



CREATING THE FUTURE

Change the Questions, Change the World!

Communications Strategy – Conditions for Success ***December 2019***

In developing a communications strategy for Creating the Future, Catalytic Thinking guides us to lay out the cause-and-effect dominoes that will lead to our desired results. The actions we design and act upon will then lead those dominoes to topple in the direction of our success.

The following are the questions we asked and the answers we explored during [Meeting #2](#) of this strategy design effort, to define each of those dominoes.

For our mission to be successful, and for people to connect to us and each other in service to that mission, what would people need to KNOW?

- People need to know that the need is urgent, for re-imagining social change support systems to reflect the equitable, cooperative world we want to see. To quote Greta Thunberg, that the house is on fire. The current systems are not sustainable, either for social change work itself (e.g. [a recent Chronicle of Philanthropy survey](#) noting that 51% of fund development professionals plan to leave their jobs in the next 2 years) nor for accomplishing the change we all want to see.
- People need to know that on the other side of urgency is hope. There is a path to our potential. That path includes each other. WE are the ones we've been waiting for. And that is possible because ANYONE can change a single question they are asking, to create dramatically different results.
- People need to know that times have changed. People's expectations of the social change arena have changed, while the tools and approaches that are supposed to create and support that change have remained the same. Things that DID work in the old days no longer do work. And importantly, our definitions of "worked" have changed, to focus on end results in communities vs. means (raising money). And with the 2018 Giving USA results, it appears that even raising money isn't working as people hope.
- People need to know [the brain science of what happens when we are forced to compete for the means to survive](#) (only one org gets to do the work).
- People need to know the Cultural roots of our survival focus
 - That the scarcity story and competition is just one story of reality. We can create systems rooted in a different story of reality.
 - When people come together, we accomplish more
 - Because our brains are hard wired to simultaneously NEED each other and SUSPECT each other, it is even more critical that systems lead us to cooperate to survive and thrive, because systems create a comfort zone when we are not comfortable, easing the way for actions that are aligned with those systems.



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For our mission to be successful, and for people to connect to us and each other in service to that mission, what would people need to FEEL?

- People need to feel valued and honored for the work they've done so far, and for the desire for things to work more effectively.
- People need to feel safe – that our intent is to work towards what is possible vs. blaming and pointing fingers
 - For people to feel safe, they need to see OUR vulnerability, so that they will feel safe being vulnerable.
- People need to feel invited to share their wisdom, insights, and perspectives. They need to feel confident that they have wisdom to share, AND that we are eager for them to share it.
- People need to feel excited by what is possible. They need to see this work as a reality check against pessimism.
- People need to feel that everyone is bringing something to the table, that even a small organization is contributing to making a big difference. We are all contributing to the whole.
- People need to feel we all have the same mission: Enhancing the quality of all life on planet earth.
- People need to feel heard, listened to
- People need to feel psychological rewards for connecting and cooperating
- People need to feel they're not alone. "I thought it was only me!" They have colleagues, collaborators, co-conspirators.
- People need to feel their own agency. Because when you see yourself as having agency in one place, that will ripple into stepping into your own agency in other settings.
- People need to value people more than stuff. What we really value is what we take action on. Despite our words, our actions show our true values.
 - Our culture tends to DEVALUE connection (takes too long, has no ROI. "Will they give us money?")
 - Our culture tends to HIGHLY value money, metrics, speed



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For our mission to be successful, and for people to connect to us and each other in service to that mission, what would people need to SEE / HEAR?

- People need to see / hear stories / examples
- People need to see what it looks like when hierarchy is flattened – how much hierarchy is in the current systems ([See the video at 51:35](#) for details)
Government / Funders → Programs → people
- People need to see that the current systems negate the ability to learn from each other
 - [Great examples at 52:55](#)
- People need to see that resources DO exist when we focus on REAL STUFF vs money – making the invisible visible. ([See 1:09:50](#) and then the example that begins at 1:24:25)
 - We de-value the things we really need (stuff) and we instead HIGHLY value the means of exchange (money) that gets us what we need.
- People need to see that resource sharing is a powerful way of building and maintaining connections.
- People need to see that our work is honoring and contributing to ideas and efforts that are already happening, that may not have been named / made explicit – that we are not claiming to be inventing something new.
- People need to hear language that makes sense to THEM
- People need to see a way of picturing themselves in what's to come – I see myself NOW in what I do. I can't picture myself in that future. What would I be DOING?
- People need to see easy ways to share what they hear / learn
- People need to see how labels exclude, even when well-intentioned.
 - “Latino” is used in the US to describe anyone who speaks Spanish. If one comes from Spain, they are lumped in, even though they are NOT Latino. “What about an indigenous person from Guatemala? Are they lumped in with everyone else?” By labeling, people feel like an outsider in the Anglo world AND in the Latino world. What is my identity? Where do I belong? *People therefore do not feel invited to the conversation.*



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For our mission to be successful, and for people to connect to us and each other in service to that mission, what would people need to BELIEVE?

- People need to believe that a different way is possible (examples)
- People need to believe that sharing is not (as is currently seen) a weakness, something you do when you can't afford to buy your own or if you're a hippie
- People need to believe that they are shaping Creating the Future's efforts vs. having a fait accompli handed to them and asking, "So, what do you think?" That we are building it together, exploring together.