

Kopywriter Freelance Copywriting Services
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Nonprofits and the Recession

Recessions mean belt-tightening, cutbacks, and hard times. Yet for nonprofits, the possibility of a recession is often: “so what else is new?”

For charitable organizations, every day is one of belt-tightening, of constant concern about sources of income, of trying to stretch every dollar.

But no matter how familiar you are with being budget-conscious, a recession isn't just the “same old, same old.” Because unfortunately, the needs of your clients tend to increase, just as your sources of funding are decreasing.

Traditionally, Americans are a giving nation; but in times of recession, donations decline. Over the past 40 years, there were two key periods when donations to nonprofits decreased: 1973-1975 and 2001-2003. Those were special cases: the first was triggered by the OPEC oil embargo and the startling revelation that Americans weren't insulated from the rest of the world's troubles, that abundant fuel was a myth, and shortages and hard times could become reality. The second was the World Trade Center tragedy, which dramatically eroded Americans' confidence, as we again faced fears of vulnerability and thoughts of uncertainty.

So how deep will this recession be? It's possible that the stock market's precipitous drop since early last fall is simply a normal correction, or it could be a reaction to ever-increasing bad news: the wars, the crises in the sub-prime lending, alt-a mortgage and

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student loan industries, the price of gasoline (again) and the ripple effect on grain prices, particularly wheat and corn. Once considered the ravings of fanatic doomsayers, it's now possible that we may soon be paying \$4.00 a gallon for gasoline and \$5.00 for a loaf of bread. Across the world recently, there have been food riots. Could it happen here?

It's not a pretty sight, and it's easy to get caught up in gloomy forecasts. Donations from the middle class could dry up, as charitable giving is one expense that's always easy to excise. An added factor this year is that many donations may go instead toward political candidates, rather than charities. The reasoning is simple: the next President will have an opportunity (if not an obligation) to restore confidence, domestically and worldwide, and ease some of the biggest triggers for recessions: fear of the unknown, and an uncertain future. So it isn't surprising that the candidates are getting many of the dollars during this political season.

But for nonprofits, there is good news.

In 2006, charitable donations in the US set a record, about \$295 billion, according to Giving USA Foundation. That's

an increase of 1% after inflation from 2005, another healthy year for charitable giving. It's also less than three years removed from a steep decline: 2.2% in 2001, and another 1.1% drop in 2002.

Americans as a rule do not treat charitable giving as an expendable luxury, particularly those who possess strong ties to religion. Further, giving by the faithful is not directed only toward their weekly offerings or tithes.. the religious also tend to be more charitable than others for all forms of charities. It's a belief doubtless grounded in a compassionate sense of duty to help others, and a passion to try to make a difference.

"The religious faithful and those in their Twenties and Thirties represent two of the strongest donor pools available to nonprofits."

An exciting hope for nonprofits is that the most youthful of our moneyed generations, those in their Twenties and early Thirties, are particularly primed toward wanting to make a difference. The difficulty for nonprofits is that overall, this generation is not looking at traditional ways to contribute; instead, they'd like to do it in the easiest way possible: "*show me how I can help, and I will.*" That's not meant to tar this generation with the paintbrush of laziness. Rather, this generation is simply impatient with methods that are tired and not so true, and is eager to find more efficient ways to do a greater good, as quickly as possible. For all nonprofits, that's a donor base that has been largely underutilized, and one primed for marketing.

It's arguable that there are two important priorities for any nonprofit:

- 1) Client services
- 2) Obtaining funding for those services

Everything else you do, all your efforts and programs, channels toward those two goals. And without the second, you can't properly serve the first, no matter how dedicated or caring you and your staff are.

So how do you ride out a recession?

First of all, don't hide your head in the sand. Don't believe so passionately in the good works you're doing that you dismiss the possibility of a shortage of incoming funds. You're already doing good work; now's the time to make sure everyone else knows it, too.

It's essential that you've previously developed a broad base of donors, including individuals, corporate and foundation grants, government contracts, commercial income (if applicable), and properly conceived and implemented fundraisers. It's essential that you stay in front of your donor base so that when they're ready to give, they'll think of you first.

And while it's important not to panic, do look at projected expenses, as well as sources of income. It's possible that you're considering consolidating staff positions, holding off on future hiring, or delaying purchases of new equipment. But while cutting expenses may seem like the logical path, it often puts organizations (as well as commercial businesses) on track for further and deeper losses. Just as a retail

business that cuts employee hours inevitably sees a decline in customer service and a resultant increase in customer dissatisfaction, a nonprofit's client services inevitably suffer because your reduced staff is working with inadequate tools and resources.

And what happens when you're forced to make cutbacks and consolidate positions? The overall workload doesn't change; in fact, we've established that it's possible that there's an increased demand for your agency's services. And that forces your remaining staff to work longer, faster, and sometimes, cut corners to get the work done. It's possible that the work you do, particularly the writing that's always necessary (newsletters, brochures, fundraising letters, etc.), gets less than 100% effort. Sometimes, it just gets done, so that it's out of the office and into the publicity pipeline.

But these are things you already know.

Fund-raising is Advertising

It's important to remember that fundraising is advertising. And advertising, particularly in times of a slowdown, becomes more important than ever. If you advertise and market when everything's flush and rosy, you're just preaching to the choir. But advertising when times are bad ensures that you're not forgotten. If your mission is to do good things for the disadvantaged and you've continually accomplished that in the past, now is the time to remind your past donors and educate potential donors about your good works, and the true worth of your mission.

*"If you don't do anything,
you'll wind up with nothing."*

Most people, particularly Americans, understand that even as they are enduring hardship, others are feeling it more. And that's the time to show them that there are simple methods to help those who are worse off. That's the time to market.

- ✓ It's the time to increase mailing efforts, not decrease them.
- ✓ It's the time to create new slants for old messages, so your pleas are heard and not ignored.
- ✓ It's the time to consider hiring a professional writer.

Yes, a professional writer is an added expense. A professional writer can't possibly have the same dedication and desire to help as you and your staff. It will also take time to educate the writer, so he or she completely understands your goals, your commitment, and your passion.

But professional writers bring something else to the table: we're trained to persuade, even when our understanding is not as complete as that of industry experts.

Our mission is to craft messages for those who have even less of an understanding of your services, as well as your specific needs, problems and challenges.

Our job is to create products that convince those on the fence, that remind those who've forgotten, and in turn prompt readers to open their wallets, take out their checkbooks, or whip out their credit cards.

The Freelance Advantage

- You don't take valuable time away from the everyday duties of your staff.
- You don't have to pay us benefits, or offer perks
- You don't have to work around coffee breaks, lunch hours, or time off.

As freelancers, we take care of all those things for ourselves, so you don't have to. We'll get your job done invisibly, and present you with polished, complete works which are everything you expect and more, in a timely fashion.

So if you're considering cutting back on your marketing efforts, consider the dangers of not promoting your cause. If you're lost in the forest and you don't call for help, who will even look for you?

Call the Kopywriter or email today for a no-obligation consultation for your next writing project: brochure, newsletter, sales or fundraising letters, web content, or just everyday writing, to take the pressure off you and your staff.

The Kopywriter... the "staff writer"
not on your staff, but on your side.

What is a Kopywriter?

Strictly speaking, "kopywriter" is a made-up word. Check the sidebar on page 4: "**Y Did U Spel it So Funy?**" Of course, it's really copywriter, and that's why you have this newsletter in your hands.

You're searching for expert copywriting for your business, non-profit organization or for personal reasons, because you don't have the time, experience or patience to craft first-class comm-unications. You want copywriting in all its forms:

- electronic ad copy for radio or TV
- print for brochures, newsletters, flyers and booklets
- direct mail, sales letters, catalogs and public relations
- everyday business writing, editing and proofreading
- and more than ever, web content.

In these uncertain times, you might be looking to update your resume, one that's power-packed with keywords that ensure you more than a five-second look, a resume that will get the HR manager, recruiter or headhunter to pick up the phone and call you for that interview.

Above all, you want affordable copywriting that's prompt, clean, and persuasive. You want it to be creative, with grabbers that attract potential clients so you can turn them into long-term customers. And whether you know it or not, you don't want a lot of flashy graphics for your website because people have clicked on your site for just two reasons: they want information, and they want it now.

So, thanks for reading the Kopywriter newsletter. Poke around, see who I am, what I can do for you, and have a little fun!

Y Did U Spel it so Funy?

The definition of “copywriter” is as follows:

Copy-y-writ-er: [kop'-ee-raht-ter]-noun

a writer of copy, esp. for advertisements of publicity releases. *Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1).*

Based on the Random House Unabridged Dictionary, © Random House, Inc. 2006

In Middle England, many craftsmen and artisans earned the appellation “wright” for their area of expertise; for example: shipwrights, millwrights, wheelwrights, and even playwrights. By extension, then, a “copy-wrighter” would reflect that attention to detail and craftsmanship.

Why change the spelling? It's a humble affectation: my last name is Kaye. So *voila!* A revised definition:

Kopywriter (kop'-ee-right-er) (noun)

- 1) One who writes advertising copy
- 2) a freelance writer
- 3) pen for hire
- 4) the “staff writer” not on your staff
- 5) the professional writing partner for your next sales, promotional, fundraising or marketing campaign
- 6) me (Bill Kaye)



*“Fundraising
is
Advertising
is
Marketing”*

Bio

The Kopywriter is Bill Kaye, Production Director for WJBR-FM in Wilmington from 1985-2005. As Production Director, Bill was the primary copywriter, creating over 8000 individual radio spots for virtually every type of business, service or product. Bill's special talent is in digesting complicated and detailed notes, and writing radio spots that inform the listener as well as prompting that all-important “call to action.” Bill's strengths are creativity, dependability, promptness and a dedication to detail and accuracy, ensuring that there were virtually no “make-goods” required for inaccurate or dated copy.

Recently, Bill has been involved in consultative sales, particularly business to business sales, and thus brings a unique perspective and under-standing of the demands of businesses and organizations.

A desire to make a difference in his community drove Bill's 10 years service with a youth baseball league, as President and later as Registrar, long after his own children had left the league. Bill created all facets of the league's writing, including fundraising and recruitment letters, handbooks, newsletters, brochures, advertising and all peripheral materials.

Bill is also the author of two published novels:

The Killing of Bill Doolin
(Leisure Books, 1980)

Wrong Target
(Leisure, 1981)