



## And Now, A Message from the President...

*By Dana Kader Robb*

Almost every newsletter that's created for a non-profit organization has one. And many for-profit companies put one in their newsletter also. It's a President's Message or A Note From the CEO or Words of Wisdom From the Executive Director or whatever. It really doesn't matter what you call it; what matters is what it says. And (if I can be brutally honest for a moment) they usually don't say much.

The trick to a great message is to make it relevant to the readers' lives. Now, I understand that trying to be relevant 12 times a year can get difficult, but it can be done... and it's worth doing. A good message can inspire people to volunteer, donate money, renew a membership or even make a difference in someone else's life. Here are a few suggestions for making your message have greater impact.

- ✎ Know what's in the rest of the newsletter. Then don't spend more than a sentence or two repeating it. It's good to tie your ideas to whatever else is going on, but don't just rehash what's already there.
- ✎ Deal with a topic that might affect the majority of your members. Avoid references to inside jokes or information that everyone may not understand.
- ✎ Use your message to share your experiences regarding the organization, business or cause. Tell how your involvement has made a difference in your life.
- ✎ Be encouraging, inspirational, thoughtful and reflective. Challenge others to go further or do something more than they are already doing. Karen Hendrickson, who has held a number of presidential-type positions in organizations, says, "You were elected to a leadership position in part because of who you are as a person. By sharing personal views you are also sharing leadership qualities."
- ✎ Quote other people. People who've come before us have been much wiser and made many significant observations. Make sure you relate the quote to your personal message.
- ✎ If you use your message to thank individual people for their efforts, be sure not to leave anyone out. Yeesh, can you imagine anything more embarrassing?
- ✎ Answer a question that "newbies" often ask. Odds are good that a number of your existing members or clients will not know the answer either, and have been wondering about it for a while.