



Newsflash

Sibal Writing & Consulting

Business Writing that Works ... Consulting for Success

Winter 2008-2009

2009: Keeping Optimistic During Recessionary Times

It seems every where you turn there is depressing news about the economy. No one knows how severe this recession will be and when the bottom will be reached. TD Economics recently announced that 251,000 of us will lose our jobs this year. According to the Conference Board of Canada, Ontario is expected to have the weakest consumer spending outlook of all provinces and real GDP in Ontario will fall by 1.2 per cent this year. And while there is so much talk about economic stimulus and bailouts, no one really knows if this is the right prescription to heal our ailing economy or when it will trickle down to our communities, assuming it does.

One thing is certain: as the unemployment levels continue to rise, people are finding it harder to make ends meet. We're going to see more people depending on social programs and services like never before. It's a catch 22 for non-profits and

community groups: while we're faced with an increased community-level demand for services, we are running out of the very resources needed to do our jobs well. Many organizations are just trying to keep afloat.

There are simple things nonprofits can do during these trying times. Take stock of your current programs and assess if they are truly meeting the needs of your client base. Audit every expenditure to uncover potential savings. Don't overlook the fact that there could be opportunities for collaboration and capacity building with other like-minded organizations—perhaps to combine programs, share resources and learn from each other. Sibal Writing & Consulting can help your organization explore all of these possibilities with a free one-hour initial consultation. You've got everything to gain by contacting us today at 905-580-4433 or info@sibal.ca.

Did you know...?

- Canada has more than 161,000 registered charities and non-profits
- There are more than 12 million volunteers across Canada logging in more than 2 billion hours of volunteer time annually
- Canada's charitable and non-profit sector employ more than 2 million full-time equivalent workers, or 11% of the economically active population, or about 8.5% of Canada's GDP

- *Imagine Canada, 2009*

What We Do Best ... Serving Public Sector Organizations

Sibal Writing and Consulting offers professional writing and consulting services to the broader public sector – governments, agencies, associations, community-based organizations, coalitions and networks.

We offer top quality, affordable business writing and corporate communications support. Our consulting services include customized research to support organizations with public policy and program development and expertise with government relations.

With 18 years experience in the public sector, we are dedicated to helping organizations in the child welfare, education, social services, multicultural and health care arenas so that they are better able to serve people who are at-risk and the most vulnerable members of our society.

Let's work with you to improve public policies, programs and services that support more sustainable community development.

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Spotlight on: The Ontario Nonprofit Network

You may have heard of the Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN), a network of networks building communication and coordination amongst nonprofit organizations working for the public benefit in Ontario. Formed a couple of years ago, the ONN is increasing the profile and capacity of the nonprofit sector to participate in public policy in Ontario in a resource efficient manner.

The ONN has been openly critical of the Federal Government's budget in January which failed to see the nonprofit sector as an essential part of the economic stimulus solution for Ontario and Canada. The ONN has

also written an open letter to Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty, given that the province is the largest funder of nonprofit and charitable services in our communities.

Ontario has over 45,000 charities and nonprofits. Clearly, Ontario's diverse nonprofit sector impacts every resident of the province. The ONN believes the nonprofit sector is uniquely positioned to help the country bounce back from these hard times if it receives the right support from all levels of government. Specifically, it has asked the provincial government to: maintain (not cut) support to Ontario communities,

increase funding to selective groups already stretched to capacity and bearing the brunt of the recession, invest in social innovation at the grassroots level, and to cut the red tape and reduce detailed reporting requirements for nonprofit and charitable organizations.

Can your organization make a difference in advancing the interests of the sector? You bet! It's free to join the ONN as a Network Partner and you'll receive regular updates on issues that matter the most to nonprofits and charities. For more details, visit www.ontariononprofitnetwork.ca.

Does Your Website Need a Tune-Up?

Your organization's website is the front door to quality service. Make it welcoming, user-friendly, informative and impactful!

When was the last time you looked at your organization's website? *Seriously*. More importantly, when did you last update it? In today's uncertain economy, your client base needs up-to-date information about your organization's programs and services. Here are some simple tips to get your website operating at optimal performance:

- **A fresh, current home page** is key to ensuring your clients are getting timely information

about program or staffing changes, or changes in policies and procedures, hours of operation, etc.

- **Make sure all links are working** within your website and to external organizations—remove or update accordingly.

- **Update current events information** and remove details related to past events.

- **Consider blogging.** Many websites have a blog feature that allows your organization to

communicate on a daily or regular basis with clients.

- **Determine the need for an overhaul.** If your website is structurally cumbersome to navigate, it may need to be streamlined beyond a simple tune-up. Sibal Writing & Consulting can audit your website. We'll transform it into a truly effective communications tool. Contact us at 905-580-4433 or info@sibal.ca for a free initial consultation.

Why Hire a Professional Writer?

- To get clear, concise writing that your audience understands
- To bring different writing styles together (which can be the result of project work)
- To save time and money, especially in today's tough economic environment. Your precious resources can be freed up to complete other projects
- To improve your organization's image—polished writing will give you the professional image that gets attention: you'll get that grant application or research proposal approved and you'll look like a star!

Don't Miss our Next Issue ...

Get timely information and tips on:

- Communicating on a Shoe-String Budget
- Networking 101 in Tough Times
- Grant Opportunities? Yes, they are out there!

Coming Spring 2009!