

Nonprofit 911 – October 14, 2008
A Tagline is a Terrible Thing to Waste:
Building Your Nonprofit Brand in 8 Words or Less
with Nancy E. Schwartz
Sponsored by Network for Good

The MP3 audio transcript can be found at
www.fundraising123.org or www.Nonprofit911.org

Rebecca Ruby: Hello everyone, and welcome to the October 14th Nonprofit 911 sponsored by Network for Good. My name is Rebecca Ruby and I'm the marketing specialist here at Network for Good. We're really happy that you joined us here for our call, "A tagline is a terrible thing to waste: Building your nonprofit brand in eight words or less."

Before I introduce today's speaker, I just wanted to let you know a little bit about Network for Good. If this is your first time joining us, we are a nonprofit organization like many of you on the phone. Our mission, quite simply, is just to make it easy and affordable for nonprofits to raise money online. Nonprofit 911 is one of the many free resources that Network for Good provides the nonprofit community to help organizations increase their online fundraising and nonprofit marketing results.

In addition to Nonprofit 911, we also provide online fundraising services. So if you're not raising money right now on your website, we hope that you'll consider Network for Good for your online fundraising and e-marketing needs. We've had over 130 people register for today's call.

Many of you have already received an email from us today with a link to the handouts for today's call. For those of you who just registered today, you may not have seen that. If you'd like to follow along and get those handouts, please feel free to visit our learning center. Go to www.nonprofit911.org and go ahead and download those two handouts. But don't worry, if you're not in front of a computer, you can always continue your learning after the call at www.nonprofit911.org.

Once again, you'll also be able to access the audio recording, and ultimately a text transcript of today's call at the Learning Center. If you'd like to reach us at any time during today's call, or if you'd like to ask the speaker a question, please do so. Our email address is fundraising123@networkforgood.org. You are absolutely encouraged to ask your questions throughout today's call, as well as at the end when we open up our tagline clinic. We'll reserve some time for that at the end.

Once again, the email address to contact us for any reason is
fundraising123@networkforgood.org.

At this point, I'd like to go ahead and introduce today's speaker, Nancy E. Schwartz. Nancy helps nonprofits succeed through effective marketing and communication as the

publisher of the Getting Attention blog and e-newsletter, which is at gettingattention.org, and as President of New York City based Nancy Schwartz and Company.

Nancy and her team there provide marketing, planning and implementation services to organizations all across the board. Anywhere from the corporation for support of housing, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the National Association of Mothers and Sisters to the New York Botanical Garden and the Association of Small Foundations. She recently published the nonprofit tagline report based on recent survey results. The report guides nonprofits to build their brands in eight words or fewer with must do's, don't do's and a thousand plus nonprofit tagline examples, many of the lessons we'll go over in today's call.

We're actually mixing it up a little today with our Nonprofit 911 call. Rather than just one prepared speech by our special guest speaker, we're going to lead a Q&A session with Nancy to learn about key findings from the report that I just mentioned, and then we'll go over what makes a strong tagline work, as well as the seven deadly sins to avoid. Then we'll open up the tagline clinic for Q&A. It's your chance to get some no-cost, no-risk advice on your organization's current tagline if you have one now, or if you're trying to develop one for the first time.

Without further ado, I just want to go ahead and welcome Nancy one more time.

Nancy E. Schwartz: Well thanks so much, Rebecca. I'm always glad to talk taglines. It's a topic dear to my heart, particularly because it's something that nonprofits can really hone to use in a way that tends to make a real difference for marketing efforts.

Rebecca: Wonderful. All right, well then I guess we can just jump right on into our questions. How did you get involved in taglines as a topic to start out with?

Nancy: Well Rebecca, as a blogger I just can't help myself. I'm always out there, looking at communications, for-profit and nonprofit, because I'm drawing on both worlds to report back and guide readers. Through that process, I started to notice that taglines; which are so pithy, so essential, used so consistently in for-profit and not-for-profit taglines, there really was very little guidance on taglines for nonprofits.

There's a lot of other guidance on more general branding issues. Shaping effective campaigns and so forth, I realized that there was a huge gap and decided to fill it.

Rebecca: That sounds about right. What is so important about taglines? Why should a nonprofit focus on shaping a strong tagline when there are so many other priorities, both in the marketing department and all across the board?

Nancy: That is a great question, and one I've been asked so many times in recent months since publishing the report, Rebecca. A tagline is the heart of your organization's brand. But the brand is a really key differentiator, especially in the time we're living through now in which people are distracted, they're nervous, and they have, in many cases, fewer dollars or fewer hours to give -- whether as volunteers or advocates.

A brand is more vital than ever in communicating your organization's unique identity and value, and usually it uses consistent messaging and a look and feel to do so. You want your audiences, your base, to recognize that it's your nonprofit reaching them -- whether it's coming through an email, a Facebook page or a walkathon sign in a walker's front yard.

I want to emphasize in talking about branding that it's not only the way you say it -- what words you use in your tagline -- the colors you use in your graphic design that make a strong brand. A strong brand has to be based on quality, consistency and authenticity.

That's sort of a promise your organization makes to your base. You have to be really dedicated to ensuring you can make good on that promise. Once you have that down, your organization's tagline is hands-down the briefest, easiest, most effective way to communicate your brand, and it's one, because it's so brief, that it's probably the easiest component for your base to pass along to their friends and relatives.

You guys of course at Network for Good are famed for the introduction of charity badges. I know that these are little tools that any nonprofit or individual can add to their website asking folks to give for a specific cause, and I know that you did some really interesting research that showed that nothing is more influential on giving than what your friends and family are doing and suggest that you do. A tagline, because it's so easy to remember and repeat; a good one that is; is an ideal for what we call viral marketing, what we used to call "whisper down the lane."

Rebecca: Great. Thank you for mentioning our charity badges. Anyone who hasn't gotten a chance to check those out, the charity badges are at www.sixdegrees.org, figured I would throw that in there. Moving on about taglines though, who has them and who doesn't?

Nancy: Well Rebecca, I was shocked to find that some 73 percent of the nonprofits who I researched; and I'll tell you a little bit more about that research later; 72 percent of the nonprofit respondents to the survey I did, and there were almost 1,900 respondents, they either don't have a tagline at all or they rate the one that they're using as working poorly. So they are missing this really vital tool for building their identity. That was really, really shocking.

What I found is that human service and grant making organizations had the highest incidence of tagline use, while religious and spiritual organizations are a bit lower. About half of them, a little more than half do.

Interestingly enough, environmental organizations who I always think of, or perhaps assume, as being on the forefront of marketing because green issues are so front and center in the news -- and our children's education and so forth. These environmental organizations held up the rear in using taglines at all with only 30 percent of them using taglines whether they're good or bad.

That was really shocking to me, in a field that's becoming increasingly high-profile, complex, and frankly, competitive.

Rebecca: Wow. How did you gather the data that you built the report on? Where did you get all these great statistics?

Nancy: Once I identified the gap, I realized that I really needed to take the pulse of the nonprofit sector. As creator of Getting Attention, both the e-news and the blog, I asked John about online surveys, and that's something that I recommend to all of you. It's a great way for some quick and dirty audience research.

So I reached out to my e-news readers, and they're about 9,000 of them, and also through my blog. I have lots of relationships with fellow bloggers in the nonprofit space, and I asked them to spread the word. I was amazed that I got this huge response, 1,900 organizations. That showed me that I was on the right track; that this was something people really wanted to know more about, weren't happy about how they were doing and so forth.

Then I asked folks, when they responded to the survey, Rebecca, if I could be in touch with them for more questions. I asked in those cases for additional contact information, and really did a lot of interviewing -- both via phone and email -- to dig down into some of these really core issues. I ended up with some really solid data.

Rebecca: You mentioned being surprised by some of the results in terms of what type of organizations have taglines and which didn't, and how they felt about them. Can you share some of your other most striking findings, and what other thing surprised you most?

Nancy: Sure. What was very clear is that first of all, when you're gazing at 1,900 taglines; actually, let me take a step back and talk about how I was so enthused, and so were the folks that participated in the survey, by the initial response. I was so motivated by the strength of some of the taglines that were submitted that I then went out and, for the first time, initiated an award program for the best nonprofit taglines. In doing that, we got a total of 3,200 taglines submitted for the contest.

So I had a lot to work with. What was great was that I began to see some real trends. Not surprisingly, whose paying attention to taglines? The folks who most frequently responded to the survey and voted on the awards, etc. were communicators and marketers, pretty much full-time or at least that's the main part of their job. But executive directors were equally responsive, as were fundraisers.

Now I found that so interesting because in the consulting work I do, so frequently the folks who are out in the field, on the program site and running into problems where the folks that they're talking to just don't get what the organization does, or just don't pay attention, or on the fundraising or marketing sides.

These are the folks who are in many cases having a lot of interaction with their bases, but

a lot of executive directors I've found have a very, I'll just go right ahead and call it a fear of marketing, much less branding. It's almost like a bad word. Just to give you the numbers, 47 percent of folks who responded to the survey were marketers and communicators most of the time. Twenty-four percent were fundraisers and 21 percent were executive directors.

I found that extremely encouraging, because what that says to me, and this is really going to be great news for all you fundraisers and all you marketing folks out there, is that EDs are really starting to see that branding matters, that messages matter and that taglines are something that they're really beginning to think about. So that was really interesting.

Another interesting finding was that I asked folks to gauge how effective their taglines have been, and the ones that have been gauged to be very effective, most of those have been in use for just two to four years.

I found that really interesting because a successful tagline's lifetime is almost infinite, assuming that there are no pressing reasons to change the core message. There can be reasons, for example if there's a change in your organization's focus, or the competitive or issue environment in which you work; then you really need to change your tagline, although ideally not more than every five years, that'll confuse people; to meet where you are.

But without changes in the external factors, taglines can work for a very long time. My favorite example of this is "a mind is a terrible thing to waste" from the United Negro College Fund. Although the folks at UNCF introduced a whole new brand just last year, made a really big deal out of it, they kept that tagline because it still speaks to their focus and their impact. So those were some very interesting findings.

Rebecca: So now, I guess we want to jump into some of the meat about taglines. We're actually getting a little bit of feedback from the field. Folks want to hear some more about the do's and don'ts. If you don't mind, let's jump ahead. Can you tell nonprofits what to avoid when they're crafting their tagline?

Nancy: Definitely. There's some really clear guidelines, and it's really important because when you're pared down to eight words or less; and eight is what I suggest as the maximum number of words you can use. There can be reasons for going a little bit over that. You've got to get it right. As challenging as it is to create a strong tagline, it's all too easy to craft one that fails. Here are some key tips that I've seen.

First of all, avoid being generic. Remember, your brand in general and your tagline, almost more than any other piece, should be as specific and emotive as possible to highlight the connection between an individual and your organization. Generic language is deadly. Here's an example. I did some work for a legal organization in New York that provides pro bono legal services to other nonprofits. Now, their name; and I'm going to keep them under the cloak of anonymity; but their name doesn't really say what they do.

This is the tagline they used: "Building a better New York." If I was looking even at their

name and their tagline; and usually the tagline is used with the name; that could represent a division in the mayor's office or a construction firm.

Here's another tagline from the same kind of nonprofit in another city: "Connecting lawyers and communities." So that shows me what the value of the organization is, whereas "building a better New York" is so general. I don't know that they are talking about lawyers. I don't know what kind of legal services they are providing. It raises more questions than the answer.

Here are a couple of more examples of the "don't do" on the generic side. A very big national women's healthcare provider had this tagline is "we are more than you think." Now that raises more questions than it answers and it makes me want to know, so what are these unexpected services and why do I care about them.

A hospice organization's tagline is "there is a difference!" I don't care that there is a difference, I want to know what that difference is. A nonprofit camp's tagline is "discover." Well, that's just generic as they come. I want to know again what is to be discovered and what does that do for my child. So that's one big category. Don't be generic. Be specific and try and distinguish organizations from the others out there that are competing for attention, time and dollars.

Second of all, don't veer off focus. Here is an example of a tagline that draws attention to the organization's location. And that location has nothing to do with the organization's services or value, "produced in Boston, shared with the world." So this comes from a public service media producer based in Boston, but its programs are distributed worldwide via PBS and public radio. So it is known for the quality of its program, but it is using this really high value real estate in its tagline to focus on its geographic location, which is not core to its identity.

Another "don't" is don't use analogies that don't hold water. You will only confuse your audiences and let me give you a couple of examples. A marrow donor organization says "life is a team sport." That confused me. I mean I get that, yes, a donor is giving to another person on the team, but it doesn't speak to me about the gift of life, how that organization is streamlining the donor process or whatever.

Another example from a university is "find your edge." I thought that was really interesting because "an edge" is not what most students and certainly not what most parents are seeking in a university education. So those were couple of examples of analogies or references that don't hold water in the way they are being used.

Another "don't" is don't plan uneasiness and avoid introducing ambiguity into your tagline. Let me tell you about a few examples here. A state nonprofit association and there are many of these throughout the US, their tagline is "protecting, strengthening and promoting nonprofits." When I saw that, I was shocked, I was thinking to myself: why do nonprofits need protection for goodness sake? So this tagline is bound to make audiences wonder and really raise some concern.

Another thing to make sure you avoid is poor word choices, which take your audience in the wrong direction. And here is one very graphic example from an agency serving children with special needs, their tagline is "potential made possible." Well, potential is always possible, that's what potential is. It has the possibility. It's something with the potential to become even better. An improvement for this tagline would be "potential brought to life." That shows me the role that the agency has in making better lives or helping these children to have better lives.

Finally, the biggest "don't" of all is don't put two or more taglines to work. One survey respondent wrote to me that we probably have 10 or more taglines in use at the same time, various staff and board members and volunteers use different ones. Well, that is the best way to confuse and alienate your audiences, because unless they hear consistent messaging from you, they are not going to recognize you in an instant and that's what you have to get their attention. So those are I'd say the key "don'ts" you want to stay away from.

Rebecca: Great. So just for those of us on the call that might be taking notes, can you just do a top-level recap of all those points, starting with don't be generic, if you could explain that.

Nancy: Of course, don't be generic, don't veer off focus, avoid analogies that don't hold water, don't plan uneasiness or ambiguity, avoid incorrect word choices and never put two or more taglines to work.

Rebecca: Wonderful. All right, well thank you for going over those again. Great, so now that we have gone over the "don'ts" and the items to avoid, can you give us some other guidelines for high impact taglines that you can share with us?

Nancy: Definitely. So, of course, many of these are the converse of the don'ts. What is key is that your tagline conveys you are a nonprofit or if it is for a particular program, impact or value.

Here are a couple of examples that I think do a great job of doing that. From an organization called RetireSafe, their tagline is "protecting your retirement, securing your benefits." From an organization called Active Living by Design: "increasing physical activity through community design." So the taglines in these cases are not only saying what the organization does, but they also convey the value or impact of that work.

Another great example of this was one submitted from the Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers, which is "informing grantmakers, improving our community." So that's really cool and really important. That's what I call kind of focus, a generalized positioning value. And if your tagline doesn't have positioning value, if it is just a descriptor, it is a bust, it is a waste. So that's really key, the most important "do."

Once you have got that nailed and you know what you want to say, you want to make sure you make your tagline broadly accessible and memorable, avoiding jargon and

acronyms. So here are couple that are very clear; you will see they are very brief. The first from the National Eating Disorders Organizations is "starve fear, feed hope." The second, which I love, and was forwarded to me from a friend who works at AmeriCares is "passion to help and the ability to deliver."

So make sure your tagline can be recognized at a glance, that it is memorable and why that is so important so that people can repeat it and that they keep thinking about it. The "starve fear, feed hope" ties into another do, which is making an emotional connection. And here are a couple of other examples: "helping preserve the places you cherish," the tagline of an organization called LandChoices.

For me, makes me think back to my days as a kid wandering about my summer camp and around my family's home in the summer time, all year round actually, and how I loved that opportunity of wandering these open spaces and enjoying the beauty. I am really thinking about that feeling has a very positive connection and that makes me really think more and want to find out more about the organization behind that tagline.

The second example here is also very good. It is an example of a tagline that works even though the emotion it generates is not an upbeat happy one. And this one comes from the Jewish Family and Children's Service in Sarasota County, Florida. Their tagline is "when you can't do it alone." And no, that is not upbeat, that doesn't make me feel all nostalgic and tucked-in happy, but it does make me remember times when I have felt alone, and it makes me think, wow, they've really got it. If they address that, they are doing really good work.

So that emotional connection makes sure that an understanding and interest of your organization begins to be seated not only in the brain, but in the heart of your audiences. Obviously, Rebecca, you want to make sure the converse of "don't be generic" is making sure your tagline is unique and specific to your organization.

What happens is, there are only so many original ideas, there is only so many original taglines. Now that's not a problem if no one else in -- no other organization within your arena that's retained the same folks you are trying to engage and which is using the tagline. But you don't want to use one that two other organizations in your town are using if you are all trying to engage the same base, that's confusing.

So here are a couple of taglines that I think do a great job of differentiation. NTEN, which is the nonprofit, an organization of folks interested in putting technology to use in nonprofit organizations and learning more about how to do it better, their tagline is "people who change the world need the tools to do it." The Women's Sports Foundation has a fabulously short tagline "equal play." That's it. So these are really very unique taglines and they map directly to the very distinct identity and focus of the organizations behind them.

Of course, another "do" and this is once you have and now that you know the idea is that your tagline should clearly complement and clarify your organization's name without

duplicating it. Sometimes you can use one of the same words that's in your organization name and the Active Living example that I mentioned earlier does that. But sometimes I think taglines when they repeat the whole organization name in the tagline again, that's just lost real estate, Rebecca. That kind of sends folks away as we are talking about it and so they have a very brief attention span.

So here are a couple of ones that I think are great. The Museum of Transportation, which is somewhere in Missouri, the tagline is, "it is a moving experience." So that brings a sense a humor, never a bad thing. The Sierra Club's tagline is "explore, enjoy and protect the planet." And I think at this point in time, we all know what the Sierra Club is. They have been around for a long time, but when they first came on the scene, what people have tended to think of, when they heard the name was, California Sierra Nevada Mountain range and in fact the Sierra Club was founded to protect that range. But the tagline really emphasizes that the organization is doing a much broader range of work now and balanced it for seemingly narrow focus that one might conclude is associated with that mountain range.

Remember, you can't presume your audience brings any particular context to digesting your tagline and I have more suggestions for achieving impact with your tagline, so let me just say one more thing if I could. And once you have that tagline and once you have tested it and you have put it away for a few weeks and you've looked at it again and you have tweaked it and you have done some testing again and it is good to go, you have to make sure that it is highly visible and integrated into all print online multimedia and even most verbal communications.

You got to really ensure that consistency. That's what lets people make connections among the different pieces of your work and among your various communications. I was really shocked when I heard last month on NPR's Morning Edition - well I wasn't shocked in listening to the radio, let me clarify that, I love Morning Edition.

And I heard that one of the sponsors that morning was the American Psychological Association and they had a really good tagline, which I can't remember right now. But I was actually listening to that when I was sitting at a traffic light after I dropped my daughter off at daycare and I frantically was scribbling down the tagline so I could get back to the office and look it up, because I wanted to find out and see how it was used and so forth.

Well, when I got to the American Psychological Association's home page, its tagline was nowhere to be found, not only on the home page, but not anywhere on the site. So that confused me, because I know I got it right, but I am wondering: if this is the way they are broadcasting their identity, I would assume they chose this very targeted audience that referenced the morning edition, why aren't they using it on their website. It made me think: do I have the right organization? No, of course I did, but this kind of invisibility and lack of integration kind of underlines your tagline power and your overall marketing effect. They have to make sure that you apply it across the board. So those are the key "do's."

Rebecca Ruby: Great, wonderful. Well since we did it for the "don'ts" do you mind doing a quick recap of the "do's"?

Nancy: Of course, let me do that real quickly, because I want to share a brief case study and then open things up for questions. So, your tagline should convey you are a nonprofit, the program's impacts or value, make sure it has positioning value, make it broadly accessible and easy to remember avoiding jargon and acronyms, make it unique and specific to your organization, so it works to differentiate you, make it eight words or less, make an emotional connection, if at all possible, complement and clarify your organization's name in the tagline without duplicating it.

And then once you have that tested tagline ready to go, make sure you integrate it throughout communications online and offline and conversations when talking about it.

Rebecca: Wonderful. Well thank you for doing that and then you mentioned you'd like to share a case study, so if you wouldn't mind sharing some story about one or two nonprofits whose tagline really made a difference for their organization?

Nancy: Yeah, so I live right outside New York City near Newark, New Jersey, which is a very depleted city on its way up, we hope. But it has a really interesting museum that I have sort of been tracking in terms of its marketing efforts. And here is a really good story I learned from their marketing director Mark Albin.

When Mark started at the museum back in 2003, he had a pretty overwhelming challenge and this is what it was. Museum visitors were few and far between and because of that there were some other problems. The low number of visitors kept funding as many funders gave gifts on visitation among other factors and most major donors evolved from the visitors' base. So without more visitors, their amount of funding was capped. And, ultimately, their impact was capped.

He really did not know what the problem was, and nobody in the museum had reached out to really talk to their audiences in more than a decade. So he decided to spend some money, and it wasn't so much, but they did a telephone survey. They realized that they were never going to get folks coming from New York City, where there are plenty of museums. Instead, they were going to reach out to folks who they called "culture consumers," within the five county, 30 mile area that the museum focuses on, including those who knew the museum and those that didn't.

What they found is that visitors who knew the museum wanted to keep a good thing secret; because they thought that the museum was very small and had some capacity issues.

Those who had never visited had no idea what the museum was. Ninety percent of them actually thought that the museum featured either the history of Newark or artists from Newark. In fact, this is a pretty broad regional art and science museum that features the planetarium, representative works from American art, there is a restored 19th century mansion, incredible stuff.

So, he knew that the best way to fix this problem was to get a clear understanding out there... to build a clear understanding of what the museum offered.

But, at the same time, they did not want to go with a whole new brand. They knew that in 2010 it would be a big anniversary for them, and they were going to do a whole new brand at that time.

They thought that they could make a real difference with a tagline. And what he did was to narrow the focus of the tagline to the two essential points that he thought would help reassure folks from both perspectives.

The folks that knew the museum, it would tell them that there is plenty of room, plenty for everyone and don't worry. Tell people about it and, for the folks who did not know it, make it clear what the museum had to offer.

So, he came out with this tagline, working with a group folks, colleagues, at the museum. It was a pretty low budget process. "Eighty galleries of inspiration..." So, it is about art inspiration... "And exploration." And the 80 galleries, of course, emphasizes that there is enough for all.

What was interesting is that they put this everywhere. This shows if you get an email from them, if you get a postcard from them... They do a lot of marketing. They run trips. Every single piece of mail has this. And it is short enough to fit up in the return address block of every single direct mailer. This is just an example.

Once they had that tagline, and they tried it across communications, Mark also trained every one of his colleagues, from gallery guards to janitorial staff and to the main operator on the phone, on this tagline--why it was developed, what it meant--and really encouraged them to talk more about these two points. There is plenty of room for everyone in 80 galleries. And there is both art and science covered by the museum exhibits.

This has had a huge impact on visitation. It has grown, in the first year of use, by 14 percent. This was significant. It continues to grow at a slightly decreased level year over year. That made a huge difference, enabling folks to understand what the museum was and that there was room for everybody there.

So, I bet that is a great tagline story.

Rebecca Ruby: Absolutely. It is a great example that I am sure that a lot of people can relate to. If they haven't quite done the research yet, and they don't really know where to start.

So, I just want to remind everybody on the phone, before we go into our last question... I want to remind everyone on the phone to go ahead and, if you have questions, to please email them to fundraising123@networkforgood.org.

And before we get into our last question, Nancy, do you want to give everybody a heads up of what we will be doing with the tagline clinic and what people can send in for us?

Nancy: Sure, Rebecca. Ask me how you can push on through barriers that have been thrown up in your tagline development process or how to get started. Ask me for my opinion on a tagline that you are developing now or one that is already up and running, but you have some doubts about it. Those are the kind of questions that I would love to help you work through.

Rebecca: Wonderful. OK, so everybody one more time. The email address is fundraising123@networkforgood.org. We will get into our last question and then we will open up the floor.

So, let's say that there is a nonprofit and that somebody called in today. They read the report and realize that they do need a tagline. Or maybe they need a stronger one than the one that they have now. What do they do next? Where can they get started?

Nancy: OK. The best way to get started is create a team in your organization that includes folks from areas... And in very small organizations this is great. But you want people there who are talking different aspects of your operations, with different members of your audiences.

So, it could be that if you have Seagraves programs, it could be someone who deals with the ins and outs of that. You might have people on the program staff that are out there in the field delivering programs. You want multiple perspectives involved.

And then, what you want to do is to sit down and, actually, even before you start a brainstorming session, what I would do is try and ID what are some of the words, and ask people to submit these to you. A laundry list of keywords.

What are some of the elements that are distinctive about your organization where it can impact that are memorable? What are some keywords that could be put to use in the organization?

The next step would be to ask the folks you have put together on this team for examples of taglines that they feel do work and those that don't from colleague and competitive organizations reaching out to your same audiences. That is the universe that you are really concerned with, within and outside of your particular field. You want to have that example.

Next, I would sit down. And, again, this is a quick and dirty way to do it. But, I would sit down that team and start to do some brainstorming. Start to think about how you can differentiate your organization, how you can do so in a way that is distinct from other organizations, engaging your same audience.

Then, if possible, I would always suggest reaching out to your audiences and getting

some input. You have got that anecdotally through your various colleagues working with you on a tagline.

I have to warn you that, like in graphic design, key messages, like the tagline, people can hold them very close to their heart. And it can be very hard to get agreement on one. It can't be done.

But audience research is very helpful, as concrete, tangible data that will let you see how your audiences are thinking about your organization and what their needs and wants are.

Then your job, as the tagline team, is to find the intersection between your audience's needs and wants and the value of your organization's work. That is what you focus on. Not only on your tagline but in your brand as a portfolio of components featuring your tagline.

Once you have a tagline, do not launch it before trying it out... Before committing to yourself and your organization your top choice, get key feedback from at least ten members of key external audiences.

I recommend doing this in two ways. If you can do an online survey, great. But I also recommend doing it in conversation. You can get a lot more that way in response.

If you have program stuff, just throw it out there to folks, they say time and again, or people who are buying your publications; the fulfillment manager asset on the phone, what do you think about this? What do you think about using this phrase as our tagline? Does this seem right to you? How does it hit you?

Now, you may discover one of two things. Either that your targets just don't get it, or you don't feel 100 percent comfortable with it yourself. Before you launch, you have to make sure you love your tagline and you'll be satisfied using it for at least five years. Remember, if it remains relevant and powerful, a longer lifespan is even better.

That's the basic process, Rebecca.

Rebecca: That's a great overview for everybody. So now the questions are rolling in, so if you feel ready I think we can jump into our tagline clinic.

Nancy: I'm ready to go.

Rebecca: All right, wonderful. We have Sherry from a health care foundation, and her question is: "You said to avoid multiple taglines. Is it feasible to have an organizational tagline as well as a tagline for a capital campaign?"

Nancy: It's possible to have not only a campaign tagline; whether it be an advertising campaign, a program campaign or a fundraiser campaign, Sherry, but also all of the above. What's important, though, is that you're sure that your organizational tagline is strong before you roll out subsidiary taglines. That's important.

At the end of the day, when a capital campaign is successful and comes to an end as I know it will be, you want to be remembered by your organizational tagline, not by that capital campaign tagline.

Rebecca: Great. All right, now we have a question from Heather. Her question is: "This tagline was developed for us as both an internal and external audience -- internal for us to our member nonprofits, and external to nonprofits used in their communities. Is this possible to do with one tagline?"

Nancy: Wow. I'd say that in general, what you're calling the internal audience, the nonprofits that are your members, have a whole lot more understanding of the key concepts that I assume are conveyed in that tagline than are their audiences in their communities. I'd say that the tagline is disadvantaging one of those groups.

Rebecca: So it can be done, but it may not be effective for both audiences equally.

Nancy: Not in most cases. It's hard.

Rebecca: Gotcha. Our next question comes from Lauren. Her organization is called Heavenly Housing. Heavenly Housing is a new nonprofit, just two years old, in need of exposure and building a donor base. We're very unique, providing housing for volunteers in disaster areas of the US. Our tagline is: "If you volunteer, they hear!" However, our first home isn't actually built. We are still in need of some funding to complete it. Are we being dishonest with our tagline?

Nancy: Not at all. First of all, I think you really need your tagline. It works very nicely in tandem with your name, to clarify "What the heck is Heavenly Housing?" I love it. It has a sense of humor, it rhymes. Some may say "Ugh, cliché", but you know what? Cliché works because we respond to it. That's a good thing. You're not at all being dishonest, we're working towards that goal.

Rebecca: Wonderful. Our next question is from Melinda. This is a very practical question that I'm sure some people are going to be running into. She asks "What do you suggest to do with printed materials that have an old tagline that still have a shelf life?"

Nancy: That is a really important problem, especially right now. If you go through the trouble of developing a new tagline, you have to be committed to tossing that stuff. From here forward, I recommend that most nonprofits other than huge organizations go with digital printing on demand, so that you can create much smaller print quantities and have much less likelihood of running into that same kind of problem. You do have to toss it, otherwise you're going to undermine the very good work you've put into creating the new tagline.

Rebecca: OK. We have time for at least one more question, so this one comes in from Robin. Robin says "We are trying to develop a tagline for our organization, Katrina's Angels. Katrina's Angels exists to support communities affected by disasters by offering solutions to unmet needs and enhancing the recovery process through resource pooling

and information sharing. Being a very small organization, we don't have a lot of resources. Can you offer advice on the following two taglines we're thinking of incorporating into our brand?"

Nancy: Yep.

Rebecca: The first one is "Katrina's Angels. More than just a wing and a prayer, we represent real hope for disaster victims." Do you want me to read the other one, or do you want to do them one at a time?

Nancy: No, no, I'd like to compare them.

Rebecca: Sure. This other one that they used for their fundraising campaign is: "Katrina's Angels. Be an angel, give a hand." Your feedback is appreciated.

Nancy: OK. So, my take is I think they could do better than both. I'm on Katrina's Angels site right now, and the tagline that I see; this is probably already out the door, I'm going to assume that; is "Coordinating resources for the survivors of major natural disasters." Although that's a pure descriptor, that's not the ideal tagline either, what I'm getting from that is what Katrina's Angels does, and I don't really get that from either of the two taglines in play. I really don't. It sounds like the work they do is filling in a pretty significant gap in disaster relief.

It's basically like they're IDing the holes in disaster relief efforts and helping to fill them. That's incredibly interesting and vital kind of focus, but I don't get that. I don't get anything about that. That focus and the fact that they're going to speed the recovery process along through their work; putting lives back together, something like that; should be the focus of their tagline. I would not repeat the imagery of a wing and a prayer. I'm looking at their logo type now, and it has an angel's wings, so I think we have enough there of that sort of feel.

Something about the change that their work makes in communities that have been affected by disasters would be a really strong focus for a tagline.

Rebecca: Great. All right, well thank you for that. It looks like we are at two o'clock on the nose, so I think we're about ready to wrap up, but thank you so much for joining us today Nancy. I really appreciate you for joining today's call, and if anyone else has any other questions, don't hesitate to send them along to fundraising123@workforgood.org.

So thank you all for joining and for registering for today's call, and thank you, Nancy, again. We really appreciate you taking the time for us today.

Nancy: Well thanks, Rebecca. Thanks to all of you for your attention and your very good questions. I really urge you to put some focus and time into taglines, they can really have a significant impact on your marketing success. If you haven't had a chance to download the report, it's free, you can get to it at gettingattention.org. There are over a thousand nonprofit taglines listed there, and learning by example is a great way to go there.