center of the Universe

“I assume you want me to tell you whether we should sell candy bars or wrapping paper.”





87




**When** did you first become connected with Westminster Christian Academy?

**What** attracted you to Westminster Christian Academy?

**What** faculty or staff member comes to mind when I say, “Westminster Christian Academy?” **Why?**



88

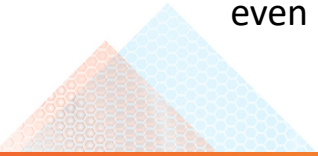




**What** is the one thing the school does correctly, and should never change?


**What** is the one thing the school needs to change?

If the school ever did this, it would lose **my** support:

If the school did this, it would make **me** feel even better about the school:

89






Has the board missed anything that should be a priority?

**When** people ask you about the school, how do **you** describe it?


**When** you think about the future of Westminster Christian Academy, how interested and concerned are **you** about its welfare?

( ) Very Interested    ( ) Somewhat    ( ) A Little    ( ) Not at all

**What** have I not asked **you** that I should have asked?








90




## Everything we do Matters

- We do not determine what is important for donors.
- They do.
- They notice and value what they want to.
- Understanding “pressures” of the job and forgiving lapses in recognition can only last briefly.






91

91




## Words Never Heard

**“Your brochure was so beautiful, I just had to whip out my checkbook.”**





92

92




Donors mostly don't want to know about the vehicles we use to get them to their goals.



They just want us tell them how wonderful the destination is – and how it is *great for them*.



93



**“Speak the magic and the vision...most prospects cannot remember the printed material.” — Panas, Jerold, *Asking*, Emerson and Church 2010**



94


## What do airlines sell?

95



96









**Present a compelling message that is value driven, not product driven.**

**This is about them, not you.**

**-Jeffrey Gitomer, *Very Little, but Very Powerful Book on Closing***





97




**Make it easy for donors the reach you.**

- I don't have a phone number, I have a gift annuity hotline
- [Wayne.olson@imail.org](mailto:Wayne.olson@imail.org) or [giftannuity@imail.org](mailto:giftannuity@imail.org)
- [Wayneolson.com](http://Wayneolson.com)
- [Wayneolsen.com](http://Wayneolsen.com)
- [Wayneo.com](http://Wayneo.com)
- [Nonprofitspeaker.com](http://Nonprofitspeaker.com)






98




Communicating means the listener hears what we intend them to hear

- Outside the box
- Moving the needle
- Collaboration
- Ubiquitous exposure
- Social inequities laid bare
- Collective crisis
- High prevalence of despair
- Cultivate mental well-being
- Lean into more vulnerable side
- So central to the work




99



Communicating means the listener hears what we intend them to hear

**Don't Lean Into Anything**

**Move**

100

### Communications Bingo

"to your point"	"I think this is what you are trying to say"	"no problem"	"cascade"	"lean in"
"cadence"	"a lot on my plate"	Any abbreviation "TBD" (for example)	"paradigm shift"	"elephant in the room"
"bandwidth"	"raise the bar"	FREE SPACE	"push the envelope"	"run it up the flagpole"
"get her blessing"	"touch base"	"giving 110%"	"reinvent the wheel"	"with all due respect"
"circle back"	"deep dive"	"all hands on deck"	"low hanging fruit"	"move the needle"


101

Communicating means the listener hears what we intend them to hear




## Control Distractions

- Poor cell phone signal?
- Background noises?
- Donor hard-of-hearing?
- Cell phone ringing?
- Texting?
- Donor hungry?

102




**“I only hear from them  
when they want more of  
my money.”**



103



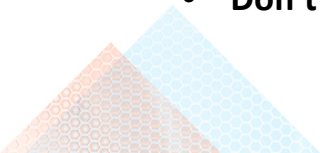
103



**Jeff Gitomer, Little Teal Book of Trust**


**“The audience must first buy the speaker before  
they buy the speaker’s message.”**

- **Start on time.**
- **Be authentic, honest, truthful and helpful.**
- **Don’t use “I,” “we,” “our.”**






104


104



**Being on time translates into being trustworthy. — Richard Weylman.**






105




**Steps to Being a Better Listener**

**We only learn by listening.**






106




## Some Ideas for You

### Watch your Language!

- One thing you can brag about where no one will EVER complain that you are bragging!
- “I am a good listener.”
- There is a world-wide shortage of listeners.
- Everyone wants to be an influencer. Few want to listen.






107



## Steps to Being a Better Listener

**Remember: As humans, we are ALWAYS communicating, even when we aren't saying a thing.**



108

# Steps to Being a Better Listener

**Body language counts as much in listening as it does in speaking!**



109

109

- 1. What you do overpowers what you say.**
- 2. When faced with inconsistencies between actions and words, people tend to give greater credence to actions.**

— Stephen R. Robbins, *The Truth About Managing People*



110

110

## Steps to Being a Better Listener

**As a listener, our goal is always to get information.**

**We never learn anything while we are speaking.  
(exception - watching someone's reaction gives  
us clues)**



111

111

## Steps to Being a Better Listener

**Albert Mehrabian, Body Language Researcher**

**The “55/38/7” Formula**

**55% Nonverbal**

**38% Vocal**

**7% Words Only**



112

112





# Steps to Being a Better Listener


**Albert Mehrabian, Body Language Researcher**

**Research showed, “Body language accounted for the majority of impact negotiating.”**



113




113



# Steps to Being a Better Listener


**Albert Mehrabian, Body Language Researcher**

**Research showed, “The person with the strongest argument wins over the phone, but not always in face-to-face conversations.”**






114

114




## **Steps to Being a Better Listener**

**Before communication even begins, decide what your goals are for the meeting.**



115

115






## **Steps to Being a Better Listener**

**Set your mind to be a good listener**


**Clarify your goals and what information you hope to obtain.**

**But also look at it from the other person's point of view. What is his her or goal(s)?**






116

116




## **Steps to Being a Better Listener**

# **Count to Five Before Saying Anything.**






117

117




## **Steps to Being a Better Listener**

# **Let the Other Person Finish His or Her Sentence.**






118

118




## Steps to Being a Better Listener

**“To your point,” means:  
that thing you think you  
said? I can say it better.**






119

119




## Steps to Being a Better Listener

**If a person says, “right,  
right, right..” that person  
is not listening.**






120

120




## **Steps to Being a Better Listener**

**No one has ever talked  
anyone into anything. Or  
won an argument.**






121




## **Steps to Being a Better Listener**

**Be Comfortable with Quiet.**





122




# **Steps to Being a Better Listener**

## **Adopt Body Language that Shows You Are Listening.**





123



# **Steps to Being a Better Listener**

## **Ask Questions that Begin with: Who, What, When, Where, and Why.**



124



# Steps to Being a Better Listener


**It's not about us.**

**It's always about them.**



125

125






## John Haydon, Donor Care

**“Remove your organization from any unnecessary mention within the narrative.”**


No: Thank you for giving to ABC Charity. Here's what we will do with your money...”

Yes: Your donation will save the lives of three children.






126

126




## Olson's Law on Giving




A Donor Will **always** Give  
when the Emotional  
Satisfaction of Giving an  
Asset is Greater than the  
Comfort of Keeping it.



127



More talk about service and  
mission than about money.



128






# Success Steps

People expect more of the conversation to be about them, less about us.






129

129




# Some Ideas for You

Call a donor on the anniversary of his or her biggest or first gift.






130

130




# Some Ideas for You

Send a donor a  
Thanksgiving or  
Valentine's Day card.






131




# Some Ideas for You

Send a donor a  
Birthday Card.






132




# Some Ideas for You

Call a donor and  
ask for advice.






133




# Some Ideas for You




Call a donor  
“just because.”




134



I put one of your suggestions to practice this week. I've been thinking about a donor...she lost her husband this summer. I am fortunate that I got to meet him. Really amazing person. I reached out to her just to let her know I was thinking about her. And she was SO appreciative. Thank you for that reminder, Wayne. Those touches mean so much...I know it would mean the world to me. - Christina at CGP Conference November 2022






135




# Success Steps

It's Never not Personal.






136



# Success Steps

Ask a donor why  
she gives.

Ask another  
donor why she  
stopped giving.



137

137



# Success Steps


**People expect us to keep  
our promises.**

**No matter how big.  
No matter how small.**






138

138




# Success Steps

People expect us to be as  
passionate as they are.






139

139



# Success Steps

People expect us to be as  
sincere as they are.



140

140




# Success Steps

People expect us to listen.  
Carefully.



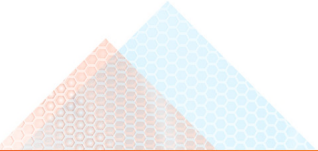


141




# Success Steps

**Turn cell phone off.  
Place in pocket.  
Leave in car.**






142



# Success Steps

Buy a book on body language.




143

143



# Success Steps

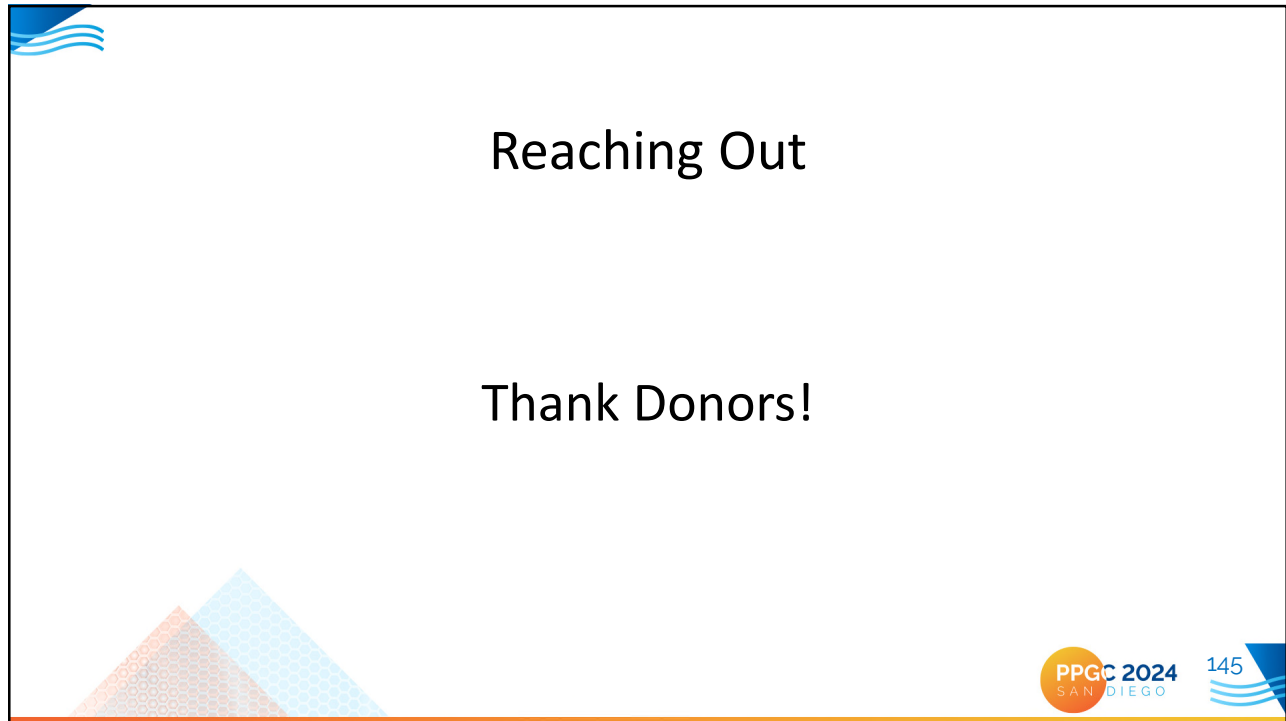
Read Dale Carnegie.



144

144





145

# You Matter

146

AtleastIdidntfallasleep.com

147

Thank you

**Wayne Olson**  
**wayneolson.com**  
**wayne@wayneolson.com**  
**@waynero**  
**256-924-9223**

148



**PPGC 2024**  
SAN DIEGO

# Speaker Evaluation

**COMPLETE THE SURVEY**

Please fill out the speaker  
evaluation by using the QR code.

Powered by CresSurvey:  
**Crescendo**  
Integrated Marketing for Planned Gifts