



Metropolitan Group

the power of voice

Arts and Culture as Elemental Contributors to Social Capital

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Thank you for participating in this gathering to explore the power, impact and opportunities for innovation through robust support of arts and culture. It is always such a charge to gather with the rest of the choir and enjoy our own music. This room is full of such creative and cultural energy and power for change that it energizes and inspires each of us to keep doing this work. Yet, I worry that we are not collectively reaching as far beyond the choir as we must to unleash the potential impacts that arts and culture have to offer our community and the world. For too long we have all allowed arts and culture to be treated as a nicety—the first budget cut, the last investment made, the tertiary quality-of-life mention of our elected leaders. In the last 30 years, we have seen our nation's public and private investment in the arts decline as we have scrambled to communicate relevancy through the frames of general educational achievement, creative economy investment and local economic development—all of which are true, but also undersell the critical power of arts and culture.

I have had the opportunity to work nationally and internationally on issues including poverty alleviation, educational equity, environmental health, state arts funding, national arts funding and many others. Increasingly, I see that the solutions to our most critical problems cannot be solved through institutional hierarchy or traditional policy and enforcement models, but rather **through collective action, dispersed innovation and shared responsibility**. For example: about 35 years ago we had a water pollution problem. We passed the Clean Water Act and **enforced** shutting down 100,000 pipes that dumped toxic waste into our rivers. Today, MORE river miles are polluted (not from industrial polluters but from non-point-source pollution—the actions of every American that end up impacting their watersheds).

There is no way to monitor and enforce every American conserving water, making alternative transportation choices, not fertilizing our lawns before it rains, etc. However, when people and communities are armed with **information, imagination and the ability to engage each other**, we can change public will and thus change our actions and impacts. This is true for protecting our drinking water, preventing child abuse, dealing with global climate change, closing the educational achievement gap, and addressing the severe economic disparity that threatens our core American legacy: **real opportunity for all**. And today, we live in a time when the need to address these issues is more urgent than ever.

Our economy is moving from being manufacturing-based to being creativity- and innovation-based. Are we fostering the imaginative capacity to compete? We are faced with cataclysmic food, fuel, water and air quality issues, not to mention climate-related disasters, if we do not address our reliance on a carbon economy. But are we sparking the innovation and creative thinking to find not only new technologies but new models for our interaction with natural resources? We are in the slow recovery from the great recession, yet the impacts to the most vulnerable among us have not abated and we face generational challenges related to the losses of livelihoods and neighborhoods. Are we thinking beyond existing models to drive sustainable and broad-based economic prosperity? We have a dramatically changing population that is completely shifting the demographics not only of voters, students and workers but also of business owners and executives, community leaders, donors and the innovators of new technology and ideas. Do we have the multicultural humility and the cultural context to leverage this change as an asset? This week's election illustrated a country deeply divided, a loss of civility in our public discourse and a diminished sense of a social contract unseen since the Red Scare. Do we have the mediums to create the shared vision and civil discourse needed to solve tough problems? For the last century, **financial and institutional capital** have been the priority leverage points to address our society's challenges. I deeply believe that now **human, social and creative capital** will have the greatest impact.

And this is where **arts and culture are a necessity**.

There is no discipline, sector or issue area that nurtures, protects and sparks the cognitive ability to **imagine** and unleashes the **creativity and innovation** we need every citizen to command more than arts and culture.

There is no approach that **breaks barriers, connects across cultural and linguistic differences**, and **engages our shared deeply-held values** more than arts and culture.

There is no investment that strengthens our core human asset—**the ability to connect with each other, to be moved to action and to make collective choices**—more than arts and culture.

Around the country the creative, intellectual and community capital of the people in this room and of other key stakeholders need to grapple with finding tangible solutions to significantly increase equitable access to quality arts for every American. We don't need another cultural study, symposium, conference or gathering of the clan. We do need a demonstration of **shared leadership** that engages the strengths, the political capital and the power of our collective voices to drive **a shift in the normative expectations of our community**. We need our communities to experience and to demand the arts, **as a necessity not a nicety**.

To succeed I believe we must do several things:

- **Focus on cohesive strategies that foster real collaboration**—finding the best ways to leverage existing structures where they help, work around them where they get in the way and to change them where they truly impede progress.

For example: the growth of school-based health care. In the U.S. a major challenge for health access for children and families experiencing disparities is a lack of knowledge or trust of how to sign up for programs, obstacles for single working parents to get kids to the medical clinic, and distrust and fear of new institutions and systems. Many of these children are in public schools, where families already transport them, where staff with relationships can sign families up for existing and new benefits programs, etc. However, the barriers created by school and public health policies create challenges to licensing, siting, medical reimbursement and many other factors. Coalitions were formed in states across the country and nationally and for over eight years have broken down silos and advocated for change—it is working. Today, there are thousands of school-based health centers, and federal healthcare reform includes provisions for them.

- **Identify the stakeholders who must join, support and advocate for solutions**—we must reach outside the “field” to deeply understand the values, needs and motivators of other partners including parents, community-based advocacy and development organizations, business, neighborhood and civic leaders. We will need non-traditional partners to invest in change.

For example: The faith community as advocates to address climate change. For most of the 90’s and early 2000’s the environmental movement was primarily supported by the traditional liberal and progressive base regarding climate change. However, outreach and engagement of the faith community (not only stereotyped progressive congregations as in Reform Judaism, Unitarianism, etc., but across the Evangelical, Catholic, Mainline Protestant, Muslim and Jewish communities in the U.S.) has created a groundswell of direct action (reducing the carbon footprint of faith facilities and taking energy audits and other changes into the homes of congregants) and of advocacy for sound policy to address climate change and, increasingly, environmental justice. Organizations like Faith in Place, Interfaith Power and Light, and others are leading efforts to deeply engage the faith community in Caring for All of Creation.

- **Get out of our own way by identifying solutions** (programs, structures, policies, practices and financial models) that might be outside our comfort zone, require letting go of territory, and require communicating with language and through mediums that resonate beyond the field. The messages that work for us probably do not work!

*For example: River and watershed groups moving from technical language that is deeply valued in the field to language that connects with what Americans understand and care about. The national community of more than 1,700 watershed groups was using the message frame, “Every American should **know their watershed address**,” when most Americans think a watershed **is an outhouse!** However, Americans highly value and are worried about clean drinking water; think most of it comes from rivers (more than 50% actually does); have a positive emotional connection to rivers; and, without needing to know it is their watershed address, do know that the river near*

*them is a defining feature in their community and is important to their health and welfare. Moving to a much simplified message frame—**clear rivers = clean drinking water**—let go of the language of the field but was much more effective to drive individual behavior change and to broaden the constituency advocating for clean water policy.*

- **Learn from ourselves and others**—a great deal of thinking and work has been done and has changed the positioning, importance and funding in many other arenas.

*Several examples: Libraries across the country went from no investment in 35 years to a renaissance boom (this year more people will **physically** visit a library than attend all college and professional sports combined!). Preventative healthcare was not covered even for most folks with insurance, but now it is becoming the norm. Corrections had languished without capital investment or funding for decades; now, due to mandatory sentences (which I abhor), building prisons is a thriving industry. Less than 20 years ago you would expect to be surrounded by smokers on a plane, at your desk at work or even in the waiting room for some doctors—**today, you can't even smoke in a bar!***

The point is, we can build Public Will and we can completely change the game.

- **Recognize that it will be hard and will take a long-term commitment**—this is not a simple or obvious task. The political challenges, economic constraints, competing interests, priority gaps and complexities are all real and significant challenges.

*For example: Remember, Big Tobacco did not pay a dime in punitive damages for decades and owned the Americans Deserve Freedom and Independence message frame. Public health and anti-smoking advocates fought for over 30 years before real policy and practice change occurred, particularly by leveraging second-hand smoke as a way to also own the Americans Deserve Freedom and Independence message frame (I have the right **not** to smoke!). Even so, fighting for big change isn't a destination, it is a journey full of switchbacks and setbacks. While major changes have reduced the availability of cigarettes and created many smoke-free environments, Big Tobacco is aggressively marketing smokeless (chewing) tobacco with flavors to appeal to kids and women and is marketing hookah tobacco with flavors like wild strawberry.*

And ultimately we must:

- **Seize the moment**—we are in a time of massive economic challenge, political and generational change. We are in a volatile and a fertile time. Historically, the most significant reforms and investments in social capital and game-changing approaches have been accomplished during similar periods of challenge and transformation. We are in a time when policymakers will have to address significant structural changes and where the body politic is in play with pendulum swings left and right that demonstrate a willingness to risk the status quo. We are in a time when building understanding that the realities and implications of globalism and the paradigm shift to shared responsibility are pre-conditions for solving problems and ensuring a vibrant and sustainable future. We are in a time ripe for moving arts and culture from a nicety to a necessity.

We have work to do, and we have to do it together.

All of us must be messengers and champions for increasing our community's value of and investment in our cultural capital—**not** to serve our institutions, our field or our careers, **but rather** to create the just, vibrant, equitable, sustainable and **meaningful** society that is our shared desire and is all of our grandchildren's birthright. As a community, we must use our power to tell stories, to communicate across cultures and to inspire other stakeholders as allies and activist shareholders.

I hope we will engage and support each other as CHANGE AGENTS and harness our creativity, intellect, wisdom and connections to create a fundamental demand for equitable access to quality arts culture in our nation.

I hope we will push beyond what is expected to what is needed and what will work.

I hope we will push each other and support each other in reframing the discourse and the debate in ways that harness the arts as a vector for a desperately needed innovation pandemic, and will thus establish arts and culture as core community priorities and ultimately the legacy of this gathering of champions.

Thank you.

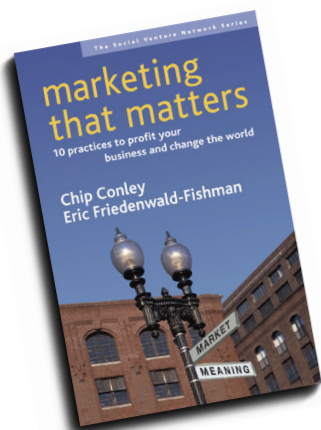


Eric Friedenwald-Fishman is the creative director/president of Metropolitan Group, a leading social marketing firm headquartered in Portland, Oregon, with offices in Chicago, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Group specializes in strategic communication, resource development, multicultural communication and organizational development for nonprofits, public agencies, foundations and social enterprise businesses.

Eric has worked extensively with leading foundations, nonprofit organizations, public agencies and businesses to promote social equity, literacy, educational access, arts, heritage and culture. He has been a featured speaker at the National Endowment for the Arts' Education Leadership Institute, Arts Education Partnership National Conference, Americans for the Arts National Conference and was the opening speaker and facilitator for America's first Arts and Environmental Summit (sponsored by AFTA, Aspen Institute and Wolf Trap). MG has worked with numerous arts, culture and heritage organizations, including government agencies, nonprofits and advocacy associations/groups. Current and recent clients and projects include cultural and arts planning for City of Portland, City of Austin, City of Seattle, Chicago Arts Leadership Initiative, Montgomery County and Illinois Arts Council; as well as communication and fundraising work for Americans for the Arts, Alliance of Artists Communities, Oregon Arts Commission, Folger Shakespeare Library, Galveston Historical Foundation, Missouri Historical Society, National Park Foundation, and Northwest Business for Culture and the Arts, Preservation North Carolina, President's Council on the Arts and the Humanities and others.

He is the co-author of *Marketing That Matters* (Berrett & Koehler), which has been translated into six languages; the primary author of MG's Public Will Building Framework: an approach for sustainable social change; and co-author of MG's article *Relevance, Relationships and Results: Eight Principles for Effective Multicultural Communication*. He is the 2008 recipient of Northwest Business for Culture and Art's Exemplary Business Volunteer for the Arts award and is a winner of the New Yorker Cartoon Caption Contest. Eric has a bachelor's degree in art history and political science from Willamette University, where he currently serves as a trustee and as chair of the College of Liberal Arts committee. Eric is also on the Advisory Board of the Regional Arts and Cultural Council, is on the board of historic Congregation Beth Israel and is the co-founder of his children's public elementary school foundation. His articles and presentations are available at www.metgroup.com.

Additional books and articles by Eric Friedenwald-Fishman and his colleagues at Metropolitan Group



Marketing That Matters: 10 Practices to Profit Your Business and Change the World

The book on socially responsible marketing.

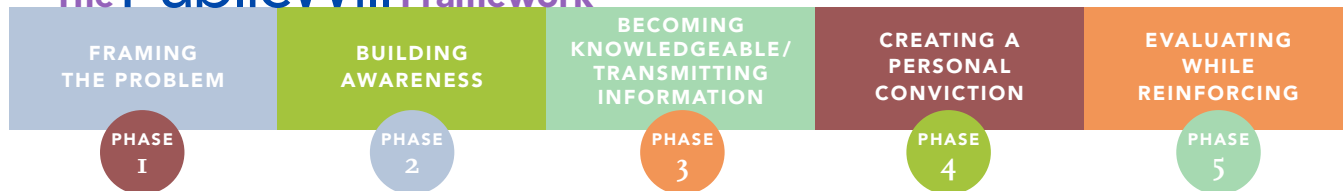
Metropolitan Group's Creative Director/President, **Eric Friedenwald-Fishman**, co-authored *Marketing That Matters* with Chip Conley, founder and CEO of Joie de Vivre Hospitality (www.jdvhospitality.com). *Marketing That Matters* is a practical guide to strategic marketing that helps large and small organizations improve their bottom line while advancing their values.

Published by Berrett-Koehler and translated into Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Portuguese. Available at most local bookstores and at www.svnbooks.com, www.powells.com, and www.amazon.com.

Download our article on **The Public Will Framework**, a process that creates lasting impact by connecting issues with closely held values and leveraging grassroots and traditional media strategies.

Available at www.metgroup.com

The PublicWill Framework



INCREASING **Relevance** | **Relationships** AND **Results**: PRINCIPLES & PRACTICES FOR EFFECTIVE MULTICULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Effectively engaging diverse audiences unlocks new resources and brings additional perspectives and talents to the table to develop innovative and sustainable solutions to our most challenging social, environmental and economic issues. Visit www.metgroup.com to download our article.

PRINCIPLE 1:	Check Your Assumptions at the Door: <i>Begin with yourself</i>
PRINCIPLE 2:	Understand the Cultural Context(s) of Your Audience: <i>Do your homework</i>
PRINCIPLE 3:	Invest Before You Request: <i>Create community-centered partnerships</i>
PRINCIPLE 4:	Develop Authentic Relationships: <i>Maintain a long-term perspective</i>
PRINCIPLE 5:	Build Shared Ownership: <i>Engage, don't just involve</i>
PRINCIPLE 6:	Walk Your Talk: <i>Lead by example</i>
PRINCIPLE 7:	Relate, Don't Translate: <i>Place communication into cultural context</i>
PRINCIPLE 8:	Anticipate Change: <i>Be prepared to succeed</i>

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Successful Advocacy

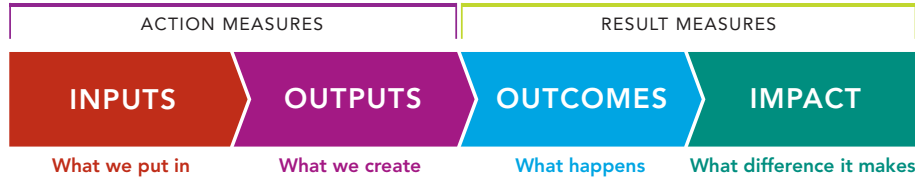
A VALUES-BASED APPROACH

Advocating for the advancement of key issues, for changes in policy and for increased funding of critical social, civic and sustainability initiatives must be based on community values and build upon strategic and creative communication approaches. Visit www.metgroup.com to download our article.



Measuring *what* Matters

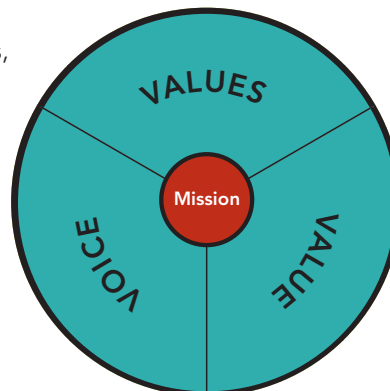
Measuring social change, from the actions we take to the results they generate, allows us to determine what's working and what's not, and to make the modifications required to align our human, financial and political capital in pursuit of that change. Visit www.metgroup.com to download our article.



Values. Value. Voice.

The 3V's of Social Purpose Branding

A brand is the aggregate of feelings, associations and experiences created between the organization and those with whom it interacts. Visit www.metgroup.com to download our article and learn how to define, express and live an authentic brand that advances your mission.





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