

The Extreme Fundraising Ezine, Vol. I Issue 2

“The Pareto Principle Applied: The Rule of Three’s”

Greetings and welcome back to the Extreme Fundraising Ezine!

In our last issue, we gave an overview of the Pareto Principle. In last week’s teleclass, we looked at Vilfred Pareto in depth and explored how his 80:20 observation could be applied to various aspects of our day-to-day life. In this issue and the next, we’ll explore a “branding” rule called “The Rule of Threes.” I think you’ll agree that this is a natural extension of a practical application of the Pareto Principle.

****THE RULE OF THREES****

The Pareto Principle tells us that we can expect to get 80% of our results from 20% of our effort. What if there were a way to apply this to communication? It’s scary to think that such a small percent of our communication would be responsible for so much of our results. Wouldn’t it be a good use of time and effort to figure out how to leverage that 20%? What if there were an approach simple enough that anyone could remember but powerful enough to get the lion share of the results? The Rule of Threes is one such approach.

I first heard of the Rule of Threes from Molly Gordon (<http://mollygordon.com>). She first heard of it from Kim Krisco’s now out-of-print book *Leadership and the Art of Conversation*. In brief, the Rule of Threes is:

- * identify 3 AUTHENTIC attributes about you or your organization
- * identify 3 natural channels of communication
- * feed the 3 attributes into those 3 channels 3 times within a 3 month period.

3 ATTRIBUTES

Go to most nonprofit websites and you’ll see a grocery list of phrases they use to describe themselves. “Catalyst,” “life-changing,” “responsible,” “mission/vision driven,” “grassroots,” etc. If all nonprofits are describing themselves with this long list of characteristics, they’re not really that effective in making themselves stand out, are they?

To identify the three attributes you’ll use in your fundraising communication, consider who you want as a donor. What does your ideal donor look like? It may be helpful to name her and give her a personality. Now that you know who you’re trying to communicate to, think of the attributes of your organization that would appeal to her. It’s crucial that these be attributes that are *already* true...not one’s you hope will be some day. What are people already saying about your organization and how it lives out its mission? What three would most likely attract your perfect donor?

3 COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Now identify three ways you can use to get that message out. Do you already print a periodical? Is your organization sending out an e-newsletter? What about the personal visits your staff makes to your constituents? The variety of communication channels is virtually inexhaustible. Your objective is to choose to focus on three of them for the next three months.

3 ATTRIBUTES, 3 CHANNELS, 3 TIMES, 3 MONTHS

Once you’ve identified 3 attributes already true of your organization and the 3 communication channels, feed those attributes into the channels three times each over the next three months.

Be patient and submit to the process. You're like a farmer sowing seed. The harvest *will* come—and it will be incredible. Your intentional focus is like planting hybrid seed. But don't expect to see results until the fourth month. Seeds need time to grow before they can be harvested.

****WHAT ABOUT YOU?****

What about you? Why not block out some time this week to brainstorm with your staff and donors about *the* three attributes you should use to identify your organization?

****TELECLASS REMINDER****

The next Extreme Fundraising Teleclass will be on Tuesday, November 18 at 1:30 p.m. There will be no teleclass on November 4 as I'll be on my way to APC's East Coast Fall Conference in Philadelphia. If you're attending the conference, let's get together! I'll be giving three seminars there; one will be on The Rule of Threes and the Independent School Advocacy Initiative. It should be great!

That's enough for this issue. In the next issue, we'll explore how a school might put The Rule of Threes to use. Until then, let me know what attributes you're finding out about your organization. I can be reached at marc@fundraisingcoach.com.

To your extreme fundraising success,

Marc

Marc A. Pitman is an executive coach to nonprofit leaders. An expert in helping people identify their natural abilities, he's committed to providing down-to-earth information that will decrease stress and remind people how much fun it is to ask people for money!

The Extreme Fundraising Ezine is a complimentary newsletter of The Fundraising Coach (<http://fundraisingcoach.com>). Feel free to pass it on!

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