



COMMUNICATIONS LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

**Communications Leadership Institute
Strategic Plan
2008-2013**

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With support from LaFrance Associates, LLC**

Executive Summary

Introduction and Background

The Communications Leadership Institute in Spring 2008 began identifying strategic opportunities and how to seize them. This plan, its goals and priorities came from that effort.

Because CLI is undergoing a significant organizational and leadership transition, the timing for strategic planning is propitious and opportunistic. The organization is under new management: A new executive director started in July 2008, and a new director will begin work in August 2008 overseeing the SPIN Project, one of CLI's four anchor programs.

The CLI Board in early 2008 committed to the strategic planning process and to enlist full-time executive leadership. The result will be a fully integrated CLI that offers strategic communications training for nonprofits to help them bring about positive social change.

CLI and SPIN were both incubated at the Independent Media Institute, where they thrived with a mission to provide strategic communications capacity building for nonprofits.

Strong records of achievement led the two organizations to merge in 2006 and thus derive significant benefits. Cultural differences and lack of strong, full-time leadership slowed the pace, but this plan and a committed CLI Board of Directors will hasten and ensure implementation.

To build this plan, CLI and its consultant team conducted 37 stakeholder interviews; surveyed SPIN clients; reviewed financial, staffing, marketing and program documents; held two all-day meetings for clients and stakeholders; and conducted a one-day Board of Directors retreat.

Values, Vision, and Mission

CLI's board and staff captured a representation of the value that the organization brings to the nonprofit community in the strategic planning process. The process allowed a clear CLI identity to take shape, with engagement of external stakeholders. That identity is encompassed in the organization's newly adopted Values, Vision and Mission. The strategic plan holds true to these fundamentals, and adherence to them will guide the organization for the foreseeable future.

CLI's **values** pervade its work. It strives for **accountability**, seeking to demonstrate measurable impact; **connections**, fostering relationships by building capacity; **empowerment** of organizations to strengthen their effectiveness; and **trust**, as modeled by its board and staff.

CLI's **vision** is that nonprofits will effectively use strategic communications to engage their constituents and achieve lasting positive social change.

CLI's **mission** is to provide nonprofits with the training and tools they need to increase their strategic communications capacity and build stronger messages to achieve their goals.

Summary of Key Strategies

CLI identified three external and one internal strategic focus areas, each with a set of initiatives set to be carried out in 1 to 2 years or 3 to 5 years.

External

Strategy	Initiatives
Integrate and Fortify a Vibrant CLI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and Integrate Brand (Years 1-2) • Expand and Diversify Funding (Years 1-2) • Extend Geographic Reach (Years 1-2) • Engage CLI Alumni to Build Alumni Network (Years 3-5) • Build Endowment (Years 3-5)
Develop Cutting Edge Offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate new media in trainings, programs (Years 1-2) • Expand Intellectual Content (Years 1-2) • Revise SPIN Curriculum (Years 1-2) • Expand Spanish Language Trainings (Years 3-5)
Build Communications Training and Talent in the Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Capacity Assessments (Years 1-2) • Expand Programs to Mid-Capacity Organizations (Years 1-2) • Develop Fellows and Interns Programs (Years 1-2) • Confer Communications Awards (Years 3-5) • Develop Certification Standards (Years 3-5) • Expand Number of Trainers (Years 3-5)

Internal

Strategy	Initiatives
Foster Organizational Health and Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand Board (Years 1-2) • Determine Staffing Model (Years 1-2) • Establish new Pricing Model (Years 1-2) • Expand SPIN staffing (Years 1-2) • Engage in Communications around Strategic Plan (Years 1-2)

Conclusion

This plan represents CLI's commitment to focus on strategic initiatives that will best serve its clients – funders, nonprofits and the organizations and individuals whom they serve. Its implementation will help ensure a healthy and self-sustaining CLI capable of meeting the needs of nonprofit organizations working at all levels of society for social change.