

Parker LePla

## Washington State Nonprofit Conference

### Case Studies

November 24, 2008



### SEATTLE JOBS INITIATIVE

#### The Challenge

Seattle Jobs Initiative, previously part of the City of Seattle, was being spun out as a separate non-profit responsible for its own funding after several years as a city department. The way SJI talked about itself made sense within the city context, but did not encourage funders to care—or to give. This organization coordinates the job placement, training, policy and wrap-around services involved in helping low-income people in the City of Seattle gain living wage jobs, describing itself as a workforce development intermediary.

#### The Solution

SJI hired Parker LePla to conduct a branding exercise, interviewing dozens of staff members, participants, community based organizations, board members and funders. From that qualitative research, Parker LePla came up with a new strategic role for the organization, a new mission, a brand principle (its unique approach to its mission) and a personality, all designed to help the company talk about its services in a way that inspired funders to give.

- **Mission:** Seattle Jobs Initiative creates opportunities for people to support themselves and their families through living wage careers
- **Strategic Role:** Opening doors to living wage careers
- **Brand Principle:** Innovation and Results
- **Personality:** Collaborative, Dedicated, Compassionate, Informed, Proactive and Tenacious

Now, when the organization presents itself, it touches both the heart and mind, making a compelling argument why it deserves funding and is different from other non-profits.

## The Results

As of January 2005, SJI achieved the following results for its participants:

- Placed: 4,150 low income residents
- Wage: \$10.03/hr average wage
- Retained: 60% at one year
- Increase: 40% reported wage increase to an average of \$12.48/hr

It is now self-sufficient, a successful non-profit that has learned how to position itself to the funding community.

JEWISH FEDERATION OF  
GREATER SEATTLE



Jewish Federation  
OF GREATER SEATTLE

The mission of the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle is to ensure Jewish survival and enhance the quality of Jewish Life by meeting needs locally, in Israel and worldwide.

### The Challenge

The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle was losing donors and experiencing lower donations from those who gave. They were associated primarily with fundraising—a reminder of duty rather than a community-builder. But the Federation had always been the central address for the Seattle Jewish community—the hub for help, education and social activities as well as an umbrella funding organization for local Jewish nonprofits, national and international Jewish causes. Without the Federation, much of the local Jewish infrastructure would collapse.

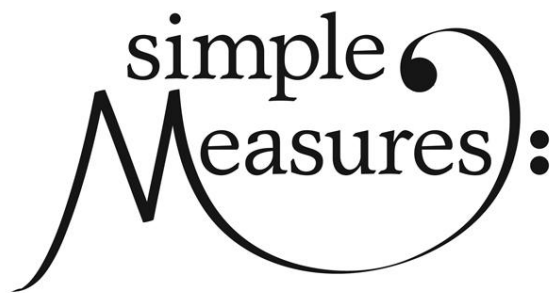
### The Solution

The Federation needed to find its way back to more active community engagement, while remaining relevant to all the parts of a changing Jewish community. Through Parker LePla's process, they took on the role of "helping people find their connection to the Jewish community". The Federation began to focus on their welcoming side, inviting individuals and organizations to connect however they wanted to. Using "partnership" as their guiding principle, the Federation changed their approach to fundraising, engaging with beneficiary agencies and its relationships to donors—thereafter known as members.

### The Results

Stakeholders responded immediately. Because members were no longer required to make a minimum donation to participate in events, attendance increased dramatically—and so did donations. As important, the Federation shifted its overall focus to long-term member development based on personal relationships. They are now better able to fulfill their funding commitments and are making all their resources visible, fostering progress and growth in a community facing challenging times.

## SIMPLE MEASURES



### The Challenge

A new non-profit arts organization was in the idea stage, ready for becoming reality. All that was needed was ...well, everything. Founder Rajan Krishnaswami envisioned a chamber music organization that brought world-class music to a broader audience by making it more casual, more intimate, and closer to home. Themed concerts, given in community venues such as coffee houses and libraries, with the audience allowed to ask questions and be right next to the musicians, offered a different format that Krishnaswami thought would encourage more people to connect with chamber music.

### The Solution

Parker LePla helped Krishnaswami create the mission, vision and name for the new non-profit: Simple Measures. We also helped set a bold tone to the organization's materials; one not typically seen in classical music circles. For example, the website featured a close-up of a violin and the headline: Get close enough to lick the varnish. One poster featured a dead fish wrapped in a music score; another had cellist Joshua Roman in a mug shot, Busted for mixing jazz and classical music. And we created a brand association of a mark that decreed that Simple Measures concerts were certified 98% Hoity-Toity free.

### The Results

Now in its third year, Simple Measures has exceeded its goals for attendance, sold out many of its concerts, and year over year, has increased the number of both subscribers and concerts. It is a fixture in the local scene and has broken down many of the barriers between people and discovering their love for classical music.

## SUSTAINABLE PATH FOUNDATION



### The Challenge

The Seattle Biotech Legacy Foundation (SBLF) had a problem: its name did not reflect its role or value. A foundation that gave grants to non-profits to conduct science-based projects aimed at making our region more sustainable, it had neither a biotech focus nor was there a legacy involved. They even did projects outside of the Seattle area! Started by several employees of a local biotechnology company, SBLF was looking to increase its fundraising and profile, and a new name was a necessary first step.

### The Solution

SBLF hired Parker LePla to conduct brand research, create its brand tools, and rename it based upon the results. Our research resulted in a new mission: To promote sustainability and health in our region through collaborative approaches informed by scientific understanding and systems thinking. The research results were used as input to a renaming process that resulted in the name “Sustainable Path Foundation.” A new logo, website and messaging now frames the value of the organization in a way that encourages participation by new donors, partners and other stakeholders.

### The Results

Today, Sustainable Path Foundation has a higher profile and is moving toward becoming a community of donors committed to the organization’s value and purpose.