INCREASING Relevance | Relationships AND Results:

PRINCIPLES & PRACTICES FOR EFFECTIVE MULTICULTURAL COMMUNICATION

PRINCIPLE 1: Check Your Assumptions at the Door

PRINCIPLE 2: Understand the Cultural Context(s) of Your Audience

PRINCIPLE 3: Invest Before You Request

PRINCIPLE 4: Develop Authentic Relationships

PRINCIPLE 5: Build Shared Ownership

PRINCIPLE 6: Walk Your Talk

PRINCIPLE 7: Relate, Don't Translate

PRINCIPLE 8: Anticipate Change

Metropolitan Group
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Table of Contents

Introduction 1

PRINCIPLE 1: Check Your Assumptions at the Door: *Begin with yourself* 3

PRINCIPLE 2: Understand the Cultural Context(s) of Your Audience: *Do your homework* 5

PRINCIPLE 3: Invest Before You Request: *Create community-centered partnerships* 8

PRINCIPLE 4: Develop Authentic Relationships: *Maintain a long-term perspective* 10

PRINCIPLE 5: Build Shared Ownership: *Engage, don't just involve* 12

PRINCIPLE 6: Walk Your Talk: *Lead by example* 14

PRINCIPLE 7: Relate, Don't Translate: *Place communication into cultural context* 16

PRINCIPLE 8: Anticipate Change: *Be prepared to succeed* 18

Conclusion 19

About the Authors 20

About Metropolitan Group and Multicultural Communication 22

Footnotes 23

Additional Resources 24

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We thank our clients for their inspiration, impact and focus on creating a just and sustainable world. We'd especially like to thank the organizations that are mentioned in this article, including the Healthy Birth Initiative (a program of Multnomah County Health Department), NYAC (National Youth Advocacy Coalition), YMCA of the Columbia-Willamette, New Seasons Market, Circle of Tribal Advisors, The Saint Paul Foundation, National Council of La Raza and National Assembly on School-Based Health Care. We appreciate the opportunity to collaborate in their work and to share a few of their stories.

Introduction

EVERY DAY, THOUSANDS OF BUSINESSES, NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AND PUBLIC AGENCIES encounter the challenges and the benefits of working in an increasingly multicultural society. From reaching out to potential customers, clients, donors and taxpayers to providing critical products and services, every organization in today's society must make effective communication in a multicultural context a key priority. It is an absolute necessity for organizational success and for building healthy communities.

Taking a multicultural approach to communication increases the relevance and impact of communication by recognizing, respecting and engaging the cultural backgrounds of all stakeholders and framing communication in ways that invite real participation and dialogue. Effective multicultural communication unlocks new resources and brings additional perspectives and talents to the table to develop innovative and sustainable solutions to our most challenging social, environmental and economic issues.

An analysis of the raw data highlights the significance and growth of our nation's increasingly multicultural population. Take ethnicity statistics alone: ethnic and racial groups account for 30 percent of the U.S. population, or more than 90 million people. In 2050, communities of color will make up 49 percent of the U.S. population, or more than 209 million people.

Race and ethnicity, however, are not the only indicators of an increasingly diverse population. Currently, there are 41.9 million 18- to 29-year-old citizens in the U.S. This figure is more than twice the number of 66- to 77-year-olds (20.3 million), and represents 21 percent of the overall voting public. These shifts demonstrate the importance of effectively engaging all members of our communities for the success of individual organizations and to ensure an innovative, prosperous, just and healthy society.

Moving beyond demographics, recent studies highlight a rich mosaic of stereotype-busting interests, priorities and actions, from buying patterns to charitable giving. Consider this:

- In a recent study done by the Hartman Group (Organic 2006), African Americans were found to be 24 percent more likely "core" consumers of organic products than their white counterparts. "Core" means they're more dedicated to buying "natural" products than the mainstream population.
- In the business sector, minority- and women-owned businesses have become an influential force, more than 12 million strong and accounting for more than $4 trillion in annual gross sales, according to research from the U.S. Small Business Administration (1999). These businesses represent the fastest-growing areas of the U.S. economy and are responsible for the strongest job creation among all U.S. businesses.
- Among the U.S. electorate, Latinos are the fastest-growing ethnic group. Their voter registration and voting rates are growing faster than those of other racial and ethnic groups, according to the National Council of La Raza's report, *The Latino Electorate: Profile and Trends* (2007).
- Network for Good, a major processor of online charitable donations for nonprofits, has reported that online donors tend to be young, with a median age of 38 (The Young and The Generous: A Study of $100 Million in Online Giving to 23,000 Charities, 2008).
- Donors of color are generally motivated to "give back" to the community after achieving success in their own lives, according to a study by the Council on Foundations and the Association of Black Foundation Executives. As reported in the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* (2003), African Americans who give to charity donate 25 percent more of their discretionary income than whites.

Effectively engaging diverse audiences is key to sustainable customer acquisition and growth, ensuring long-term voter support, increasing revenues and contributed income, strengthening consumer loyalty, and

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attracting new volunteers and members. Yet, many organizations either apply a one-size-fits-all approach to their communication or recognize the need for a multicultural approach, but do not know where to start.

At Metropolitan Group, we have the privilege of working with many leading nonprofit, business and public sector organizations engaged in multicultural communication and collaborating with and on behalf of many cultural communities and advocacy organizations. Through our work, we have distilled eight principles for effective multicultural communication. In this article, we will provide an overview of each principle. You will see that many of the principles make great sense for communication to all audiences and are built upon well-established communication and social marketing theory. We will also highlight a few practices — tangible actions — to demonstrate how each principle can be applied. Finally, each principle is illustrated by an example from the work of our clients.

The eight principles are:

PRINCIPLE 1: Check Your Assumptions at the Door: *Begin with yourself*

PRINCIPLE 2: Understand the Cultural Context(s) of Your Audience: *Do your homework*

PRINCIPLE 3: Invest Before You Request: *Create community-centered partnerships*

PRINCIPLE 4: Develop Authentic Relationships: *Maintain a long-term perspective*

PRINCIPLE 5: Build Shared Ownership: *Engage, don't just involve*

PRINCIPLE 6: Walk Your Talk: *Lead by example*

PRINCIPLE 7: Relate, Don't Translate: *Place communication into cultural context*

PRINCIPLE 8: Anticipate Change: *Be prepared to succeed*

We have found these principles and practices to be useful starting points for our work and for our clients' approach to multicultural communication. We hope you will find them to be helpful in your work as well. We also hope they will lead you to discover other effective practices and approaches as you engage with your communities. We know that if your organization is committed to effective multicultural communication and concentrates on building relevance and relationships, you will advance your own goals, achieve results, and increase the social and community capital that benefits us all.

PRINCIPLE 1: Check Your Assumptions at the Door:
Begin with yourself

BEFORE BEGINNING TO WORK WITH ANY GROUP THAT IS CULTURALLY, ETHNICALLY OR RACIALLY DIFFERENT FROM YOUR OWN, it is critical to step back and identify any assumptions, preconceived beliefs or stereotypes that you might hold about that population. Your best intentions may be undermined by old assumptions or isolated experiences that can impact your ability to develop a sound strategy that effectively achieves the behavioral, attitudinal or systems change you seek. It is also essential that you not assume a particular group holds the same set of values or beliefs as your own.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES:

1. Get the facts. Often assumptions are based on outdated or incomplete information. At the beginning of any multicultural communication initiative, you should refresh your knowledge by reviewing recent available data on the basic demographics of your audience and its specific behaviors and attitudes in relation to your issue. This can include the audience's purchasing trends, voting patterns, philanthropic contributions, literacy rates, health statistics, etc.

2. Examine the work of community- and faith-based organizations and programs that serve that cultural group. Local community-based organizations, or regional and national organizations that are closely connected to local affiliates that are grounded in the community are often experts that can be consulted to help evaluate or contribute information, enabling you to establish better understanding and develop more effective communication strategies.

3. Scan the news media for articles that demonstrate trends, challenges and opportunities within and for specific cultural communities. Being familiar with the public discourse issues and perspectives of your audience and of the way these issues and your audience are portrayed in local and national mainstream and community-based media helps build your understanding of issues of relevance, insight into community perspectives, and awareness of key players and leaders.

4. Test your assumptions through informal discussion groups of five to eight people recruited through your network of contacts; in more formal focus groups with individuals who were recruited according to specific demographic and psychographic data that meet the profile of the audience you want to reach; or by engaging experts from that community.

   This process helps surface existing beliefs, values and behaviors within the target audience group early on and provides an opportunity to gain insights into how your audience really views an issue. This step is invaluable in refining strategies and messages, avoiding major pitfalls, and saving costly resources you might otherwise invest in fully developing an outreach strategy that is not valid for your audience.

5. Check your ego at the door and approach the work with an open mind, an open heart and a sense of humor. It is normal for us all to want our work to be successful. However, you should expect that this work will not come about without some multicultural misunderstandings and occasional uneasiness for you or for others who might feel they are out of their comfort zone. Encourage others to provide honest feedback and direction so as to understand where there are cultural differences and how they might impact your communication. Be flexible and open to changes in direction and approaches if the original plan does not work.

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CASE EXAMPLE: The *Healthy Birth Initiative* provides a good example of "checking your assumptions."

ISSUE: African American, Latino[1], Somali, and low-income white women in Portland, Oregon, had disproportionately high rates of infant mortality and low-birthweight babies. County health officials assumed this was because the women were making unhealthy choices (smoking, drinking, drug use, etc.) during pregnancy because they were unaware of the risks to their babies. They planned a public education campaign, *Healthy Birth Initiative*, to reach women in these communities.

STRATEGY: Focus groups conducted with women in the target group proved the initial assumptions wrong. Many pregnant women were aware of the risks, but a lack of support from male partners and friends was a major deterrent to making healthy choices. With this new information, the campaign and message design changed dramatically to include targeted outreach to men. Messages about how to have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby were framed using the theme, "What if men could get pregnant?" Men were encouraged to provide support to all the pregnant women in their lives. Campaign materials in English and Spanish were distributed in places that men visit, from health clinics to restaurants and barber shops.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The campaign achieved both behavior and systems change. Infant mortality rates and incidence of low birthweights declined. Male outreach workers were added to the county health team.

Print creative from the *Healthy Birth Initiative* brings men into the mix as a vital part of supporting the women in their lives to have a healthy pregnancy. By listening to the audience, campaign organizers learned that the core issue was not a lack of knowledge of healthy pregnancy behaviors, but rather a lack of support from the men in their lives. *Metropolitan Group conducted the research, and designed and managed the campaign for the* Healthy Birth Initiative.

PRINCIPLE 2: Understand the Cultural Context(s) of Your Audience: *Do your homework*

THE GOAL OF ANY COMMUNICATION IS CREATING SHARED UNDERSTANDING. As communicators, when we relay a message (language, symbols, images), it is with the expectation that the receiver can interpret as the sender intended and has the ability to choose to take action accordingly. This is not always the case. Various cultural groups have unique ways of perceiving, organizing and relating to information. They may have different needs, values, motivators and behaviors. The norm for one group may not necessarily be relevant or appropriate for another group. The message must fit the cultural context (the norms, ideas, beliefs and totality of meaning shared by a cultural group) of the audiences you want your communication to reach. The more you learn about the specific communities you want to engage, the more specific and effective your communication and outreach strategies can be.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES:

1. Define desired audience(s) as specifically as possible. Major differences often exist within ethnic, racial and cultural groups. Narrowing your focus by evaluating factors such as age, education, reading level, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, geographic area, etc., will help you better analyze the needs, interests, values, concerns and decision drivers of your audience.

   For example, the Asian American, Pacific Islander and Native Hawaiian population, as a broad category, is extremely diverse, speaking nearly 500 languages and dialects and comprising 32 different ethnic groups, including Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Korean and Vietnamese. Approaching these populations as one homogenous group would render any strategy completely ineffective. In fact, it could have the opposite effect and generate a negative reaction.

   Further, many ethnic and racial communities are made up of people in different stages of acculturation to American society. Some individuals may be recent arrivals to this country or first generation. Others may be second or third generation or may have arrived as children. As a result, they may have very different values, thought processes, decision-making processes and behavior drivers than those of their parents or grandparents, or even their peers. Cultural influences impact the lens through which people view the world — the way they define their reality, their beliefs and assumptions. Understanding where your audience stands in relation to an issue or desired action, or its attitudes toward a product or service is key to designing an effective strategy and is a fundamental best practice for all communication.

2. Be aware of norms, traditions, dialects and other cultural nuances that are unique to your audience. Once you have identified your audience, the next step is to begin to understand the characteristics of this cultural group. In addition to consulting any available literature on the demographic and psychographic attributes of your audience, you can revisit the practices outlined under Check Your Assumptions (Principle 1) to deepen your understanding of the specific audiences you have identified and prioritized.

   Even within a single language group, significant differences in vocabulary and usage must be considered. Although not as diverse a population as Asian American and Pacific Islanders, it can be a mistake — and an ineffective use of resources — to communicate with Hispanics as if they are a homogeneous group. Cultural norms, traditions and language usage such as slang and colloquialisms vary extensively by Hispanic subpopulation.

   As described in Practice 1 above, depending on characteristics such as country of origin, length of time in the United States and level of acculturation, Latinos may have very different political views, family traditions, use of language and even preferences for food and consumer products. Although Spanish is the shared language, many words may mean different things to different people depending on the subpopulation. For example, in Puerto Rico a “china” is an orange. “China” in Colombia could refer to a little girl. In many other South American countries, a “china” is a Chinese female.

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3. Understand historical experiences and attitudes that may impact communication. Depending on their age, people may be impacted by different defining moments in history — among them, slavery[2], the right to vote[3], the Depression[4], the civil rights movement[5], the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.[6], the Columbine High School shootings[7], the attacks on September 11th[8], and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

   Ongoing political and legal debates on polarizing issues — such as immigration — are often based on and colored by the unique circumstances of those individuals involved in the discussion. Personal experiences, such as discrimination when seeking housing or credit, can set strong positive or negative perceptions through which people view and respond to organizations, messages and institutions. For immigrants, there are also relevant home-country events and perceptions that come from personal experience or are shared with family members by elders or relatives who have remained in the home country.

   These historical experiences impact how messages are received and how issues, concepts and organizations are viewed by different cultural groups. For example, first-generation immigrants from former Soviet Bloc countries have a tendency to distrust financial institutions. They may have experienced state-controlled systems, communities without mortgage lending, bureaucratic regulation that created barriers to small enterprise, and corrupt practices, including bribery, in their home countries. As a result, they have limited knowledge of financial services such as home mortgages and small business lending. This lack of familiarity and trust must be addressed through education by the right (trusted) messenger and outreach if a bank or community development program is going to attract such customers and serve this community.

   Further, literal historical experiences and pop culture references must also be viewed through the lens of a particular community's experience to determine their relevancy and positive or negative impacts as part of a communication strategy. Specific political changes, community victories or injustices, or events such as Woodstock[9] or the grape boycott[10] can either be effective examples to people who lived through them or absolutely meaningless to those who did not experience them.

4. Identify and build upon cultural strengths and assets. When formulating strategies and messages, ensure that they relay a positive message about the targeted audience or highlight assets rather than convey negative stereotypes. Messages can powerfully identify challenges and needs from a strength-based perspective that illustrates an opportunity to meet a need. Such messages will be much better received by your audience and therefore be more effective in bringing about the desired change. Engagement with strategic partners, choices of outreach strategies and the development of communication tactics that emphasize and build upon cultural strengths can increase trust and more effectively engage desired audiences. (Refer to case example under Principle 7 for an additional example of a social marketing campaign designed to build on the cultural strengths of its audience).

CASE EXAMPLE: The National Youth Advocacy Coalition's *You Know Different* campaign is a good example of "understanding the cultural context of your audience."

ISSUE: AIDS is the leading cause of death for people between the ages of 15 and 49 worldwide, and more than 50 percent of new infections each year are among people age 25 and under. The epidemic also disproportionately affects people of color — half of all new HIV infections each year in the United States are among African Americans, and three out of five people living with HIV/AIDS are people of color. Research about youth HIV testing indicated that major barriers include denial of risk, fear, stigma, misinformation and lack of relevance of current materials (which usually feature adults). Barriers to testing can be even higher in the African American LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transsexual or

Questioning sexuality) community, where males are often "closeted" and unlikely to get tested for fear of rejection by their cultural community.

In 2005, NYAC (National Youth Advocacy Coalition) received a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention grant to increase the rates of HIV testing and test retrieval among African American LGBTQ youth ages 14–24 by building capacity among local agencies and conducting a public awareness campaign. The goal of the *You Know Different* campaign was a 100 percent increase in HIV testing and test retrieval in communities engaged in the campaign. The core challenges were to create a campaign that would resonate as authentic and representative with youth in three very different geographic regions, and to create very low-cost, grassroots strategies and tools that would give strategic partners the ability to reproduce materials easily and customize them based on their target populations.

STRATEGY: NYAC conducted formative focus groups with the target population to gain more specificity about trusted sources of HIV/AIDS information, how information should be delivered ("by people who look like me"), relevant messages and barriers to seeking HIV testing.

Subsequently, research and planning sessions were held with all participating partners in each campaign location, including a campaign group of youths who helped to deepen understanding of the unique cultural needs and capabilities of each community. In addition, a "digital ethnography" process was employed in which participating youths were given digital cameras and asked to "show us who you are." The resulting photographs created the basis for the campaign creative and the clear decision that this campaign would not work utilizing previous creative frames, but needed to utilize new creative developed specifically for this community.

Initial messages were developed based on the research, and a focus group of youths from each of the test location sites evaluated and responded to creative concepts and language. Using an interactive format, messages were finalized with this group. In addition, strategies for reaching youth were tested, and a grassroots network strategy was employed based directly on youth feedback.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: At the outset of the project, potential partners in the effort envisioned a traditional mass media public awareness campaign. As a result of the strategic approach employed, the campaign approach and creative shifted dramatically toward a youth-centered, youth-driven, grassroots outreach program. The campaign goal of a 100 percent increase in testing and test retrieval was exceeded by 20 percent. Results included:

- Number of youths contacting testing organizations increased more than 300 percent.
- Number of HIV tests scheduled increased 220 percent.
- Walk-in testing increased nearly 50 percent.
- HIV tests performed increased 120 percent.

African American LGBTQ youth helped craft messages and define images for this peer-to-peer campaign. A series of images was created for the cities in which the campaign was launched. *Metropolitan Group was engaged by NYAC to develop and implement a national social marketing campaign to increase HIV testing and test retrieval among African American youths ages 14–24.*

PRINCIPLE 3: Invest Before You Request:
Create community-centered partnerships

HISTORICALLY, THERE HAS BEEN A TENDENCY TO REACH OUT TO ORGANIZATIONS SERVING SPECIAL POPULATIONS at the point when issue advocates, or an institution, need help accessing a community or seek to serve this community. Too often the first introduction is a request for assistance in conducting outreach, sharing information, facilitating market research or referring participants to programs. In many cases, communication has been one way and self-centered — what can this person or organization do for us? Often the request or "offer to help" is framed in a manner that implies a deficiency. Though usually well-intentioned, the approach is easily perceived as "we are here to help you" and/or bring you services or programs that can "correct" the situation.

By investing in the community — learning about organizational needs, attending events and community forums, and participating in community-based efforts — you can build trust and build the foundation for long-term engagement. By taking this step first, before you have a specific programmatic request, you invest in building relationships that lead to long-term partnerships.

Further, by utilizing a strength-based approach — one in which you demonstrate trust in your audience's ability to identify and resolve their own issues — you set the groundwork to build more effective communication and programs that provide mutual benefit and advancement of mission.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES:

1. Treat leaders, organizations and community members as partners with whom you wish to engage, not as a "tool" for you to use. Don't let the first time a community hears from you be the moment when you want something. Build the relationship from the inside out. Before you ask, give. The creation of community-centered partnerships facilitates the development of long-term relationships.

2. Learn about a community's needs and assets, and seek to understand how you can add value. The organizations identified in your early research can be great resources. Quite often they are members of community coalitions and roundtables that meet regularly. Consider attending as a guest to listen to what key issues and concerns are surfacing in the community that you will be working with. Listen for opportunities to collaborate and share resources.

   It is only after you have invested in their work and helped meet their needs that you can ask others to invest in and support your efforts. This is particularly true of communities that have experienced disparities, injustices or any of the "isms." Trust must be earned through true willingness to understand the needs and assets of the community and through demonstrating that you want to work collaboratively and invest to add value.

3. Stay in touch. Once you establish a new relationship, maintain regular contact through periodic updates, calls and check-ins so that the relationship remains intact.

CASE EXAMPLE: The YMCA offers many examples of community-centered partnerships.

ISSUE: The YMCA of the Columbia-Willamette in Portland, Oregon, was interested in connecting with the fast-growing Latino population in the area. It wanted to increase Latino participation in programs, as volunteers and as potential donors to the organization.

STRATEGY: The YMCA's president was new to the area, recently relocated from Los Angeles, where he had worked extensively with Latino youth and families. He reached out to a local Latino-led community organization that served children and youth through a variety of programs. He offered transportation, access to facilities, and staff to lead nutrition and fitness classes free of charge.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The pilot program sparked multiple on-site programs and joint fundraising efforts over several years. The Latino organization gained access to quality facilities, expert staff, and curriculum about health, fitness and nutrition to supplement its educational and workforce development programs. Hundreds of children and teens benefited from year-round health and fitness programming. Over time, this relationship led to new Latino board members, an increase in Latino volunteers, and an increase in the number of Latino youths and families attending YMCA programs and services (the original goal). ■

The YMCA of the Columbia-Willamette reached out to a local Latino-led, community-based organization and offered transportation, facilities and staff for free fitness and nutrition programs, building relationships that resulted in Latino participation on the YMCA's board and in programs. *Metropolitan Group's Maria Elena Campisteguy was previously the executive director of the Oregon Council for Hispanic Advancement and worked in partnership with the YMCA on this project.*

PRINCIPLE 4: Develop Authentic Relationships:
Maintain a long-term perspective

AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS ARE THOSE THAT ENGAGE COMMUNITY MEMBERS in idea generation, feedback and decision-making. Such a relationship is patiently developed because there is no need to rush to get to know and understand each other. The relationship is based on a true sense of shared values and shared mission and is focused on ongoing collaboration rather than a specific project. Communication, contribution and commitment are all two-way.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES:

1. Go to the community. Don't expect community members to come to you until they know and trust you. This includes attending events and visiting venues that are important to the community on a regular basis. Depending on the issue and geographic scope, events and venues can include community fairs, community centers, schools, universities, markets, places of worship, civic clubs, and conferences and special events (local, regional or national).

2. Work with trusted allies. These are individuals and organizations that already have a relationship with members of the community and can help open doors and introduce you. Building relationships with trusted allies is an excellent investment of time and resources.

3. Don't become a "one-hit wonder," getting what you need and never coming back. Commit to the long term and take the initiative to follow up after completion of programs or initiatives to seek further collaboration and to understand where you can contribute to other priorities in the community.

4. Become an ally. Be supportive as issues important to the community come up, even if those issues are not always at the top of your own list of priorities. There is a critical role that individuals from outside a cultural group can play as effective and knowledgeable facilitators and advocates for change within a specific community.

   A great example of this goes back a few years, when a wave of anti-immigrant measures that originated in California appeared to take root in Oregon. Immediately, Basic Rights Oregon[11], the state's chief advocacy, education and political organization working to end discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity reached out to PCUN[12], an Oregon union of farmworkers, nursery and reforestation workers, which was also the state's largest Latino organization. Basic Rights Oregon offered its support as an ally in the fight against discrimination, including resources and research about what Oregonians thought of discrimination.

CASE EXAMPLE: New Seasons Market is a good example of developing authentic relationships.

ISSUE: New Seasons Market is a chain of Oregon grocery stores committed to building strong communities and supporting a healthy regional food economy and environment. Unlike many stores that carry a wide array of natural and organic foods, New Seasons has opened several stores in underserved neighborhoods that include the established African American community, a growing Latino population, and many new Southeast Asian and Eastern European immigrants. These stores are in locations that were abandoned by traditional grocers decades ago. New Seasons needed to establish community support to build the stores and a strong customer base in neighborhoods other grocers had considered unprofitable.

STRATEGY: New Seasons' CEO and other leaders began attending neighborhood meetings prior to siting new stores. They learned from community members that a major need and priority was bringing a grocery store with healthy food into the neighborhood. They garnered community feedback on store location, product mix and service needs. They began hiring and recruiting from the neighborhood for jobs in their other stores while new stores were in development. They participated in priority neighborhood projects, from street tree plantings to sponsoring a youth entrepreneurship program at one store site. They advocated as an ally of the community for improved transit and other needs.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: New Seasons opened two large stores in neighborhoods without a grocery store and hired staff at all levels that reflected the local community. The diverse customer base from the neighborhoods has made both stores very successful. New Seasons has forged strong community partnerships and relationships, providing it with allies on priority issues of food policy. In turn, New Seasons has been engaged as an ally for community development and economic equity priorities. Further, local communities have pointed to New Seasons as an example of the expectation they have for other companies that benefit from doing business in their neighborhood. ■

New Seasons Market invests in community before opening new stores, garnering input from the community, hiring from the community and being an advocate for key community needs, from public transit to street trees. *Metropolitan Group has worked with New Seasons Market as its agency of record since before the first store opened in 2000.*

PRINCIPLE 5: Build Shared Ownership:
Engage, don't just involve

AS YOU SEEK TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY IN YOUR WORK, LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES for the community to become vested in the mission that drives your work and its outcomes. Identify opportunities for leadership roles for members of the community and engage them as decision-makers and owners of strategy. Actively seek their guidance and input in evaluating and refining strategies and messages. When there is more than one cultural group that you wish to engage, identify the needs, values and motivators that the groups have in common and use these to develop messages and strategies that help unify the groups. This approach helps build community, ensure that groups do not feel they are in competition for attention or resources, and also helps to identify and elevate shared community needs and values that help shape ongoing community dialogue.

The possibilities for bringing people together can be as creative as you wish and will differ depending upon the program, needs and specific communities. Regardless of the format, ensure that your efforts are not superficially "involving" people for the sake of being able to say that input was received from community members. Rather, listen to and act upon advice and build programs where all partners describe them as "ours" and ask how "we" are going to succeed. Your response and feedback to input will be critical in building credibility, trust and ownership among community members.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES:

1. Make sure there are seats at the table. Develop input and decision-making structures that demonstrate and reinforce ownership. This engagement may take many forms, depending upon the project and communities. Whether ownership is built as a coalition, a steering committee, an advisory group, board-level counsel or a working group, the shared responsibility the process creates will result in much more effective and successful multicultural communication.

   For example, when CentroNía[13], a Washington, D.C.-based provider of bilingual and multicultural educational programs and family-support services for children from birth to age 18, needed a new brand, its process included hiring four teenagers from the center to work alongside writers and designers. The youths had "grown up" at the center; some had been there since their toddler years. As part of the project, a "Branding 101" course provided training for the students and, at the same time, provided the opportunity for them to teach the branding professionals about "their" organization. The result was a new brand that truly resonates with the African American and Latino communities the organization serves.

2. Establish shared decision-making and shared authority. Build coalitions and partnerships with groups from your target audiences. Identify protocols for participation and decision-making as well as for the joint development and facilitation of agendas and meetings.

3. Engage partners as "adaptors," not "adopters." Learn from the field and incorporate what you learn into communication program design and execution. Build feedback and testing sessions into overall strategies and allow time to make refinements based on that feedback. When Washington County (Oregon) developed its 20-year strategic plan, all of the diverse communities that make the county their home were invited to participate through a series of community forums, discussion groups and other opportunities for input. Farmers, high-tech professionals, retired seniors, Koreans, Hispanic migrant workers, and youth were among the populations that were actively sought out and engaged in developing and refining the plan. These seemingly disparate audiences had unifying needs and motivators. They shared an appreciation of and a commitment to the county where they lived and worked. They all had a common interest in ensuring a safe, clean and sustainable environment that promised quality of life for them and their families.

CASE EXAMPLE: The National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial is a good example of engaging communities.

ISSUE: The National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial[14] commemoration was being planned in the shadow of the controversial 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' arrival in America[15]. The latter event was perceived by many as divisive — as celebrating the beginnings of destructive impacts on Native Americans and perpetuating a myopic narrative that dismissed thousands of years of history and culture. To engage people in an important historical commemoration with relevancy to all Americans, a very different approach was required.

STRATEGY: From the start, the descendants of the tribes and bands that explorers Lewis and Clark encountered were part of a national coalition formed to determine the goals, vision and strategy of the Bicentennial. The coalition decided that the point of the commemoration should not be to tell Lewis and Clark's story, but rather to tell many stories through the diverse perspectives of this historic journey and the impact it had on all peoples.

Three themes emerged for the commemoration: understanding intercultural perspectives, understanding environmental stewardship, and understanding the importance of learning. The governing board of the coalition included many tribal leaders. A broader advisory board and independent programming organization, the Circle of Tribal Advisors, was established with leadership from 38 federally recognized tribes. Program exhibits, 13 national signature events and a national ad campaign, all speaking from diverse perspectives, told a more powerful story.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The decision to commemorate, not to celebrate, and to tell stories of mutual learning and impacts (positive and negative) created a national dialogue that built connections and increased understanding. It also created an extremely successful national program, garnering the participation of millions of Americans and massive media coverage that exceeded goals and is seen as a benchmark model for historic commemorations. Further, it drove lasting changes in curriculum, exhibits, commemorative signs and programs that changed the Lewis and Clark narrative and created strong connections to current issues of environmental stewardship and tribal sovereignty.

The Farther They Got From Civilization, The More Civilized They Became.

"If you think that the place that Lewis & Clark set out from 200 years ago was civilized and the places they went to were not, chances are you're looking at the wrong map. Because as Lewis & Clark began their quest for an all-water route to the Pacific, they left one civilization only to discover dozens of others. Diverse, thriving American Indian cultures whose hospitality and generosity, if anything, brought out the best in the explorers. After all, here was a military expedition that sought to avoid bloodshed. Here was a slave and an Indian woman who were encouraged to speak their minds. Here was one community journeying into another and being accepted because of their differences.

"For three years, Lewis & Clark and the 33-member Corps of Discovery traveled an 8,000-mile trail of tolerance, enlightenment and good will that, we'd soon find out, was too good to be true. What did they do so well that later generations would not do half as well? What can we learn today from their 200-year-old story? Visit Lewisandclark200.org and see what you discover. Because their trail still winds through us all.

"Walk with them and see what you discover."

(from an ad promoting the Circle of Tribal Advisors awareness campaign)

Metropolitan Group coordinated media placement of the Circle of Tribal Advisors' public awareness campaign and developed the overarching strategic framework and marketing strategy for the National Council of the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial.

PRINCIPLE 6: Walk Your Talk: *Lead by example*

ALL OF US HAVE HAD EXPERIENCES IN WHICH THE MESSAGE CONVEYED BY AN ORGANIZATION IS INCONSISTENT WITH ITS ACTIONS AND BEHAVIORS. The classic example is a retail business with a huge welcome sign in the window and a staff that ignores you. This is just a manifestation of the challenges audiences experience when the message doesn't match the experience.

If you say that your programs are flexible, open to all members of the community and based on community needs, then that must be what your audience experiences. If you commit to collaboration, then you must behave collaboratively. If you are committed to providing services to "everyone" in the community, your organization's staff, governance and partnerships need to reflect the community, and your resources need to benefit that community. Anything short of this tells audiences that you wish to engage that you're not authentic. It raises suspicion and erodes the foundation for trust. As discussed in Principle 5, the practices below are not limited to working with one cultural group at a time and can be applied to multiple audiences.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES:

1. Acknowledge the reality of your organization. Conduct a self-assessment: Examine who your organizational policymakers, decision-makers, and program or department managers are. Do they reflect the community in which you live and the customers and clients you serve? Who are your donors or investors? Have you diversified your base of support? Do the communities you serve also have the opportunity to reciprocate by investing in your work? If your organization does not reflect the diversity of the audiences you are hoping to engage, be transparent about your efforts and challenges. For most organizations, this is a journey. Clarity about your particular journey and real investments create a foundation for trust and collaboration.

2. Do what you say you believe others should do. When you set goals to broaden your reach and communicate internally about the importance of tapping into new markets or reaching new populations, make sure you are aligning your own organization's operations with your goals. Do your programs, products or services align with the cultural values and serve the needs of your diverse stakeholders? When you publicly espouse the value of embracing new and emerging communities, do your internal actions reflect these words? Are your governance structure, policies, staffing and supply chain reflective of your vision?

   Once you conduct your self-assessment, be diligent about creating a measurable and actionable plan that addresses the areas where you have fallen short. Your assessment should serve as a blueprint for how your organization will take action to better reflect the community that you serve and strengthen your multicultural communication competency.

3. Deliver on promises. Recognize that commitments made to partner organizations, customers, consumers of services, donors and voters are important with all audiences, and many multicultural groups may even hold you to a higher standard. As discussed above, historical experiences and current experiences of disparities create barriers to trust. A broken promise will be seen as a nearly unforgivable breach of confidence.

   To ensure that promises build faith and trust, make sure they are communicated clearly in diverse media (in person and in writing). Engage others in your organization and in the community you are working with to share the promise. Establish regular check-ins or other methods to ensure frequent communication when needed adjustments and changes can be mutually determined rather than turning into real or perceived broken promises.

CASE EXAMPLE: The Saint Paul Foundation is a good example of an organization that leads by example.

ISSUE: As the population of racial and ethnic minorities rapidly increased, the city and surrounding suburbs of St. Paul, Minnesota, began experiencing racial tensions. The Saint Paul Foundation is one of the largest community foundations in the country and a long-time community leader in its region. The Foundation recognized that a critical need in the community was to advance antiracism efforts.

STRATEGY: After the Foundation identified antiracism as a major priority, it reviewed its grant-making program and found disparities throughout the process. It made those disparities known and began a long-term commitment to revise programs and track results. The Foundation then commissioned deep community research on attitudes and behaviors concerning race and racism and developed *Facing Race: We're All in This Together*, a community outreach initiative to engage others in building an antiracist community. At the initiative's launch, a speech by the Foundation's president included an assessment of the organization's own diversity needs (board/staff diversity and multicultural training). She publicly made a commitment to address these needs, acknowledged that the road ahead would be bumpy, and highlighted the need for open communication and action.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The Foundation has increased the diversity of its staff and has brought a multicultural perspective to the forefront of all board discourse, conducted an internal climate assessment, provided training to staff and increased grantmaking to community-based organizations in communities of color. Along the way, the Foundation has experienced many successes and a few challenges with staff transitions and program communication. The Foundation addressed the challenges by working with community members to provide feedback and find solutions. ■

The Saint Paul Foundation recognized that talking about cultural and racial differences can be uncomfortable. The organization developed a tool to help community members engage in dialogue on race and walked its talk by focusing on its own needs and challenges as it engaged the community. *Metropolitan Group developed the* Facing Race: We're All in This Together *campaign in collaboration with The Saint Paul Foundation.*

PRINCIPLE 7: Relate, Don't Translate:
Place communication into cultural context

SUCCESSFUL MULTICULTURAL COMMUNICATION REQUIRES MORE THAN JUST TRANSLATING ENGLISH-LANGUAGE CONTENT. It requires embracing the social nuances of diverse cultural groups and markets and actively engaging them in the creation of relevant communication strategies, tools and messages that have the best opportunity to achieve the desired action. When existing strategies are deemed effective, the process of adaptation for new audiences is much broader than the words on a page. In fact, more important than which language to use in your materials is ensuring that the content resonates with the culture and identity of your audience.

Effective multicultural communication takes into account how people from a unique cultural, ethnic or racial group will interpret your messages, verbal or nonverbal. It entails appropriate interpersonal communication dynamics, the right context, and appropriate usage of culturally relevant imagery, vocabulary, vernacular, metaphors or slang. Translation makes things readable, not necessarily relevant. A better approach is to make a conscious choice between translating existing concepts that work, relating existing concepts into new images and words that convey ideas more effectively, or developing completely new creative (message frame, copy, imagery).

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES:

1. Determine if existing creative works for the audience and is based on cultural context. Review existing creative with advisors from the priority community and evaluate against the cultural context information you have gathered through your project planning. Can the core creative concept work with simple translation into other languages, can it be adapted to be a better cultural fit for your audience, or does new creative need to be developed? If the existing creative works, follow translation protocols to ensure quality (see Practice 5 below). Critical to this process is upfront identification of the desired behavior you want from your audience. For example, if the original communication refers audiences to a website for more information, then translation of the content on the outreach tool is not sufficient. It is important to ensure that when audiences get to that website, they find what they need in the language that they understand and expect, based on your communication that invited them to visit the website.

2. "Relate" the existing concept to the needs of your priority audience. If the existing creative idea works but the execution (images and copy) does not translate in ways that are meaningful to your audience, rework the creative by selecting new images and writing new copy that convey the core idea in the language and cultural context of your audience.

3. Develop new creative. If the core idea in existing creative approaches does not work as a translation or as a reworking, developing stand-alone creative that connects with the values, is relevant to the cultural context and meets the needs of your primary audience is far more cost-effective than investing in translations that do not work or can send negative messages. Remember, when developing, testing or adapting new creative, engage your audience and build ownership using methods discussed in Principles 2 and 5.

4. Establish clear translation protocols. To ensure high-quality translations that accurately convey your message, hire qualified, certified translators who are translating into their native language. Use a separate, independent, equally qualified reader to review the translation. Provide as much information and context as possible to both translators so they understand your audience, particularly in terms of subpopulation, age, reading levels and goals of the translated piece. Translated copy being laid out by a graphic designer should go through an additional round of review prior to going to print. Remember, your translation is a reflection of your organization. You should put as much care into it as you would when preparing and finalizing English-language materials.

5. Don't forget to implement. Translation does not equal dissemination. Quite often organizations use translations or new creative as an end goal and forget to think through the outreach and dissemination strategy. What happens when someone responds to your communication? Is there someone who

speaks the language on the other end to respond? If materials aimed at a mainstream audience are translated, and include reference to a website, are there linkages and information connected to that site that will support the desired call to action? Is the content on the site translated? Think through the lifecycle of any communication from the point of view of your primary audience and ensure that at each point they can easily get what they need.

CASE EXAMPLE: The *Lee y serás* campaign (an initiative of the National Council of La Raza, Scholastic Inc. and Verizon) is a good example of "relate, don't translate."

ISSUE: Currently, 86 percent of Latino fourth-graders and 91 percent of Latino eighth-graders in the U.S. read at or below basic skill levels. Fewer than 25 percent of Latino 17-year-olds can read at the skill level necessary for success in college and the increasingly high-tech workplace. This achievement gap actually begins before children enter kindergarten. A major goal of this national bilingual early-literacy initiative is to empower parents and child care providers to play a first teacher role.

STRATEGY: As the education system has increasingly encouraged learning English, non-English speaking parents do not receive encouragement for and may even be discouraged from reading to their children. Also, the traditional message of "Read to your children so they will be better prepared for school" does not resonate as well in the Latino community due to a belief by some segments of the community that learning begins in school, not at home. Clearly, traditional literacy frames would not work with this audience. New materials and a unique creative approach was needed in Spanish and best developed within a cultural context that the various Latino subpopulations could relate to.

The campaign's focus group research guided the development of a message framework that centered on succeeding in life, rather than the dominant literacy message frame, "Read to your child so they can succeed in school." Latino cultural strengths such as storytelling, and rhymes and singing were emphasized. Further, based upon an understanding of the work-life demands (another cultural context factor) of the primary audience, the message frame highlighted how talking, telling stories and singing to children could be incorporated into parents' daily activities.

By recognizing that many parents have multiple jobs and cannot meet the demands of traditional messages that call for a set amount of time spent reading each day, the campaign created a culturally relevant frame that was effective with parents and primary caregivers. Six pilot campaign markets were selected to reflect cultural needs of specific subpopulations such as Chicanos and Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles, Cubans and South Americans in Miami, and Puerto Ricans and Dominicans in New York.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Initial impact assessments in the six markets show very promising success. Parents involved in the program clearly and enthusiastically articulate and act on their first teacher role and articulate the core messages of the campaign in their own words when describing what is important for their children to succeed. Cultural aspects of the program such as rhymes, stories and songs have been particularly well received.

Lee y Serás
Listo para la escuela, listo para el futuro

The National Council of La Raza, Scholastic Inc. and Verizon are actively working to support Latino families in helping their children succeed in life through an innovative early literacy/cognitive development program delivered through community organizations. The research-based campaign encourages storytelling and is based on a message frame focused on succeeding in life that resonated more powerfully than the dominant literacy message frame of success in school.
Metropolitan Group helped design and implement the campaign.

PRINCIPLE 8: Anticipate Change:
Be prepared to succeed

IF DONE CORRECTLY, OVER TIME, THE APPLICATION OF A MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVE TO AN ORGANIZATION'S COMMUNICATION AND WORK CREATES ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE. Organizations move from a monocultural perspective that does not acknowledge differences to one that values, utilizes and engages diverse perspectives. This change occurs not just at the personal level (beliefs and attitudes of individuals) and interpersonal level (how individuals in the organization communicate with each other and with stakeholders), but also at institutional (policies, procedures) and cultural (organizational norms, expectations) levels.

Bringing new people into your organization, especially those from a cultural group that has not been previously engaged — be they staff, volunteers, clients, customers, members, investors, donors or community partners — will naturally change the dynamics of your organization. It may change how the organization is structured, governed and staffed. It may impact how consensus is built, how meetings are managed and how decisions are made. It may impact how a product is reformulated or how a marketing campaign is planned and executed. When conducting multicultural communication, answer the questions: "Are we prepared to succeed?" "Are we ready for change?"

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES:

1. Recognize that your process and approach to the work may change. Traditional ways of working within an organization may change, based on having new people at the table who may hold a different worldview than your own. They may bring different ways of thinking and may have different needs for discussing and processing information. For example, in Native American communities, the need to process information and hold several conversations before driving for a decision is very important. This is how authentic relationships and trust are built. To drive through an agenda with new information and immediately push to a decision would create distrust and distress. Embrace the change and see the value in new approaches. Be patient with the change process. Don't be afraid to ask for feedback from community members or to ask lots of questions.
2. Continue to build infrastructure to support multicultural success. As your programs, initiatives and organization change, it will be critical to support the changes with intentional recruitment, retention and training, and capacity building for staff and board members. Consider adopting organizational policies that publicly commit to and support a multicultural environment. In addition, it is important to strengthen internal and external communication programs to regularly update stakeholders and to document new ways of operating, learnings, community feedback, impact and results. The investment of resources to support infrastructure for a multicultural environment will provide strong returns in increased relevance and impact.

CASE EXAMPLE: The National Assembly on School-Based Health Care is a good example of an organization prepared to succeed.

ISSUE: In 2004, the National Assembly on School-Based Health Care (NASBHC) committed to applying a multicultural perspective to its work at all levels of the organization. This included authentic engagement with the communities that the organization and its member affiliates serve. These populations include communities of color and youth. The organization had struggled in the past with how to include youths at its annual convention in a way that was healthy, safe and meaningful for them and for adult participants.

STRATEGY: The staff and board members attended multicultural development training as a team. This enabled them to establish a common vocabulary and mutually agreed upon guidelines for discussing and celebrating cultural differences among the staff and membership. The opportunity gave them a consciousness about multiculturalism that now plays out much more intentionally in the public face of the organization (website images, speakers, staff, board, etc.). They looked at staff and board composition,

studied annual conference workshops and presenters, and recruited a diverse committee to review all communication materials to assess and improve application of a multicultural lens.

Additionally, one staff person's time was shifted to focus on youth engagement at the national convention and to identify opportunities for authentic youth engagement within the organization, such as a youth advisory board. The 2008 convention marked the first time the organization incorporated a comprehensive youth track planned by young people. Several teams of youths from around the country were invited as presenters. The organization offered partial scholarships to encourage youth participation.

NASBHC is currently establishing relationships with community- and faith-based organizations with youth constituents and developing a plan to reach out to other strategic partners. Once a quarter, the staff come together for frank discussions about disparities relating to oppression. The executive director carries with him guidelines for successful multicultural communication, and those guidelines are integrated into all internal and external meetings and posted in the organization's conference room.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The organization now has a more diverse staff and board of directors, and hundreds of youths are being engaged in its work and in the work of its affiliates. Communication tools have been revised to more accurately reflect the organization and its constituents. Many of the affiliates have also attended intensive multicultural development training and are identifying and implementing opportunities for applying a multicultural lens to their policy and advocacy work.

NASBHC National Assembly on School-Based Health Care

The National Assembly on School-Based Health Care (NASBHC) made a commitment to engage all the diverse communities the organization and its affiliates serve and identified youth engagement as an area of challenge. It provided multicultural training for staff, shifted resources to create support for youth engagement, created a youth advisory board and developed ways for youth to participate in and make presentations at the organization's national convention. *Metropolitan Group served as NASBHC's interim communications director and also provided resource development services and strategic counsel.*

Conclusion

Effective multicultural communication is a critical factor in engaging and garnering support from the full spectrum of voters, donors, customers, constituents and stakeholders that make up the American mosaic. By applying the eight principles and their accompanying practices, your organization can better advance your goals and mission and help create a stronger and more equitable society. While there are many nuances, approaches and perspectives to learn and apply, ultimately it all comes down to what we like to call the 3Rs: **Relevance**, **Relationships** and **Results**.

Please feel free to share this material with others, to model this approach, and to speak out as a champion for the increased understanding and engagement that result from effective multicultural communication.

More information is available at **www.metgroup.com**.

About the Authors

Principal author

Maria Elena Campisteguy, Executive Vice President/Principal

Maria Elena leads MG's multicultural communication practice, bringing to her work three decades of experience with communities of color, immigrant populations and youth as an advocate, marketer, program developer, coach and consultant. Internationally, she has worked throughout Latin America, Africa and Japan. More recently she has worked with some of the nation's leading Latino advocacy, education and media organizations, including National Council of La Raza, Hispanic Scholarship Fund, National Hispana Leadership Institute and National Association of Hispanic Journalists. She has designed and implemented hundreds of diversity trainings, programs, outreach and social marketing campaigns to increase participation and engagement of traditionally underserved communities. Recent work on behalf of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation School-Based Health Care Policy Program includes developing a suite of tools for discussing issues of health care access within Native American communities and writing several articles on authentic youth engagement and applying a multicultural lens to policy work. She co-authored "The Power of Effective Communications" for *Exchange,* a publication of the Land Trust Alliance.

Co-authors

Eric Friedenwald-Fishman, Creative Director/President

Eric is widely recognized as one of the nation's most effective experts in developing and implementing strategic communication and resource development campaigns that engage diverse stakeholders and get results. He specializes in creating major public will building campaigns that build lasting social change. He has led MG in raising more than $1 billion in partnership with our clients. He is the principal author of Metropolitan Group's Public Will Framework, a process that creates lasting impact by connecting issues with closely held values and leveraging grassroots and traditional media strategies. He is co-author of *Marketing That Matters*, a book on marketing practices that benefit social purpose organizations and change the world. The book has received international interest and has been translated into Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Portuguese.

Laura K. Lee Dellinger, Senior Executive Vice President/Principal

Laura is an award-winning and nationally recognized leader in strategic communication. She leads MG's strategic communication practice and is widely respected for her skill in developing branding and communication strategies, social marketing and public will building campaigns, multicultural communication programs, grassroots support programs, trainings, workshops and signature events. She is co-author of MG's "Building Public Will" article and has written other published articles, speeches, legislative testimony, and a book chapter on social movement rhetoric. Laura has deep experience in the use of community involvement strategies and tactics to engage diverse audiences in community-based solutions and advocacy campaigns to address complex challenges and issues.

Brian Detman, Vice President

Brian leads MG's national new business development efforts. He brings to his work more than 14 years of combined experience in outreach, facilitation and recruitment in diverse communities; direct service and education for children and youth; and community relations and grassroots involvement. He has worked extensively with local, community-based organizations and advocates as a professional, volunteer and leader. Throughout his career, he has been committed to increasing access to educational opportunity, working closely with African American, Latino and Native American students, as well as those who are the first generation in their families to attend college.

Jennifer Gilstrap Hearn, Vice President

Jennifer has 10 years of experience helping organizations discover, distill and achieve their vision. She blends communication expertise with a unique understanding of the special needs of nonprofits and public agencies to build capacity and develop effective strategies that create results. She is the leader of MG's organizational development practice area, bringing to this work a deep understanding of how to capture and focus the energy of individuals and groups to help them achieve their goals. She is also a co-author of Metropolitan Group's Public Will Framework.

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About Metropolitan Group

Metropolitan Group is a full-service social change agency that crafts and integrates strategic communication, resource development and creative services that empower social purpose organizations to build a just and sustainable world.

Metropolitan Group was founded in 1989 and has offices in Chicago; Portland, Oregon; San Francisco; and Washington, D.C.

We work exclusively on behalf of social purpose organizations — nonprofits, foundations, socially responsible businesses and government/public agencies. We work as a team with our clients to create results, including sustainable attitudinal and behavioral change, increased product and program use, and expanded revenues and capacity.

Our four practice areas are:

Multicultural Communication

Resource Development

Strategic Communication

Organizational Development

Multicultural Communication

Metropolitan Group is one of the leading agencies in the nation specializing in multicultural communication and outreach to engage traditionally underserved communities. We know that engaging diverse communities requires an understanding of their cultural context, genuine collaboration with community partners, involvement of priority audiences, and the development of creative and strategic products that effectively reach specific communities and provide powerful connections to closely held values and other motivators. By investing in engagement, deep audience understanding and building relationships, multicultural communication conveys an authentic relevance that empowers communities and individuals while broadening the reach and impact of organizations.

The multicultural communication services we provide include audience-specific message development; development of nontraditional message delivery channels; culturally specific media relations; facilitation of partnerships and coalitions; public will building initiatives; communication strategies addressing issues of disparity and disproportionality; evaluation of services and programs for cultural competence; and audience-specific public involvement, outreach and marketing plans.

Our clients are clustered in 10 focus areas:

Children, Youth and Families

Community and Economic Development

Environment and Sustainability

Foundations

Government/Public Agencies

Heritage, Arts and Culture

Libraries and Literacy

Public Health

Social Justice and Human Rights

Socially Responsible Business

Footnotes

[1] The terms "Latino" and "Hispanic" are used interchangeably throughout this document to refer to persons of Cuban, Central and South American, Dominican, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Spanish and other Hispanic descent; they may be of any race. Both terms are used by the U.S. Census Bureau.

[2] The institution of slavery in North America began soon after colonization and continued until ratification of the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution on December 18, 1865.

[3] Women were not granted the right to vote until the 1920s, the result of the women's suffrage movement begun in 1848 by activists such as Susan B. Anthony. In 1870, voting rights of former slaves were initiated with the 15th Amendment to the Constitution, prohibiting the government from using race or color to determine voter eligibility. However, intimidation and violence, as well as the Southern states' "Jim Crow" segregation laws, greatly hindered African Americans' ability to vote until passage of the National Voting Rights Act of 1965.

[4] The Great Depression was a lengthy, worldwide economic slump that began a slow downward turn in 1928. In the U.S., it was greatly associated with Black Tuesday, the stock market crash of October 1929. The Depression persisted until the United States' 1941 entry into World War II, when the military's need for heavy industrial output and technological innovation reinvigorated the national economy.

[5] The chronology of the American civil rights movement arguably began with the Supreme Court ruling in 1954 on Brown v. Board of Education (overturning longstanding "separate but equal" segregation precedents) and continued beyond the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968.

[6] President John F. Kennedy was shot while riding in an open limousine through Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968, outside his motel room in Memphis, Tennessee.

[7] On April 20, 1999, two students at Littleton, Colorado's Columbine High School opened fire on their fellow students and teachers, killing or wounding 25 people before taking their own lives, sparking a national debate on youth culture and gun violence.

[8] On September 11, 2001, four passenger airliners were hijacked by members of a terrorist organization and used in a coordinated attack: one flight crashed in rural Pennsylvania, while another flew into Pentagon headquarters in Washington, D.C. The other two planes were flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, culminating in their collapse. More than 3,000 people died as a result of the attacks, which are now referred to as "9/11."

[9] Woodstock, a.k.a. The Woodstock Music and Art Fair, was held in rural New York State in mid-August 1969. The historic festival — "Three Days of Peace and Music" — has since become a familiar American cultural touchstone of the "hippie" era, suggesting a shared antiwar sentiment, opposition to mainstream social norms, relaxed communal values, youthful hedonism and artistic exploration.

[10] An influx of migrant farm workers into California following the droughts of the 1930s forced wages down while the labor demands of the agriculture industry grew. Labor shortages caused by World War II led Congress to allow the hiring of farm workers for pennies a day, in unsatisfactory living conditions and with constant exposure to toxic pesticides. In the late 1960s, Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, leaders of the United Farm Workers (UFW), organized a regional boycott of San Joaquin Valley vineyards, which resulted in the first collective bargaining agreements for farm workers in U.S. history and growing national public support for farmworkers' rights.

[11] www.basicrights.org

[12] PCUN is also known as Piñeros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste, translated as Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United (www.pcun.org).

[13] As part of the rebrand, CentroNía's name was derived from the universal language of Esperanto ("centro" means center, nía means "our") and Swahili ("nia" means purpose). www.centronia.org

[14] In 1803, U.S. President Thomas Jefferson recruited Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to explore the largely unknown (to European Americans) Western territory — The Louisiana Purchase — which the U.S. had just acquired from France. The Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804–1806) became the first overland expedition to the Pacific Ocean and back.

[15] Explorer Christopher Columbus' initial 1492 ocean voyage to the Americas has been hailed both as "the discovery of the New World" and the advent of tyranny over the region's indigenous cultures.

Additional Resources for You from Metropolitan Group

The social purpose work of nonprofits, socially and environmentally responsible businesses, and public agencies transforms lives every day. And in an increasingly diverse world, effectively engaging people from a wide range of backgrounds, ethnicities and cultures is key to success and sustainable change.

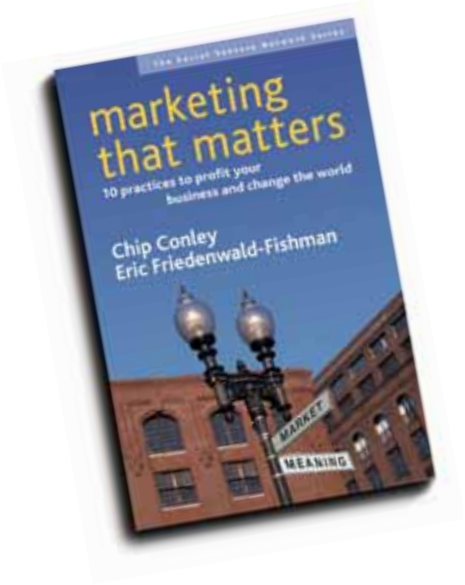
Metropolitan Group's capacity- and skill-building services empower leaders, learners, facilitators, organizers, advocates and volunteers to strategically and creatively achieve short- and long-term goals and advance mission.

Resource topic areas include:

- Advocacy
- Marketing Communication
- Resource Development
- Multicultural Communication
- Public Will Building

Building capacity for the world's change agents.

Additional Resources for You from Metropolitan Group



Marketing That Matters: 10 Practices to Profit Your Business and Change the World

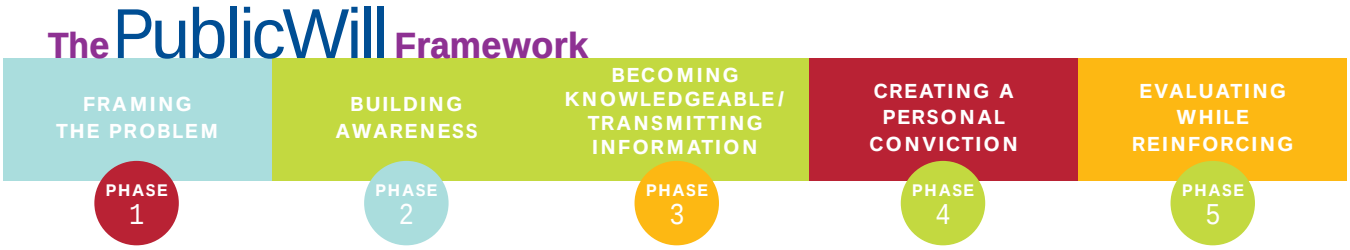
The book on socially responsible marketing.

Metropolitan Group's Creative Director/President, **Eric Friedenwald-Fishman**, co-authored *Marketing That Matters* with Chip Conley, founder and CEO of Joie de Vivre Hospitality (www.jdvhospitality.com). *Marketing That Matters* is a practical guide to strategic marketing that helps large and small organizations improve their bottom line while advancing their values.

Published by Berrett-Koehler and translated into Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Portuguese.

Available at most local bookstores and at www.svnbooks.com, www.powells.com, and www.amazon.com.

Download our article on **The Public Will Framework**, a process that creates lasting impact by connecting issues with closely held values and leveraging grassroots and traditional media strategies.
Available at **www.metgroup.com**



To download additional practical tips and tools, please visit **www.metgroup.com/tipsandtools**

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INCREASING Relevance | Relationships AND Results:

PRINCIPLES & PRACTICES FOR EFFECTIVE MULTICULTURAL COMMUNICATION

"If you are not thinking about communicating to multicultural audiences, you should be. This presentation offers excellent recommendations that enable communicators to effectively amplify their messages with changing audiences. All of us in the communications field need to be engaged in this effort every day of the year."

—**Mark Gould**, Director, Public Information Office
American Library Association

"Brilliant approach that is desperately needed in the work that we do in our multicultural communities, grounded in reality, practical and user-friendly."

—**Terri D. Wright**, MPH, Program Director
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

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