

WHEDCo works with families in the Bronx who struggle with the multiple challenges presented by poverty, and who, like all of us, aspire to a healthy, financially stable future. WHEDCo offers interconnected, innovative, and high quality solutions – including the building of healthy, affordable homes – and because of this, the Bronx is a more beautiful, more equitable, and more economically vibrant place to live and raise a family.

Until working with Thaler, however, we lacked any meaningful way to communicate what we do other than as a laundry-list, e.g. we operate a Head Start Center, after school programs, home based childcare microenterprise, summer camp, affordable housing, etc. etc. We knew that the whole of the organization's work vastly exceeded the sum of its parts, but we had great difficulty articulating the whole, and all-too-easily defaulted into the laundry list.

Thaler spent a day with our senior staff at a retreat where we discussed the current organization, and where we'd like to be in 2011. It was not a "communications" conversation, but a content conversation. She listened. She met with key staff members individually and spent a great deal of time with me in a constant and wide-ranging dialogue -- both philosophical and practical.

Thaler presented to staff a comprehensive document that articulated the values she heard expressed; and from those values, she wrote a carefully worded vision for our work, and our future. From our words and work, she crafted a series of statements – What We Believe; The Problem We Address, The Solution We Offer, and Actions We Want Others to Take; What We Do, and distilled our essence down to one sentence, and one key paragraph. Then, after the distillation process, she worked with us to articulate each of our programs as examples of the one sentence/one paragraph values statement.

At the conclusion of the process, WHEDCo was the same organization, but with a coherent and thoughtful *raison d'être*. Now, our staff and board speak with one unified voice. Our stakeholders – clients, donors, policymakers, and the media – better understand what we do. An easily deliverable and understood, consistent message is helping us to stand out in the marketplace.

We use the communications template she worked with us to develop in every piece of written material from the organization -- letters, proposals, reports, emails, website, policy papers and more.

It's fair to say that I'm a client with strong opinions and a perfectionist streak; but Thaler was up to the task, and literally went back to the drawing board several times until she was satisfied that we had jointly created a product that reflected our work but with fresh and new language, and as a comprehensive whole.

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Housing & Community Development

Head Start

Family Support & Housing Services

Home Based Childcare Microenterprise

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