

**Nonprofit 911 – November 27, 2007**  
**Getting Attention & Raising Money:**  
Creating Compelling Experiences of Persuasion with Kile Ozier  
Sponsored by Network for Good  
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**Jono Smith:** Hello everyone, and welcome to the November 27th, Nonprofit 911, sponsored by Network For Good. My name is Jono Smith and I work in nonprofit marketing, here at Network For Good. If you've participated in these Nonprofit 911 calls before, I wanted to take the opportunity to welcome you back. And if you're a first time visitor, we're really happy that you decided to spend an hour with us today.

Network For Good, in case you're not familiar with us, is a non-profit, just like you are. Our mission is to help other non-profits raise money online. These training calls are a free service to the nonprofit community to help you improve your fundraising results and your marketing results. We also provide online fundraising services directly to non-profits, including donation processing, email outreach and donor database. Well this is not a sales call. I would invite you to visit our website at [www.Fundraising123.org](http://www.Fundraising123.org) to learn more about how you can take advantage of our services for free this holiday season.

We've had over 300 people register for today's call, 'Getting Attention and Raising Money' with our special guest, Kile Ozier. A few housekeeping items before we get started: All lines have been muted and this call is being recorded. You should have received an email from us this morning with a copy of the slides for today's call. Now if you did not receive that you can logon to [www.Fundraising123.org](http://www.Fundraising123.org) right now, and you can download the slides from there. They're posted as a pdf file.

And if you need to reach us for any reason today during the call, you can email us at [Fundraising123@networkforgood.org](mailto:Fundraising123@networkforgood.org). Also if you'd like to ask our speaker, Kile, a question at anytime during the call, we'll be taking your questions at the end. You can email us at anytime, again, at [Fundraising123@networkforgood.org](mailto:Fundraising123@networkforgood.org).

I'd also like to remind you to save the date for our next Nonprofit 911 on Friday, December 7th, at 3PM Eastern Time. Mark Rovner of Sea Change Strategies will be our special guest and he'll be sharing tips from his recently published, "Procrastinator's Guide to Year End Fundraising". So if you haven't planned your holiday fundraising efforts, it's not too late. Mark will help you jump-start those efforts.

So at this point, I would like to go ahead and introduce today's speaker, Kile Ozier, who is joining us from his home in New York City. Kile has built messaging experiences for over 25 years across a myriad of contexts. In higher education, he has created campaigns totaling over \$3 billion for such institutions as Stanford, Harvard Law School and Johns Hopkins. Kile is also the founder of a really wonderful organization, one of the most respected AIDS funding organizations in the United States, San Francisco's Academy of Friends.

He's been cited for the quality and efficacy of the experiences he creates by a wide range of organizations, everything from the United States Navy to the Themed Entertainment Association. Our next 911 speaker, Mark Rovner, has described Kile as "half-showman and half-fundraiser", and I think you'll see why that description fits today. You can learn more about Kile at his website, [www.KileOzier.com](http://www.KileOzier.com). We are extremely pleased that Kile has donated his time today. So without further ado, I'm going to turn the floor over to Kile Ozier. Welcome.

**Kile Ozier:** Thank you very much. Actually it's been interesting wrapping up today's presentation. It's like walking onto a stage in a literally pitch black theater and having no eye contact with anyone, and not even knowing how many people are out there. So this is a new experience for me as well to do it by phone. Since I don't really have any feedback from the audience and you have the slides in front of you, I'm going to talk through the presentation. We'll just get started and take questions at the end, which is exactly what Jono said.

The first slide after the title slide is my 'Zen' slide, my favorite place on the planet, Newport, Oregon. I always take a minute to look at that and take a deep breath before I start any big project, and remember that there are peaceful places on the planet. What I'm going to do in my presentation today is talk about these three subjects, which are divided into three sections: the science and cultural anthropology that really lies behind the methodologies that I apply to any project. I'll go through the methodologies in ways that can be applied, and I've got some examples of film and some case studies I can share with you all very briefly.

As Jono said, I work across a lot of different contexts. Essentially what I do is tell stories experientially, and that applies primarily to fundraising and marketing. I do some stadium work and some theme park work as well. I like making large groups of people weep and if I can make them write checks at the same time, that's even better. So, onto the science.

All of this stuff can be googled if you want deeper background. On Slide 4, we have spindle cells and mirror neurons. Some of you may know this, in the last four or five years, there have been some incredible discoveries in the way the brain is built, which was a surprise to me because I thought that part of our physiology was already

well-mapped out. This new class of neuron is an even faster-acting neuron than your standard neuron, and they're all over the brain.

With the mirror neuron, we can sense the move another person is about to make and that person's feelings about that move, which readies us, involuntarily, to imitate the movement and feel with them. It's really the fount of empathy. It was discovered by an Italian scientist who was training a bunch of monkeys. I can't exactly remember what he was training them to do, but as he was training the one group, the monkeys that were still in their cages along the wall learned and performed the same tasks as the control group.

When I started reading this I remembered an anecdote about twin brothers, from 10 or 15 years ago. They took one brother and taught him to play basketball while the other one sat on the sidelines and watched. And then after a certain period of time, the one who watched actually had skills very close to that of his brother. All of this really supports my position that as society becomes more and more clogged with data and input and people are busier, there is a deep-seated physiological need for a shared emotional experience and for connecting to other people.

What a lot of us do in the fundraising context is essentially a shared emotional experience, to connect people to a mission or an institution in such a way that they are moved or compelled to support it in some way - hopefully with money. Onto Slide 5, which again is more of the science here on the brain-to-brain linkup. When the eyes of a woman, who a man finds attractive, look directly at him, his brain secretes dopamine. Not when she looks away but when the eyes make contact. Again, this is underscoring my thesis that people really need to connect.

And here are some interesting facts on Slide 6. I think it's fascinating that in 1963, T.S. Elliot made this observation that television is "permitting millions of people to laugh at the same joke, the same time, yet remaining lonesome". That was 40 odd years ago, and of course, we're seeing the evolution of that. Usually when I make a presentation, I'm revealing these line by line, but this is an interesting way to approach it. You can see in front of you the amount of time that Americans spent watching television. Number 7, every hour on the Internet reduces face-to-face contact with family and friends by 24 minutes.

I like this quote about how "you can't get a hug or a kiss over the Internet, although you can order out", but that's not anything we want to share with our clients. The iPod. Again, you've all seen it and everybody complains about it, the iPod and the cell phone. People get so wrapped up in what they're listening to or the person they're talking to they really aren't here now. They aren't aware of their own environment, and it's easy to ignore people around you.

You've probably seen this too. At my own drug store, down the street, there's a sign at the cash register at the pharmacy that says, "If you're on your cell phone, we won't be dealing with you until you've hung up", which I really like.

There's the anecdote on the Hot & Crusty Bakery at Central Station, where Rosie Garcia is the owner. She discovered that it took her 30% more time to make the same amount of money because of the number of times she had to say, "Can I help you?" to people who would be standing right in front of her counter, but were not really aware that it was their turn.

I think the cumulative effect of individual technology, while I love it, is this decline in social capital. Slide nine has this little fact from 2003, on single-person households - not family or single parent. Single-person households are the most common living arrangement in the U.S.

Again, talking a little about how the brain is built. 95% of all cognition occurs below awareness. In dinner conversation, time and again, people talk about how we never really use all of our brains, but it is a fact. Whenever I create an experience, whether it's for entertainment or to compel a group to do this or that, it's this below awareness cognition that I'm aiming at. In fact, I'm going to go into the way the brain is built, as you've seen by looking at the pdf.

It's the connection that is made - without being aware of it - that is the thing that really engages an audience. When they gasp at recognition of something and realize that the whole audience is making the realization at the same time, that's when it becomes more compelling.

Slide 11 is talking about putting an event or an experience together, the standard and best practices, and building a diverse team. For instance, whether it's a theatrical performance, a stadium show or even a ceremony, my production team always has a truck driver, a roadie or a grip, somebody who isn't from the entertainment side, because you never know where your answers or insights are going to come from.

I remember one time, 12 or 13 years ago - which is where I got the idea to do this - I was having a production meeting and a driver of one of our trucks was just sitting in the back. I can't remember what the problem was but it was a show we were loading into Yankee Stadium and nobody could figure out what to do. Suddenly he pipes up and goes, "Back in 1955, with Carol Channing, we did x, y, z". And I go, "There's our answer!"

So you never know where your answers are going to come from. Depending on what your context is, making your team diverse keeps the ideas fresh. People will ask questions that the more practiced people, who are usually in charge of creating the experience don't ask themselves anymore. In fact, I'll go into that later, the 'spectrum of assumption'.

Drill down to the core of what it is you want to create. Every experience, be it an event or something theatrical, needs to have a narrative, a storyline, an arc. I think that if you're doing an evening cocktail thing, there's your preface. Everything should be looked at as a flow.

And I think if you do that you can open up the experience to feel like it is moving faster. The old tradition, which I'm sure none of you do anymore, of cocktails, dinner, program, dancing doesn't work anymore because the minute the program starts, people go, "I've heard that speech before", and they're out. So you start mixing that up, and I'll talk a little bit about my Stanford tour.

Doing things between courses or even during courses, you can get away with transfer of information and entertainment, such that you can shave time off your evening. And you can also circumvent the preconceptions of your audience, so they can't predict what's going to happen and will be more inclined to stick around, rather than, "Here comes the speeches. Let's get out of here and go watch 'Law & Order'."

There's the 'orange roof in the mouth' anecdote. Louis Garbon, in one of his books compares these two, at one point, national icons, the orange roofing to Howard Johnson's in the mouth - obviously Disney. There are no Howard Johnson's anymore, but there certainly is a Disney.

The primary anecdote he used was that Howard Johnson's accountants became so focused on the bottom line and lost track of the experience that they actually figured out how much money they could save if they cut an inch off their straws. We should always do things and spend our money wisely, but you should be very careful about infringing on the experience that you're trying to create - and obviously, there are no more Howard Johnson's.

Meanwhile, early in the Disney epoch, Walt took three characters to Dodger Stadium to throw out the first ball of the season. He had Mickey, Goofy and Donald. Right before they went onto the field, he turned to Goofy and he goes, "Who are you?" And the kid

says, "My name is John Adams". He goes, "No, who are you." The kid goes, "Oh, I'm Goofy!" "That's right", Walt says, "OK, we're going to go out there. Mickey's going to throw the ball to you. What are you going to do?" The kid says, "I'm going to catch it?" Walt goes, "Who are you?" The kid goes, "Oh, I'm Goofy." Walt says, "That's right, drop the ball." This is just an example of the thoroughness in thought of Disney.

Every experience is an experience. Once the doors are open, it's an experience. But is it an 'Experience', or is it just something that people will believe without having really been engaged. This last paragraph really underscores what I was saying a moment ago about a narrative. You have to be cautious and take care about how you reveal information, share information, and expose your audience to the experience, whether it's something they move through or something that moves through the room. The more cohesive your experience, the more compelling it will be.

The comment on Slide 13, "All experience becomes intellectualized", is in the context of alumni events for colleges and universities. I think that no matter how powerful an experience is, even a romantic experience, at some point when it's distant, it becomes thought of in shorthand. As I've said, I've done a lot of work with Stanford, Harvard, and some of these iconic universities. I think for 98% of people who go to college that is one of the pivotal moments of their lives. That is where they became who they are, where they had a chance to stretch and grow, and usually, it's an intense social experience as well.

As years pass, people start naturally remembering that it was a great experience rather than actually feeling that experience. I see my job, when I'm doing this sort of thing, as really reawakening, re-experiencing those feelings rather than referring to them. I think a lot of alumni experiences stop short of reopening the wound and having people actually feel it. It doesn't need to remain intellectual. You can actually make that connection again and it will be more profoundly emotional.

I did the Harvard Law School launch about a year after I finished the second Stanford tour. At one of their early meetings, I was going through how the Stanford show had played out, and how I managed to bring audiences to silence and tears. They kind of laughed and said, "These are Harvard lawyers. You're not going to get any tears out of this audience." At the close of the show on launch night, the President, Larry Summers came over to me and says, "You know what? I think three of our lawyers actually did cry." You can always find an emotional connection - it's just a matter of subtlety and nuance.

Now these next few slides just, I would assume information you already know. The way the human brain is built, it's the most complex organ, how much it weighs, how it's built,

the complexity. I think on slide number 16, the fact that sort of expresses the magnitude beyond what I really realize is that each neuron can make contact with thousands or tens of thousands...here it is, brains form a million new connections for every second of our lives. That is a lot of thread if you know what I mean. A million new connections every second, it means we have... there is so much room to work with. The patterns of the connections constantly changing. No two brains are alike, just like snowflakes. Storage for memory, habits learned, personalities...this is all stuff I think that you know.

And now we move into sort of the basis of what I do is try to create experiences that focus on the right brain and leave the left brain out of the equation. The right being the more creative and emotional and the left being logic and I'm going to talk a little bit about how I do that.

Oh, slide number nineteen, that's just to scare you. We're not going to go that deep.

There are just some examples left and right, obviously Einstein and Pollock are just good examples. There has been a lot of conversation in the themed entertainment industry about authenticity of experience and I think that it's...I'm starting to hear the same kind of conversations take place in all fields but certainly in development. As I've been saying, authenticity is key. Resonance, evoking feelings from people rather than referring to them. Anything you can make tactile or oral, even using scent. I'm sure you all know that, I think the first company to use scent to draw people into her store's was Mrs. Fields followed closely by Subway. The smell of baking chocolate chip cookies, whether or not chocolate chip cookies were being baked at that time or not certainly drew people in.

So, when I show these slides I talked a little bit about budget and this is where you can create very compelling experiences with very minimal budgets. Frankly, a dark room with pools of light and doing your program with no visuals at all just sound or parts of your program that way can be as powerful and evocative as spending a hundred thousand dollars on a film. You don't need to do that. You can always... that's sort of the... I hate using the term outside the box and whoever comes up with a better term will probably make millions but that's really thinking outside of the experience and very, very often less is more.

Audience expectation; I'm on slide 23 now. What is acceptable? What's it in reference to making or exceeding audience expectation and why would we accept anything really less than what is possible? For me, I believe that irrespective of what an audience expects, our job is to know what is achievable or what we can try to achieve and get as close to what's possible as possible and by doing that we always exceed audience expectation but hopefully in a way they didn't expect.

So, moving forward into slide number 24, as creators of these experiences what are we assuming and accepting without realizing? That, I refer back to my comment about the truck driver at the meeting. Since we do this all the time, especially those of you in university development, I'm sure you have something like 400 events a year and that that's not an exaggeration, it's easy to fall into the shorthand so if you can take a minute and really look at or for your most important events, what are you assuming? I do this myself; what am I assuming can or can't be done? What am I assuming are the parameters of a venue or an experience without really realizing it because I believe we owe our audience everything possible. Their expectation is limited or defined by what they don't know is possible. A well crafted experience can actually in a room full of a thousand people still personally touch each member of your audience and I'm going to give you a couple of examples on down the line.

This next slide number 26... I ask people if you can see the difference between these two phrases. The first one says; that was amazing. The second one says, that was amazing and the point being the second sentence is what we want to create is something that stuff people [inaudible] that moves them, that makes them think and feel and back to left and right brain, don't get in the way of your message, try to avoid distraction and protect the experience of your audience and that' what I'll talk about.

Well, one film that I tried, slide number 30 is a film of the most egregious example ever in my experience of distracting the audience. I'll tell you what it is, it's pretty entertaining but two years ago I directed the opening ceremonies for the [inaudible] in Chicago at Soldiers Field and the first big moment was the eleven thousand athletes procession onto the field in 42 minutes by the way which is an Olympic record. I ran them out there fast. As soon as they had taken the oath and cleared the field, the second was the oath to the officials and in contrast to this full field we just had it was just two individuals, this man you see on the pdf, Billy Bean who is a baseball player, sports icon, he walked down from the north end of the field. [inaudible] Weber, a soccer player walked out from the south end of the field and it was a beautiful tableau of a huge green field with just the spotlight in the middle and the oath to the officials was being taken by proxy by [inaudible] from Billy and no sooner had he started than this photographer ran out to the middle of the field and literally would be at their feet and over their shoulders taking pictures. It's hysterical. I didn't think so at the time but when you look at this it's very funny especially at the end where I have the security guards drag him off and throw him out of the stadium. The point being of course he took pictures of something that nobody else saw.

Fifty thousand people saw three people on the field and the minute they saw the photographer they leave the right brain and start discussing with themselves non-verbally, photographer that's right, pictures are going to be taken and who's that guy and my point is that's the extreme of the other end of that spectrum is the videographer walking

backward in front of the bride down the aisle and anywhere in between there's no reason especially with today's technology to put anything between your audience and your experience that you're creating for them.

Video people, film people will always argue they've got to be here, they've got to be there but they don't and if you start early enough and work with them and I say this, I make several films myself, you work with them early, you find ways to avoid letting the audience see because the minute you start letting the audience see how you're creating the experience or that this is a construct then they're off into their left brain a little bit and you've lost that little bit, just that much evocation. So, distraction can certainly take many forms.

As I was saying, protect the mind, communicate through the right brain. This example of the reconstructed roses, there was a show on TV here about a year ago. One of the big party planners here in New York that does the million dollar bar mitzvah's was talking about how he created...this is his whole documentary on this guy and at one point it showed, he was taking for the centerpieces these beautiful red roses and these yellow roses and pulling the petals out of the yellow roses and inserting them in amongst the red ones to create, obviously red and.

Yellow roses which is unique and expensive and I'm sure beautiful but what you do when you do that sort of thing with an audience is they start going, oh, I wonder how they did that and to me that's overproduction and a waste of money. People will come out of that experience and the thing went on and there was a lot of that sort of thing and be talking about how things were done and what grantings were done rather than the softer side of the experience that they just had, so I think actually it's easy to distract people by overproducing. Avoid text in favor of the spoken word. I'm going to show you an example on film here but on video or film especially I try to avoid having people read anything if I can avoid even putting the name of somebody being interviewed on the screen. I do that because again once people start reading, that's left brain. And I'm trying to keep the left brain asleep during these experiences. Sometimes politics gets in the way of that, but I've been very lucky and able to avoid that a lot.

Judicious use of talking heads when making films, I just finished a film for The Thousand Oaks Alliance of The Arts and the first quarter of it is the entire sort of the history of how the whole thing was put together.

And I approached it in a Ken Burns style: interviewing the surviving members of the original organization and never ever showing anybody's face, but doing it all over stills and old film clips, so that people--if you have the voice and not the face, people tend to experience that as their own thought. It's more resonant.

If they're looking at the face, again they start not really listening to what it is that's being said. So as I say, judicious use of talking heads. A little goes a long way.

Now Jono, how does this film thing work because this next--I have slide number 33 here. The second piece of The Alliance of The Arts Film is essentially making the case for what the organization does, which is in a nutshell, their mission is to expose young people to the arts early.

They have a beautiful 1800 seat theater and once a week during the school year, they fill that theater with third and fourth graders from all over Ventura county. So, you've got privileged kids from Thousand Oaks. You've got children of migrant farm workers from Oxnard.

In fact one kid, one anecdote I heard when I started working on this film is the bus coming from Oxnard was--and frankly sometimes the bus trip is the highlight of the trip before they even get to the theater because these kids have never been in buses with televisions and big windows and the whole thing is an experience that they never expected.

But this kid looked out the window and saw this big body of water and he asked the truck driver what that was. And the truck driver said, "Well that's the pacific ocean." And this kid lived five miles from the Pacific Ocean and didn't even know it was there.

So, there really are--there's a huge spectrum of, very broad spectrum of, child. Going to the theater and--well it was really a fascinating experience to see that they actually completely shut up and became very engaged in this experience.

The mission of the Alliance is through this early exposure to the arts, there is a lot of data that supports the fact that this raises SAT scores, it avoids gang activity, it socializes kids in a different way, it has a tremendous impact.

And instead of showing these facts and figures which was the original intent of the client, what I did instead was to use Jane Seymour, who's one of their spokespeople, and actually can we play this?

Jono, how does this work?

**Jono:** Well, everybody received a copy of the--or a link to the clip. I don't--we probably can't very well over the phone here.

**Kile:** Well OK, that makes sense.

When you get a chance take a look. Basically...

**Jono:** Yeah, we can give folks you know 30 seconds to--I think the clip is very short right, Kile?

**Kile:** Yeah, it's about I think a minute or a minute and a half. Or I can just tell you what it is and you can look.

**Jono:** OK, great go for it.

**Kile:** [laughs]

This is really strange not to be able to look at an audience and see if I'm losing them or what. But in any event, what she does is she actually says, "There are reams and reams of facts and figures to support the case." She goes, "But don't worry, I'm not going to show you those things now, that's why we have Google."

And she goes on to talk about it, but you don't really have to support the case. People when they come into a room, especially in a development environment--a lot of times they've done the research. They know where the money is going to go--All they want to know is--they want to hear the facts, or they want to hear the effect.

They can check on you for the backup material. I think that a lot of money is wasted and minds are distracted when you try to show charts and graphs and columns of figures in a development environment because people don't really need to see that. Not when you're trying to inspire and engage.

They can find it out for themselves or you can even have packets of information that people take as they leave. But you don't want them looking at numbers when they should be weeping.

So, take a look at the film. That's just an example of how--one way to get the--make the case without actually showing facts and figures.

Another thing, the political input, I know that in many situations, you'll have a great idea.

But by the time the board and donors and trustees have all had their votes, things can change.

Or you have the political problem of involving them. One way to resolve that is to interview everyone, but back to my approach to using the voices under imagery.

For Stanford, my two most powerful pieces of the tour in 2001, 2002, which went to 12 cities and raised \$1.1 billion. Now I can't obviously take credit for that, but I did make 12 rooms of 1000 people weep. [laughs]

And frankly the way these films are put together, long after the campaign they're still being used for smaller fundraising events as well as one piece is still being used for incoming freshman.

But the point is that the two most effective films are scenes of Stanford campus with one has the voices of students underneath it, and one has the voices of alums underneath it.

You never actually see these people talk. So, you can interview your board members, your major donors, your trustees, anybody that needs to be included and as you put the film together, you can include their quotes at the appropriate time. They all feel like they've been included, but you're only going to use 10 or 15 seconds of them instead of--because once you put their face on camera, you've got to leave it there longer in order to make that impression.

And I think you'll have--what do I want to say?-- more play, more creative play, when you can not put these people on screen, but put them as part of your soundtrack. And then you can include anyone. It becomes very--a pretty handy tool.

As they say, on slide 35, data is best communicated live and on site. So, you know when you want to do an update on a campaign, that kind of thing should just be spoken about, rather than printed and handed out until the end.

I threw in Mickey's 10 commandments. This was actually a list created by Don Iworks, which was actually who was the first imagineer. Which is basically--well, the 10 key points when you are trying to engage an audience and create an experience.

For instance, the fourth one down, they created a visual man of the weenie he used to call

it. And that was like the--Sleeping Beauty's castle or the Unisphere at Epcot. This is just a handy thing to kind of have on your wall when you're creating something: avoiding overlook, tell one story at a time, avoid contradiction, you know make sure that, avoiding contradictions is the same as avoiding distractions. Keep people in the moment.

Then I talked a minute ago about literal versus the provocative. You can over-create. In fact, here's an example of literal versus provocative. I'm sure most of you've have seen Lion King and Julie Tamer's costume are a beautiful way to have the audience create their own experience. Every member of the audience fills in the gap and makes that hyena into a real hyena or the zebra into a real zebra.

But what's interesting the way I see it is each individual sees really a different zebra depending on their own experience of zebra, whether it's in a National Geographic magazine or a cartoon or whatever their first zebra was is really what they think of when they look at that. But the recognition happens universally. So, there's a shared intimate experience. Everybody actually sees something slightly different, but they do it at the same time so that rush of recognition fills the room and it really is recognized whereas if you build a zebra, people will immediately--there's a part of each person that kind of analyzes that zebra: is it making any sense?

The more you evoke, it's back to the room of its pools of light and doing it all with sound, then everything's perfect because there's nothing to distract people from their own experience of what they expect to see.

Pardon me.

Evocation, this is slide 38. I'm just looking to see where I am on here. I should speed up.

This is just an example.

Slides 38 and 39 are from the Harvard opening. This is a way of circumventing preconception and comfortably disorienting an audience.

The event took place in the law library, which has a huge atrium in the middle, and the staff go off to the left and right. I made a suggestion that we bring people in through the fire stairs (which were very secure fire stairs). This is the view from the entrance, looking down the stacks. On slide 39, it was dark. I brought in some little lights to light the columns.

People knew they were going to the law library, but when the door opened, they looked in and said, "Oh!" It was a whole new experience of this place that was probably a bittersweet memory. Here, they saw the beauty and grandeur of the place, and walked among the columns down into the atrium where they had their dinner. It's this kind of thinking, bringing people in through the stage door, that often...

One of my key methodologies is comfortably disorienting an audience, so they see that they don't know what's going to happen, but they also feel that they're being taken care of. Let me jump down to slide 41. We've talked about exploring the spectrum of assumption; slide 42, circumventing preconception; and slide 43, comfortable disorientation.

Another quick example of comfortable disorientation is the Stanford show. My responsibility was the experience. I try to stay away from the catering end, you don't want me there. The audience had their full day of conference, and then they had their cocktail party. Next, then the doors opened to dinner, and people expected to walk into the dining room.

What they saw instead was about 30 yards of complete darkness with two rows of people holding flashlights down, showing the ground, so people could see where they were going to walk. At the other end of this 30 yards was a monolithic curtain with light pouring over it. When they walked in, they could see where they were going and where they were going to step, so nobody was worried about security or safety, but it was completely not what they expected.

They made a sort of [unintelligible] transition as they traversed this dark space, into a mode of curiosity. By the time they entered the space where the experience was going to happen (the dinner and the film) they were far more curious than they were when those doors opened. It engaged people. They were more open and ready to experience what you're trying to show them.

Successive revelation. The first film was an example of that. You don't have to give all to them at once. I call it "gasp and grasp," where people are going, "Oh yeah! I remember that." In the Stanford show, the first film showed a kid coming onto campus from behind campus, instead of coming up the iconic drive.

This is a point I want to underscore: every institution has its iconic image that shows up on most of its publications or most of its film. Every film of Stanford, up until I got my

hands on it, started with the camera going up Palm Drive. You'd see Palm Drive, the oval, the arches, the church, and the foothills. For me, if people see that and they immediately think, "Oh, this is Stanford," or "Tiger Woods," or "Chelsea Clinton"...

By opening the film in the foothills it became an intimate experience, because the foothills are protected territory. There was the boyfriend or girlfriend or tour group, and it came onto campus from behind, from the foothills. As he turned each corner, we gave the audience a campus tour: we successively revealed campus. People were engaged from the very beginning, and at the end of the film, they got the shot that they expected at the beginning, so we didn't disappoint.

This is on a film. With film, experience, or live, you can always find ways to give people pieces so that they're always leaning forward and wanting the next piece. It also makes time seem like it goes faster.

Subliminal engagement, slide number 45. That's [unintelligible]'s costumes, having the audience do some of the work, closing the gap.

The Stanford films were shot with two side-by-side 35mm cameras. When people saw the two screens when they walked in the room, without even thinking about it they expected that both screens would show the same thing. In fact it was one image split by 15 feet of stage, so as the action flowed from screen to screen, people (in their heads) closed that gap. By having the audience do some of the work, it became far more compelling.

Here are some conceptual drawings of the Stanford show. Here is actually building it. You can see how far apart the two screens were. It was all layered, using architectural iconography from all over campus, but juxtaposed in unusual ways. People would see and feel familiar colors, textures, and images, but when they really took a look, they would think, "Oh, that isn't there," or, "This is a new piece." They started exploring the set before the lights even went down.

When the first film opens, the camera doesn't move. For 30 seconds, it's just music playing and lights going down. That's just to get people to shut up and sit down. As you know, if the lights are out and the music is playing, then people will sit down (usually the college president that is the last one). If you can find a way to do that for 30 seconds without actually communicating anything that you need to communicate, it's a good way to get people to sit.

Slide 53 is circumventing preconception. This is the concept for bringing the athletes into

Soldier Field. Instead of bringing them in with a traditional procession, I brought each team in shoulder-to-shoulder, and the entire team stepped onto the field at once. This gave each team an exposure that teams don't usually get in a procession, plus I could get 11,000 athletes on the field in less than 45 minutes. They came out like Tetris. When they all got out, they took the oath, the lights went out, and they held up LED's I'd handed them. This is a picture of the lighting effect, the world's largest pride flag.

Slide 54 is what it looked like live. The empty seats you see there are where the athletes are going to sit. The stadium was mostly full. Slide 55 is how it looked. It was a great effect, definitely circumventing preconception.

That's a quick run-through of my methodologies and the way I approach things. I'm happy to talk to anybody and share ideas with them. This is my inspirational quote, "Always try to do everything you can imagine so that you're happy to accept whatever you're able to accomplish."

**Jono:** Thank you very much, Kile. That was really exceptional.

We've got about ten minutes here for questions. You can ask Kyle a question by emailing us at [fundraising123@networkforgood.org](mailto:fundraising123@networkforgood.org).

I'll go ahead and take the liberty of asking the first question. We're just a few days away from December, which obviously is the busiest time of year for a lot of people on the phone. I know a lot of folks on the phone are never going to have the experience of producing an event in a large stadium. Folks are thinking a little bit smaller in terms of raising money this holiday season, in December, and raising money online. Kile, could you just speak for a moment about how to apply some of these lessons from big experiences and big events to holiday fundraising, direct mails, direct emails...

**Kile:** I'm glad you said that because even though I referred to a lot of large events, all these things apply to rooms full of 30, 10, or any size experience. Thanks for waving that flag. I overlooked that. I get caught up sometimes.

In fact, I just finished working on a website for a small nonprofit there that sends clothes and toys for disaster relief to kids. It's impossible to describe verbally what we did, but there are always ways to circumvent what people expect to get when they open a web page.

It's tough with direct mail. I don't have any experience with direct mail. It would be interesting to try to apply these methodologies to that.

I was just up at Harvard, lecturing with a group of architects, trying to apply these methodologies to architecture, which was an interesting conversation... Keep talking to me Jono, I don't know what else to...

**Jono:** I was just thinking that a lot of folks on the phone don't have the benefit of getting people in a room or stadium. They are communicating through...

**Kile:** Right.

**Jono:** Writing, through email. Sometimes different avenues.

**Kile:** My response to that would be, of course, every circumstance is different, but less is almost always more. I know the tendency is to want to try to say everything. But, the more...it's just like white space in a layout. It makes an ad more appealing.

The shorter the letter, the more evocative it could be. Visuals with short descriptions. Things that create curiosity and make people want to know more, rather than look like something they expect. I don't know if that makes sense to you. I, in my head, have an idea what that means.

You get a fund raising letter that's single spaced. Even one full page, it is hard to get through that.

Find ways to engage people to get them onto your website. Capture their data there. I don't know, just even being helpful.

**Jono:** You talk a lot about people intellectualizing the experience. Can you expand on that...

**Kile:** Just a minute. Here's a website; oh, where is it? Here we go. The BrandGallery.com has a website. It is all one word, BrandGallery.com. It has a sense of depth, a sense of engagement. There's just a few words on it that float across the screen. You can boil your message down to the most powerful, evocative words and have them be your draw that brings people even further in. It's hard to say without really looking at each specific instance, but the less is more rule is, I think, very valid. Were you able to look at that website? Anyway, when you get a chance, take a look at that. That's just one example of a really great way to get people curious about going in because people are so even jaded to websites any more.

The more you do with visuals and movement in order to get people engaged and then deliver your message versus trying to get it all out there, I think the more effective it will be.

**Jono:** So, you talked a lot about not getting in the way of your message, and you showed some different examples in your career - how you tried to avoid that trap.

What advice do you have when somebody is sitting down to write that fund raising email this holiday season? What tips should people have in the back of their mind so they are not making the message "all about us, all about our mission", but really connecting with their audience and not getting in the way of the message?

**Kile:** I wonder if you are actually with mail. You know, I think acknowledging - this isn't my idea, but I've seen this done - acknowledging that people are inundated, keeping the message short and not spending a lot of time making your case because the case is so often evident.

As I say, acknowledging that people are busy, acknowledging that, "I just want to catch your attention for a moment here to take a look at this picture. This is what we're trying to do. Our goal is "X" by Christmas." Really short stuff. I think that people...there's a part of them that really would appreciate that.

If I get a hard card in the mail that just has four or five sentences on it and a picture and then maybe, obviously it's reading, put a little bit of data on it. Here's "X" amount against this amount. Just keep it open and clean so that you can almost snapshot it instead of read it. I am more inclined to look at that favorably. Just an idea.

**Jono:** That's great. That's great advice.

We've got time for about two more questions here.

Nicola writes in from San Francisco, "Great presentation, Kile. Thank you. You just referred to a website you worked on for a small non-profit. I'm just curious if you would mind sharing the URL with the group."

**Kile:** I don't mind. I need to wait until they launch.

**Jono:** OK.

**Kile:** Can I give that to you later and we can put in on fundraising123.

**Jono:** Absolutely.

**Kile:** Great.

**Jono:** OK. We've got time for one last question here. But, before we do that, I just want to thank Kile for donating his time today. I also want to remind folks again that on

December 7th, Friday, at three P.M. eastern time Mark Rovner will be returning for a Nonprofit 911 call. He will be sharing tips from his recently released, "Procrastinators Guide To Year-End Fundraising", and if you are one of those procrastinators and you don't have Online Fundraising on your website, Network for Good is offering free holiday fund raising this December. You can go to [Fundraising123.org](http://Fundraising123.org) to learn more about it.

Again, I want to thank Kile for his time today.

Final question for Kile. Can you talk a little bit about...we mentioned earlier in the call...your experience with Academy of Friends, and how you were able to connect with your audience successfully at Academy of Friends?

**Kile:** Wow. Of course, that started in my living room in 1980. Just an Oscar party. I borrowed 12 televisions, and there were TVs in every room. The talk of that party was that there was a small television on the back of the john, and one that you could see sitting on the john, because there were men and women both.

**Jono:** So, this is a great example of how house parties can work for fund raising. You shouldn't be afraid to start small.

Kile. No. In fact, good point because when I moved to New York I was approached by a group here about maybe starting a similar event here, and they wanted to start with 500 people. Well, the thing is, I believe these things are organic.

The first party was just an Oscar party at my house for 30 people. The next year there were 60 because everybody had brought new dates. By the time it got to 120 people...it grew because it was a good experience. It was a thorough experience. There was food everywhere. There were speakers where there weren't televisions so that you could be way across the room but still hear.

It's just about detail and a thorough experience, and let it grow that way. So, by the fourth year I had to leave the house and start charging. Since I was going to charge, I was concerned about the integrity of the contribution. So I wanted to have it fully underwritten so that even if the tickets were \$25, all \$25 went to charity.

Those were sort of my goals; a thorough experience and 100% integrity of the contribution. And I think that that connected with an audience because it grew through its own success versus having to be sold at all.

People would come to that party...I haven't been - after 20 years, that was enough. People would come to the party knowing they were going to see somebody that they saw the year before. It's a very welcome, open experience because it's kind of an annual meeting now for a lot of people who have left town.

**Jono:** That's great. I think that creating those open experiences, those open-minded experiences is what holiday fund raising is all about.

**Kile:** There's nothing wrong with starting small. Key point, as you said.

**Jono:** All right. Well, on behalf of everyone on the phone, I want to thank you for your time today. You have definitely connected with this audience on a really unique and interesting topic and a really great perspective brought to the group today.

So, thanks very much for your time, Kile.