

Saturday, April 13 1:30pm-3:00pm

How Can We Have a Brand Voice Without Good Internal Communication?

Track: Communications

Location: Symphony I

Session Designer: Steve Heye

Hashtag: [#13NTCvoice](#)

myNTC page: <http://myntc.zerista.com/event/member/65211>

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Important: Before you start to implement anything from this session, you should document your brand and list the characteristics of your brand voice. Make sure leadership is involved and on board with your brand voice and allowing everyone to communicate for your brand.

Feeding America Case Study

Feeding America is a network of 202 community food banks. They get donations and then distribute food across the nation. Food banks all have different branding (logos, fonts, colors, etc.)

They have staff person solely dedicated to internal communications who coordinates with others. They have an intranet for the food bank network. It includes things like food safety guidelines, messaging guidelines, etc.

Weekly email to all of the food banks plus emails directly to different affinity groups within the food banks.

Other internal communications: Staff meetings, internal conferences, webinars, toolkits.

How did they come up with the brand positioning statement? Worked with a brand consultant, started with 12 concepts, narrowed it down, surveyed the public and then chose a winner based on data. Stats to backup their choice was key in getting people to accept.

Question: How deeply do you go into prescribing how they can use your logo? Feeding America doesn't have a lot of rules about this because sometimes the local food banks have better brand recognition in their communities.

The Y exercises more control--doing site inspections to make sure branding is up to par.

These two different approaches reflect two very different strategies about logos/branding across wider networks/national organizations.

They came up with the Feeding America brand positioning statement. A bit longer than a mission statement, clarifies to the stakeholders what you do.

Question: Can you give additional examples about what you provide your member orgs on your intranet? Sample press releases, sample social media posts, logos, other graphics, sample newsletter copy (as many assets as we can for communications). We talk about it in emails, webinars, and make people aware of the materials.

Question: Do you track how often people download intranet materials? Yes, we have an internal communications specialist who oversees our analytics. You need to build momentum and excitement around pushing the tool forward. A gradual cultural shift is necessary to get people to use these tools in your organization.

YMCA Case Study

Impressions of the rebranding? More colorful, energizing and inviting.

True intent of the rebranding was actually to re-shape the org as not a place to go, but a cause to support. However, what most people saw was the color and name branding, not the subtle differences in messaging.

What The Y *wanted* to do was to help enable staff to tell the STORY of The Y. Provided guidelines of how to tell good stories about showing impact in the community.

In Chicago, they were supposed to help roll out this new effort. Some resources they used: content calendar, comment escalation process, content templates

Documented comment escalation process to help people learn how to respond to criticism online. Many people were already good at responding to problems in real life, but many needed guidance about how to respond to those things online. They were very clear and strict about what kinds of things they could respond to and what kind of things needed to be deleted, escalated, documented, etc.

The Y also created a little hub/intranet for “digital editor resources” and celebrated good examples. Celebrating good examples created a positive outlook from staff and encouraged people to share each

other's stuff. Stressed that everyone is on the same team.

Providing technology and tools didn't turn people into digital authors. Helping and rewarding good examples along the way helped elevate some people, though.

The Cara Program Case Study

Everyone in this organization knows the mission and knows what they do to help achieve the mission and can tell you this on the spot.

Every desk has a laminated version of the mission statement. Artwork on the walls feature the organization's core values. In staff meetings, the organization forces staff to articulate things around these core values and call out/give kudos to other staff members who represent the core values in their daily work.

Take time to tell stories internally. They don't have an intranet -- just a fileserver/shared drives.

How do you get your staff to practice sharing stories internally? One idea (that didn't work for them) might be an internal blog where anyone can post.

Sharing success stories with all staff helps everyone. If leadership can respond to those stories, even better.

Question: People WANT to tell stories, but not everyone knows HOW. What are some great ways to HELP people tell stories?

Blog post: Top 5 Ways to Trick Your Staff Into Telling a Story

One way was to ask staff questions, write the story, then send it back to them so they see a good example. Tell them, "you have a good story" but then show them the best way to tell it and they will improve.

Question: advice for small nonprofits to incorporate this work? Determine your organization's voice first and then communicate and work on that with all staff.

Capture content instead of requiring people to write content. Ask questions and do little audio interviews.

Sometimes people do a good job of telling their story out loud even if they can't or don't want to write it down.

Question about The Y: What do they do if a chapter isn't listening to the brand standards? Not much... But peer pressure kind of helped people want to comply. People also got rewarded for doing a good job.

Question: How do you transition from a shared drive to an intranet? Talk about what immediate need an intranet would fix. Find out what is annoying about the current system and then find out what will fix that.

Some messaging advice: Shorten and streamline your message over and over again. Give people the

shortest message and post the middle version online for people to read more.

YouTube Capture App - forces people to film in the correct orientation and then uploads directly to YouTube

More resources: <http://ymcachicagoit.wordpress.com>

The Nonprofit Technology Conference uses Google Docs for collaborative note taking during sessions. The notes you record here benefit everyone! Here are some tips:

1. Work together! Anyone can take notes. If someone is taking notes already, start another paragraph and contribute another point. Or help them out by tidying up typos and formatting.
2. Use bullet points, lists, and headers to organize information. Keep paragraphs concise.
3. Refer back to the slides available for the session.
4. Have fun, and thanks for helping out!

[Link back to master notes](#)