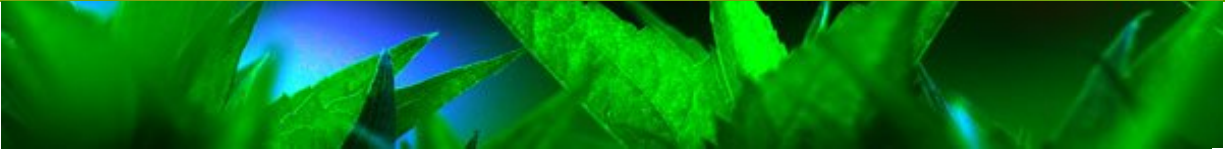


# Tip\$ & Treasure\$ Weekly

January 30, 2009



## In this week's edition...

- Nonprofit Website Mistakes: Lack of Transparency
- Announcement from the Nonprofit Leadership Institute
- Workshops, Events, Seminars and More!
- Job Announcements
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## NONPROFIT WEBSITE MISTAKES:LACK OF TRANSPARENCY

When people talk about mistakes nonprofits make with their websites, the first thing that comes to mind is usually either no direct donate button from the front page, or an unclear mission statement. But I'd like to focus on a different type of mistake; lack of transparency.

First off, what do I mean by "transparency?" I'm talking about communicating with your community (clients, members, potential donors, neighbors, elected officials, etc.) as openly, honestly, and fully about your operations as is practical and legal to do so.

And I'm not just talking about your programs and the great deeds that your organization performs. I assume that's already on your website (and if it's not, you need a far more remedial article than this one). I'm talking about your finances, your governance, and your management of the public trust.

Because that's what a nonprofit is: A public trust. You have been granted your 501(c)3 (and your special tax status) to produce something of benefit to the public, and the public is, in many very real ways, the ultimate shareholders of your corporation - even more so than your board members, clients, or staff.

These days the public finds it hard to trust in many institutions (and who can blame them). Lack of trust in nonprofits leads to lack of donations, and restrictions on what we can ultimately accomplish. By being as transparent as possible you inspire

trust in your organization, and (hopefully) in the nonprofit sector as a whole. And trust, in turn, inspires donations.

So, how do you make your website "transparent?" Here are a few suggestions to get you started...

**Post Your 990s** - Your IRS form 990 tax returns are already public information to those who know where to find them (on [guidestar.org](http://guidestar.org), for example). But why make people look for them elsewhere? Have your accountant create a pdf file of your 990s and post them annually as soon as you have filed.

**Post Your Audits** - Show your donors that your finances are in order and have passed a critical inspection. You spend your money responsibly; let your community know.

**Post Board Activity** - Maybe full board meeting minutes would be a bit too detailed, but why not a monthly summary of board activity and decisions made? A good way to do this is with the next suggestion...

**Start Blogging** - Show that your efforts at transparency aren't just an annual activity coinciding with your audit and 990s. Make a regular effort to inform your constituents of what is happening behind the scenes in your organization. This could include staff changes, new funding received, even problems with the plumbing (who knows, maybe one of your readers can volunteer a solution!).

**Contact Information!** - I can't believe the number of nonprofit websites I visit that have a board listing (names only, no affiliations) and a senior staff listing, but then only one general information email address. How about full staff listings with all emails and more some information on your board members. If board members don't all want their emails listed, how about at least the board chair, or maybe a "catch-all" email ([board@yourorg.org](mailto:board@yourorg.org)) that you can forward to each of them?

These are just a few ideas to get you going, I'm sure you can come up with many more once you start thinking about your organization, and how you communicate with your community.

From Ken Goldstein's blog at [The Nonprofit Consultant Blog](#).



### **AN ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**

NPS is excited to announce that due to the popularity and success of the first cohort, another Nonprofit Leadership Institute cohort is scheduled to begin in

March! If the timing just wasn't right for you to participate with the first group last September, this is your chance to get in on this great program and not have to wait until fall.

The NLI schedule is set and can be accessed at South Puget Sound Community College's Hawk's Prairie [webpage](#). The first class is March 3; the series of full day classes will conclude November 10th.

For more information or to enroll in Cohort 2, contact Margaret Hoyer, Associate Dean of Leadership and Management Development, at 360.596.5743 or [mhoyer@spscc.ctc.edu](mailto:mhoyer@spscc.ctc.edu).



## **WORKSHOPS, EVENTS, SEMINARS AND MORE!**

### **REGISTER NOW**

#### **NonProfit Solutions' Table Topics series presents**

##### **Effective use of Survey Monkey**

Aiye Akhigbe, Director of Alumni & Parent Relations & Annual Giving, Saint Martin's University, will lead a discussion on using Survey Monkey to test the thoughts of your organization's constituents.

Nonprofit organizations should know what their constituents think about their programs and services and how their future giving habits may change. Survey Monkey is a simple, very affordable, online tool that will help you reach large groups of supporters quickly and easily.

**WHEN:** February 19, 2009 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Mud Bay Coffee, 1600 Cooper Point Rd. Suite 630, Olympia, WA 98502, 360.754.6222

**COST:** \$25 per person & includes lunch

**REGISTER:** *Payment and registration required before February 16, 2009*

To register, please send your check to NonProfit Solutions NW, 1824 Black Lake Blvd. SW Ste. 101, Olympia, WA, 98512

OR call to charge to MasterCard, Visa, Discover or American Express  
360.866.3638

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**The CAPACITY program of Together! presents  
Introduction to Systems Thinking**

**WHEN:** Thursday, February 5, 2009 ~ 9AM - 1PM

**WHERE:** Tumwater Fire Department, 311 Israel Road SW, Tumwater, WA 98501

For more information or to register contact Ellen Nelson at

[enelson@thurstontgether.org](mailto:enelson@thurstontgether.org)

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**AFP Tacoma Chapter presents Jan Brazzell, Ph.D., CFRE  
Awaken the Sleeping Giant: Emerging Best Practices to Engage Your Board**

**WHEN:** Tuesday, March 10, 2009, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** LaQuinta Inn, 1425 E 27th St, Tacoma, WA

**COST:** \$20 for AFP members, \$30 for non-members (includes lunch)

**REGISTER:** Send an email to [southsoundafp@gmail.com](mailto:southsoundafp@gmail.com).

Do your board members leave their brains at the door? Do two or three do all the work? Propelled by Sarbanes-Oxley, new IRS reporting requirements and mounting pressures from charity watchdogs, major private foundations and government grantmakers, not-for-profits are seeking new remedies for board disengagement. This workshop will outline emerging trends in Board best practices and offer practical strategies you can use to enliven your Board. You will want to bring your Executive Director and Board Chair/Elect with you to this meeting!

Learning Outcomes:

1. Recognize the primary symptoms and causes of Board disengagement.
2. Understand major emerging trends in Board best practices.
3. Know specific strategies for improving Board engagement and effectiveness.
4. Realize how time and effective Board leadership contribute to reinventing a Board.

Interested in carpooling? Let us know with an email to

[admin@nonprofitsolutionsnw.com](mailto:admin@nonprofitsolutionsnw.com).



**JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Salmon Restoration Project Manager  
South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group, Olympia, WA**

The SPSSEG seeks an enthusiastic and hard-working individual to join our team.

We are a nonprofit organization committed to increasing salmonid populations through habitat restoration, community education and outreach.

This position is responsible for grant management of funded projects to include permitting, engineering designs, construction contract management and final report requirements. Project Managers also work with local partners to identify new restoration projects.

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled; however, interviews will begin February 12, 2009. Applications received by February 9 will receive primary consideration. For more information about the position and application details please go to the SPSSEG [website](#).



### **QUOTE OF THE DAY**

Give to every other human being every right that you claim for yourself.  
Robert Ingersoll (1833 - 1899)

