



2012 Strategic Plan

Board members and other stakeholders last gathered to draft a five-year strategic plan in 2000. An ambitious document, it challenged us to look beyond Chicago and to examine the individuals and organizations we should serve as well as how best to meet their needs to better tell their stories. Just a few months after its adoption, we learned that the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, a supporter from our inception in 1989, would no longer be funding our work due to a strategic reorientation of the philanthropy's grantmaking. Then came the dot com blow out in the stock market and a general downturn in philanthropic grant making. Then September 11, 2001 and a dramatic drop in workshop attendance numbers [and earned revenue]. All three factors changed some of the assumptions in our plan at the time.

Despite those challenges, by late 2006 it became apparent that the Workshop had completed the goals laid out in our previous plan and more. We decided to undertake a new plan to gain clarity on where we need to go and how to manage recent growth fueled by increased demand for our services and supported by more diverse revenue streams including sales of our media guide and other tools, solid foundation support, and a strong relationship with Columbia College Chicago, our base of operations.

After engaging the services of planner Marianne Philbin, we convened our Board Executive Committee to focus on what we hoped to get out of the process, then brought together our board as well as other allies and friends –some two dozen in all– from across the Chicago region in September 2007. This culminated in determination of the four primary goals which will guide our work over the next five years, and which are discussed individually later in this document:

1. Continue to **connect community leaders with journalists to promote news that matters**, enhancing core offerings so that the Workshop meets the needs of journalists and the non-profit community in a changing media landscape, widening the circle of opportunity, and amplifying the voices heard.
2. Craft new strategies for the Workshop to serve as consultant, catalyst and coach within and outside of the Chicago, furthering our message

and identity as a **national leader in fostering nonprofits' ability to get their voices heard and tell their stories.**

3. **Build a more diversified revenue base** to increase unrestricted support and build visibility in front of new audiences and potential supporters.
4. Develop internal infrastructure to support the work planned for this next phase of growth, specifically **bolstering staff capacity for marketing and fundraising, and planning for leadership succession** among staff and board.

At our board retreat, we reflected on our past as well as brainstormed about the future, and discussed the implications of the unique role that the Community Media Workshop continues to play at the intersection of media, nonprofit development and social change. Priority areas included maintaining our emphasis on our dual frame: how we help journalists find real community sources, and how we help nonprofits access journalists with real stories. We crafted a “Theory of Change” that encapsulated our beliefs about our work and its purpose:

“If we empower more people to tell their stories more often and in more effective ways, then we will influence how issues are framed and understood, which will ultimately lead to social change.”

This plan embodies our renewed desire to take up that challenge, and our vision of how we will be better able to do so in the coming years.

Who We Are

Mission

Our mission is to diversify the voices in the news to build a stronger democracy. In Chicago and across the Midwest, we provide communications coaching that enables nonprofit staff and volunteers to share their stories with a range of audiences. We provide journalists with context and sourcing guidance and connect nonprofit communicators and journalists to ensure all voices have equal access to public debates.

Our Work Today

Our recent accomplishments are highlighted in the attached Addendum, and include coaching more than 1,200 individuals per year. Our customers gain tools to identify segmented, reachable audiences and learn how to craft strong messages. They become skilled at the art of telling stories because human beings learn through hearing or reading compelling stories of individuals, families or groups, not program descriptions or rhetoric. Customers also learn leading-edge effective techniques to further their mission or build their organization. We have valued and unique print, online, and broadcast publications for both nonprofit communicators and journalists, and major fundraiser and networking events each spring.

A “Typical” Year at Current Budget Level Includes

PROGRAM	NUMBER of	SUCH AS
Workshops Trainings Making Media Connections	1200 individuals trained 20-30 total events	Professional Media Relations Power Pitching, Public Speaking Getting Interviewed, Online Strategies Making Media Connections Regional mini-conferences (Michigan)
Annual Media Guide	850 + 350 sold to Publicity Club of Chicago members	<i>Getting on the Air, Online and Into Print</i>
Free coaching services	About 100 individuals	Finding a consultant Who to pitch Strategy questions
Consulting Contracts	1 ongoing contract Lots of one-time trainings	LISC has retained us to serve New Communities Program groups (\$25,000 yr) Others are one-time, from \$0 – \$1,700/day
News Publishing Webcasts Cable Radio	Six	Newstips.org and NPcommunicator.org Newsdesk, Chicago Sources & eNotes CAN TV & WNUA productions
Speaker/Events	Two	Brown Bag evening or lunchtime-free (e.g. Opportunity Agenda from NYC 2007, John Cruikshank event 2006); Terkel reunion; Studs Terkel Awards

Future: Our Vision for Growth and Development

As we move toward celebrating the Community Media Workshop's 20th anniversary in 2009, we are well on our way to taking our work to the next level. We're providing smart, effective, affordable, state-of-the-art communications training. We're connecting community leaders with key journalists to promote news that matters -- and, looking at our work from a "big picture" point of view, the Workshop is widening the circle of opportunity, amplifying the voices heard and inspiring more hope. We'd like to continue the stability of our current base of funding, along with developing additional capacity to do more quality work and to adapt to whatever new twists and turns may come down the road to meet us. We talked about what a "dream" organization might look like in five years. The plans outlined in this document reflect that vision. We talked about the importance of:

- Community Media Workshop as a crucial leader in democratizing and decentralizing media coverage of key issues affecting America's neighborhoods.
- The Workshop modeling the communications best practices it teaches, serving as an exemplary storyteller, advocate, technical pro and innovator.
- No longer a Chicago organization but a Chicago-based regional resource, the Workshop is either running regularly scheduled workshops in more than one city, or coupling low-cost lodging with low-cost workshops here in Chicago, or both.
- Community Media Workshop networking and engaging community-based communicators to be more effective, while educating a new generation of reporters, bloggers, political analysts, video & radio producers, and multimedia artists to engage deeply in community-based reporting as the Internet continues to restructure traditional delivery of news and information.
- Continuing our rich partnership with Columbia College Chicago through ongoing work with students, faculty and administration connecting campus life with city communities.
- Trainers and consultants with extensive experience and background in nonprofit communications; typically including some advocacy or organizing (multi-lingual).
- Partnerships with multi-state coalitions and networks; extending our reach and message to cities across the Midwest, marketing the Workshop and its offerings in ways that increase our revenue as we deliver quality services to even more communities.

Constituents

Through the planning process, we reaffirmed that we have two primary constituents—nonprofit communicators and journalists:

Nonprofit Communicators

Staff and volunteers charged with sharing the stories of their organizations, primarily in the Midwest. We have tended historically to serve advocacy and organizing kinds of groups, but we

also champion particular issue campaigns as they emerge, e.g. community policing, affordable housing and local school councils. Community arts and emerging cultural institutions are a growing constituency; and we've deepened our work recently with immigration reform and ethnic media outlets. Our primary constituents are the organizations, whose impact we seek to amplify. While individuals may leave an organization, we will continue to serve the group. Some characteristics we've learned about the nonprofit communicators we work with include:

- 3 out of 4 are staff, the rest are volunteers, including board members.
- 99% are responsible for communications but 1 in 3 work communications, outreach, PR, etc. Another third work development. Balance is executive directors, artists, volunteers, community organizers, program staff, etc.
- They spend an average of just over half their time on communications-related activities.
- 1 in 3 are new to the field (less than 3 years on the job)
- About 85% women. About half white, a quarter African American, 10% Latino/a, 15% other folks.
- We should consider the opportunity to reach individuals and stick with them as they move through their nonprofit careers—building a support network of nonprofit communicators as they move up and through this sector representing seven percent of regional employment.

Journalists

We support journalists looking for stories 'off the beaten path,' through sourcing and providing leads and ideas (Newstips). As the business model of the news media changes, and as we encounter journalism students who are adept at navigating the Internet but less familiar with the neighborhoods and communities where most Americans actually live, we believe the kind of grassroots reporting that we both support and model (through public affairs shows and on-line content) will grow in importance.

Key Goals

To meet the needs of these constituents and grow in ways that enable us to respond to the changing field as well as to the increasing opportunities ahead, we have identified on the following pages four key goals.

Goal 1

Continue to connect community leaders with journalists to promote news that matters, enhancing core offerings so that the Workshop meets the needs of journalists and the non-profit community in a changing media landscape, widening the circle of opportunity, and amplifying the voices heard.

Rationale

The Workshop now reaches 2,000 nonprofit communicators annually (1,000 through coaching and conferences; 200 via Newstips and media we produce, and 800 media guide purchasers). Five thousand unique visitors arrive at our website each month accessing over 30,000 page views. A core of four thousand emailers regularly receive twice-monthly eNotes and forty percent on average open our electronic newsletter. Demand has grown—we've seen all kinds and sizes of nonprofits embrace communications as they look for ways to act on more advocacy-oriented attitudes and seek to diversify revenue streams. Technology and community media are woven into our work and will only increase in importance as the next five years bring the same kind of technology and communications convergence to the nonprofit sector that other businesses have already seen.

Indicators of Success

We will measure our success in meeting this goal through the following indicators, signs that we have made progress and achieved results:

- Measure the ratio of days spent doing training to total work days (Seek to spend about half of total workdays actually doing trainings)
- Increase numbers of individual nonprofit communicators reached to more than 5,000 per year, with incremental growth of about 400 individuals per year.
- Increase diversity of nonprofit communicators we work with (current: 50% white, 25% African American, 15% Latino, 10% other)
- Update and enrich our on-line presence, including revising www.newstips.org by end 2008
- Continue and reinforce our system of in-house evaluations and rigorous follow ups done by program staff
- Annual customer satisfaction survey will rate us highly; annual state of nonprofit communications survey will illuminate our role and further define our contributions to the field

Strategies – Goal 1

Strategies we will undertake to achieve these results include:

- Develop and administer customer satisfaction survey, and survey concerning state of nonprofit communications.
- Analyze and define methods to better track outcomes, including bringing in a professional evaluator to help us professionalize and routinize a sustainable and effective evaluation method in-house.
- Bring the media guide, *Getting On Air*, *On-line*, & *Into Print* on-line

Strategies – Goal 1 continued

- Maintain **Newstips** as a fact-based source of information on Chicago neighborhoods for journalists and other interested people.
- Look for opportunities to provide trainings that target clusters of nonprofits, for example around specific issue or interest areas.
- Determine how to formulate ongoing partnerships with national associations or organizations that have compatible missions, allowing us to streamline delivery while producing numerous trainings (e.g. provide spokesperson training at groups' annual meetings).
- Explore new methods of coaching and supporting journalists and citizen journalists such as creating one or more workshops for journalists per year, along with briefings & tours.
- Reach deeper into Chicago and suburban markets through a mix of workshops, e.g. by hosting workshops in the community—go where the people are (e.g. in the suburbs or in Chicago neighborhoods).
- Build a diverse training team / conduct trainings for trainers.
- Explore funding for and establishment of a Terkel scholar in residence at the Workshop in conjunction with Columbia College School of Media Arts
- Continue to use/consider expanding into the following training methods: Video conference, 1-on-1, On-line-on-demand, On-line-Webinar, Small groups (e.g. individual organizations), Big room, Residential retreat-like trainings (e.g. SPIN Academy style)
- Identify the characteristics of a “good” target market to receive the full impact of what we do (e.g., scale, media landscape, density of non-profits, etc.)
- Define our package of services – before, during and following any actual on-the-ground training.

Goal 2

Craft new marketing and program delivery strategies for the Workshop to serve as consultant, catalyst and coach, furthering the Workshop's message and identity as a national leader fostering nonprofits' ability to get their voices heard and tell their stories.

Rationale

The Workshop needs to raise its profile in order to evangelize around our core ideas of communicating more effectively. This means scaling up our core offerings as documented under Goal 1, and playing new roles in building the emerging field of nonprofit communications and modeling best practices. Nonprofits are investing more in sharing their stories via the news media, on-line and through other channels due to growth in the sector of a more advocacy-oriented attitude and efforts to diversify their revenue streams, driving many to communicate more with a wider range of constituents.

Indicators of Success

We know we will have met this goal when:

- We build partnerships with local non-profits and funders in three to four Midwest communities (e.g., Detroit by June 2008, Milwaukee by May 2008, Cleveland by November 2008).
- We develop an e-newsletter that works for a regional, not just Chicago, market.
- We engage more non-profits in the Chicago area, deepening our market penetration to 60 percent by July 2008 and 70 percent by July 2009.
- We secure 3-4 new major funders to support this work
- We gain more coverage from trade or general media
- On-line visits to our Web presence exceed 25,000 per month

Strategies

Strategies we will undertake to achieve these results include:

- Measure our impact and document our effectiveness in order to sell new services
- Tell our own story better, for example by publishing our own media toolkit/guidebook
- Investigate the possibilities of producing reports and studies in our field, similar to the current Ethnic Media Project
- Develop a formal marketing plan by December 2008 featuring consistent messages and marketing materials to promote Workshop offerings in coordinated fashion
- For all the workshops we deliver, we need to both offer outstanding, pragmatic coaching while at the same time modeling best practices (e.g., state-of-the-art e-newsletters and on-line communication)
- Establish Council of Regional Advisors, local stakeholders who can advise our entry into their markets and who can serve as a core affinity group for our follow-up work across communities.

Goal 3

Build a more diversified revenue base to sustain the Workshop, increase unrestricted support and build visibility in front of new audiences and potential supporters.

Rationale

The Workshop's current annual budget is about \$700,000. Diversifying our revenue base, increasing unrestricted support and building visibility will enable us to more efficiently and more effectively achieve our mission, supporting our plans for enhanced core offerings as well as new program development.

Indicators of Success

Key measures: We know we will have met this goal when:

- Our revenue mix reverses from historic pattern of 60/40 percent grant/non-grant to at least 50 percent earned (from 38 percent earned currently), 8 percent Columbia College Chicago in-kind (from 11 percent CCC in-kind currently) and 42 percent foundations and individuals (from 51 percent foundations and individuals currently).
- We increase our number of institutional funders from 10 to 20.
- We double the individual donor base and increase Terkel Awards event revenue by 20 percent by June 2008 and 30 percent by June 2009.
- Grow budget to \$1.2 million by 2012. The growth we project is outlined in the chart below:

Managing Growth

	<i>"TODAY" YEAR: 2007</i>	<i>"TOMORROW" YEAR: 2012</i>
Total Budget	\$700,000	\$1.2 million
% of Revenue from:		
Earned	38%	50%
Foundation	45%	36%
Government	0%	0%
Individuals	6%	6%
In-kind (Columbia)	11%	8%
% of Expenses:		
Program	70%	70%
Fundraising	15%	15%
Admin /Op	15%	15%
# of Staff	6: 4 Pgm/2 Admin + interns	10 7 Pgm/3 Admin + interns
# of Board	13	17

Strategies – Goal 3

To attain this goal we will:

- Develop a business plan by mid 2008 for increasing earned revenue. We will study various business models to support more earned income (e.g., p.r. agency, law firm, etc.). By 2009 we will shift current development consultant to a new staff position (which will free up training staff to do this work or will bring new sales, marketing and business development expertise).
- Create a \$100,000 venture opportunity fund – by starting to set aside 10% of earned and other unrestricted revenue by June 2008 – to further stabilize the Workshop’s funding and to position us to seize new business opportunities as they arise.
- Explore institutionalizing the annual Terkel scholarship for a Columbia media arts student through a partial endowment held by the college
- Systematize new business efforts –e.g., identify the characteristics of a strong market that is a good candidate for communications training (examining criteria such as density of nonprofit groups, particular media challenges/opportunities, funding availability, etc).
- To increase the number of institutional funders, we will significantly increase prospect research into grant possibilities, develop new relationships, and submit more grant requests per year.
- To reach out to more individual donors, we will continue to connect our individual donations campaign to our Studs Terkel Benefit and devote more effort to engaging longer-term higher end individual donors.

Goal 4

Develop the internal infrastructure to support the work planned for this next phase of growth, specifically bolstering staff capacity for marketing and fundraising, and planning for leadership succession among Staff and Board.

Rationale

The Workshop is operating at maximum capacity, and without additional staff resources can take on little additional work, no matter what the demand or opportunity. The Workshop currently has 6 staff (4 program staff and 2 administrative positions plus interns.) The Workshop currently has 13 board members.

Indicators:

We will have successfully met this goal when we grow into the organizational chart illustrated on the following page, which is intended to support the plans described in this document. The organizational chart projected is intended to be flexible, however, and may change as organizational needs develop. Overall our measure of success for this goal is an indication that our staff structure is appropriate for our operation, and enables us to reach program and budget goals on a timely basis.

Strategies

1. Develop chart of staff positions to support the work planned for this next phase of growth, expanding the staff structure in phases, as indicated in the chart on page in the Appendix.
2. Increase staff from 6 positions today (4 program, 2 admin plus interns) to 10 by Year 5 (7 program, 3 admin, 1 development plus interns), specifically adding communications and production staff
3. Transition current President from management position to new role involving continued presence as spokesperson, salesperson, trainer, and developer of new business and create a separate Executive Director position.
4. Create a Board development plan by February 2008 to support new work and provide strategic guidance
5. Complete the Board member manual by March 2008 Board meeting.
6. Recruit and fill vacancies while expanding non-Board membership on standing committees by June 2008 annual meeting.
7. Gradually expand current Board to accommodate increased contributed revenue needs and regional scope of Workshop, by 2 to 4 positions by 2010
8. Work closely with Columbia College Chicago to promote our mutual growth and development

Organizational Chart

Staff	Key functions	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Marketing Manager	Leads on order fulfillment & customer service; develops marketing plan	X	X	X	X	X	X
Executive Assistant	Supports president; leads on event planning; Manages receivables and payables; HR	X	X				
Operations Manager	Replaces exec ass't, greater autonomy			X	X	X	X
Administrative Assistant	Backs up all staff, coordinates space usage, travel, etc.				X	X	X
President	Supervises, lead trainer, fundraises	X	X	X	X	X	x
Vice President	Assists president in all aspects, leads on new business/custom sessions, develops operations plan, Trainer	X	X	X	X	X	
Executive Director	Replaces VP, takes on supervision, shifts new business to development director, Trainer					begin hire process	X
New Media Manager	Leads on media guide production, all databases and on-line materials, Trainer	X	X	X	X	X	X
Senior Trainer	Leads on Chicago work, develops evaluation plan, Trainer	x	X	X	X	X	X
Newsdesk Manager	Leads on service to journalists and publishing of Newstips, backgrounders, helps with shows, Trainer	x	X	X	X	X	X
Producer	Supports all publishing webcast & broadcasting efforts					x	x
Development Director	Pres. And VP shift fundraising and new business to centralized position (so they can focus on program work), develops business plan			X	X	X	X

Appendices

History of Community Media Workshop

Community Media Workshop was founded in 1989 by a reporter and a community activist to encourage journalists to more accurately cover stories of Chicago's neighborhoods and neglected areas — places where social problems are felt most deeply and where we believe the solutions to those problems are most likely to emerge. Since its beginnings, the Workshop has trained thousands of organizations—from small grassroots groups to large institutions—to use media and other communication tools more effectively. The Workshop is continually evolving to meet the needs of its constituents.

After its start at Malcolm X College, the Workshop was invited in the early 1990s to move to Columbia College Chicago, where we have found a nurturing home enmeshed in all forms of media arts, while helping students author the culture of our times. Through regular use of work-study and student interns, along with teaching in the graduate journalism program and other departments, the Workshop's partnership with Columbia has provided a rich practical context for our external work with nonprofit communicators and journalists.

As we look back over the growth of the Workshop's training programs for nonprofit communicators and Newsdesk services for journalists through the 1990s, we remember several initiatives that brought particular focus to our work: pro bono support for a citywide affordable housing program, early messaging and media relations work on community policing, and capacity-building for local school council leaders. Our 1996 Community News Project for thousands of journalists attending that summer's Democratic Convention is particularly noteworthy for its scope—700 stories on the real Chicago sourced by news project briefings and tours—and the Workshop's first use of digital content.

We now find ourselves in a transformational movement marked by the Internet, one in which traditional media are increasingly challenged by community media (e.g., public TV/Radio, cable access, broadband channeling of online multimedia sites) and in the escalating growth of ethnic and independent media. We see community media tools and ethnic media as the natural next phase of an arc that began here with community organizing in the 1950s and 1960s to the community development movement of the 1970s through the 1990s. The Workshop's history is imbedded in this arc as we have consistently provided community change-makers the expertise and tools not only to get media coverage for their efforts but also to move policy and effect change. Our experience is that on-line communication tools really are changing everything about our business; ultimately, pioneering community media will keep us on the cutting edge of trends in civic participation where our city has led for most of recent history.

Recent Accomplishments

1. Coaching: Increased annual individuals served to more than 1,200.
2. Community Media: Convened 150 policymakers, funders, and practitioners to explore new media/tech in marginalized communities.
3. Regionalizing: Working regularly downstate plus Michigan, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, thanks to grant support and some fee revenue.
4. Immigration: Developed Voz Latina project to carry on communications training work particularly among nonprofits in Latino communities; supported immigration justice movement; Added more bilingual work and increased focus on ethnic media.
5. Newstips.org: Sourcing and other content top Google searches. E-newsletter sign-ups have surged.
6. Media guide: In 2008 our signature product has revised format, new name (Getting On Air, On-line, and Into Print) and we're making plans for an on-line version.
7. Support for all this: Received Mott Foundation grant to pay for Michigan work, Veatch Foundation money for regional work, and nominal sums to almost cover our costs for other new initiatives. We raised \$60,000 at our last benefit and made ambitious plans to raise \$100,000 this year. We've maintained or slightly increased fee-based revenue.

Planning Retreat Participants– September 14, 2007 BOLD=board member

Jon Anderson	former <i>Tribune</i> journalist & Terkel winner
Curtis Black	Community Media Workshop- <i>Newsdesk Manager</i>
Michael Burke	Buffett Early Childhood Fund-Board Chair
Maude Carroll	Community Media Workshop- <i>Marketing Manager</i>
Thom Clark	Community Media Workshop-President
Nick Delgado	Merrill Lynch-Treasurer
Valerie Denney	Valerie Denney Communications
Bob Goldsborough	Ariel Capital Management, Inc.
Nicole Gotthelf	Center for Neighborhood Technology- <i>former chair</i>
Mark Hallett	McCormick Tribune Foundation
Mary Johns	Residents Journal
Thomas Kelly	Chase Bank
Antoinette Korotko-Hatch	Development Consultant
Demetrio Maguigad	Community Media Workshop- <i>New Media Manager</i>
Gordon Mayer	Community Media Workshop- <i>Vice-President</i>
Pat O'Connell	<i>Development Consultant</i>
Alex Pope	Advocate Charitable Foundation
Teresa Puente	Columbia College Journalism Department
Mike Roach	Weber Shandwick Worldwide
Alejo Torres	Federal Reserve Board, Chicago
John Tschoe	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Maggie Walker	Community Media Workshop
Marianne Philbin	Foundation and Non-Profit Management Consultant