

Using *Multiple Intelligences* for donors

By Bernard Ross, director of =mc

The big idea

Some of the most interesting psychological work carried out in the last five to ten years has focused on the issue of so-called *multiple intelligences*. The basic idea, developed by Harvard-based psychologist Howard Gardner, is simple. We all have access to a number of different ways of processing information, which Gardner has called intelligences.

Gardner identified a set of seven intelligences each of which has different attributes. These seven intelligences were:

- Mathematical-logical
- Musical
- Linguistic
- Visual-spatial
- Physical-kinaesthetic
- Interpersonal
- Intrapersonal

Gardner's research established we all have *some* access to all of the intelligences. But our ability to access them quickly, and the amount we can access them, varies. Because of these preferences, different people will choose to use different intelligences to solve the same challenge. And of course different donors like to find out about and engage with your cause in different ways.

It's helpful, perhaps, to think of the intelligences as the brain's software. Like computer programs for spreadsheets, word processing, and presentations, each intelligence does different things.

So some challenges are best solved using a *specific* intelligence – just as it's easiest to do a budget in Excel. If you don't have easy access to that intelligence, you need to try to develop it or work with someone who has it already. With access to a strong spatial intelligence, for example, you'll find it quite straightforward to work out the office reorganization or to set up the lay out for the chairs and tables at the fundraising special event.

Some challenges need a combination of the intelligences to achieve a result, much like preparing a presentation using Excel and Word and PowerPoint. So, for example, planning a major fundraising campaign will involve emotional, rational, and linguistic intelligences. You'll even need all of these to write a good appeal letter.

As a fundraiser we need to be sure use multiple intelligences:

- To communicate with individual donors in ways that they prefer
- To ensure that in 'mass' communications we hit all the intelligences
- To select an intelligence that best serves your 'case'

Origins

Howard Gardner developed the idea of multiple intelligences in his book *Frames of Mind* (1983). In that book he suggests that traditionally psychologists have only concentrated on one very narrow measure of intelligence – typically measures in IQ tests. He was sure for his work with high achievers that there were in fact a number of intelligences capable of being measured.

Since then, his basic model of seven intelligences has been extended and adapted by many experts. Some experts, Tony Buzan, for example, reckon we have as many as ten.

Daniel Goleman (1995) particularly developed the idea of emotional intelligence (EI), which essentially combines two of Gardner's intelligences – *intrapersonal* and *interpersonal*. Goleman's influential work has made EI a key issue for managers. EI is also a key skill in successful fundraisers – especially those in high value donor settings.

=mc *transforming the performance of not-for-profit organizations*

© The Management Centre (2008). This download and its contents may not be reproduced without permission of the authors. Permission will be granted for small-run reproduction and circulation within not-for-profit organizations.

www.managementcentre.co.uk

How to use it

Let's look first at what the intelligences are and how to use them. As indicated above there is no definitive list of intelligences, but most experts agree that the seven described by Gardner serve as a good base. The list that follows is a slightly updated and amended version of Gardner's list.

1. Physical/kinesthetic intelligence: the ability to process experience through bodily sensations and to coordinate the body and its movements well. If you are strong in this intelligence, you may have always been a fidget as a child, hating to sit still for too long. You probably have good motor and hand-eye coordination. You may communicate a lot by touch, and learn and solve problems by doing – coming up with a solution by trying something out. Dancers, gymnasts, and sports people often are high in this intelligence, as are sculptors, potters, and carpenters.

2. Logical/mathematical intelligence: the ability to use rational, abstract thought to arrive at logical deductions. As a child, you may have found pleasure in pattern-type games. You may have asked a lot of *Why?* questions. You like to learn in a structured and organized way. We would expect mathematicians and engineers to be high in this intelligence, but also people with a strong financial background.

3. Spatial/visual intelligence: the understanding of space and of how things will look or appear. You may need things to be "just so" or organized, and you're able to arrange things in neat or appropriate patterns. Builders, artists, and architects are often strong in this intelligence. This process is particularly effective for people with strong spatial/visual and physical/kinesthetic intelligences.

4. Linguistic intelligence: the ability to use words well or to learn languages easily and fluently. You learn most easily through talking and reading. You may well enjoy playing with words and especially enjoy word games like crosswords. You can probably quote phrases from poems or books. This intelligence is likely to be strong among writers, journalists, and even translators. This is a very common intelligence among senior

managers who can win people over with the quality of their arguments. They may well give outstanding speeches and presentations.

5. Creative/musical intelligence: a special kind of creative intelligence – the ability either to make or to appreciate music. You are able to pick out intricate rhythms or to play instruments easily or to identify, a style of music. You may well like to have music playing in the background. You probably learn through nonverbal pace and rhythm. An artist or a critic would likely be strong in this kind of intelligence. As a nonprofit manager, you may not use this much at work, but you may find you use music to get you in the mood for creative thinking.

6. Interpersonal intelligence: the ability to empathize with others and to build rapport quickly and easily. You may, in your youth, have been a leader in groups and been seen as streetwise and confident. You have a real gift for sensing how people are and how a group is feeling, and you may be able to manage a group's feelings well. You probably learn best in a group situation. Anyone from managers to salespeople can be strong in this intelligence.

7. Intrapersonal intelligence: the ability to be at peace with oneself – to have a calm and balanced approach to life, or to consider bigger issues in more reflective ways. A guru or holy person is likely to be highly developed in this intelligence. You may have it if you like to think things through. In a non-profit setting, people strong in this intelligence may want very much to work from a values or beliefs basis (and not change those values or beliefs easily).

How to use multiple intelligences

As indicated above, one of the easiest ways to use this theory is to identify the best way to communicate with a specific donor who has a strong preference for one particular intelligence type.

Intelligence	Fundraising implication...
Mathematical-logical	Best for people who like fundraising propositions presented logically and rationally. "Think of this as an investment in the future of the planet..." Very useful too for foundation grant proposals or EU/Government applications.
Musical	Best for people who are strongly affected by sound or rhythm. They may like catchy slogans like 'Make Poverty History'. Music can have strong impact on their emotions so playing the right music at an event can make a big difference.
Linguistic	Best for people who listen carefully to the words being said. They may like the chance to read case studies or be able to talk through ideas with an expert. They will often take notes when they meet you and like to say things back in their own words. "So what you mean is..."
Visual-spatial	Best for people who process ideas visually. They'll ask for the plans or a model of your proposed new centre. They prefer photographs, drawings or images to lots of written text. "Imagine an entire soccer stadium filled with people who have this illness."
Physical-kinaesthetic	Best for people who like to learn through doing and touching. Take them on a site visit to your project. Let them try carrying water from a well to understand how difficult it is for people in developing countries to secure clean water.
Interpersonal	Best for people for whom relationships are key. They want to feel that they trust you. And they want to feel part of something bigger. Invite them to cultivation events and into membership opportunities. Work hard to build rapport with them.
Intrapersonal	Best for people who work from internally-driven value and beliefs. For them you have to identify and appeal to those specific values. Could be a faith basis or could be social values to do with rights and principles. Vision and mission alignment are key here.

Equally you might try and use all the intelligences when addressing a group whose preferences you don't know. Suppose the CEO of a women's refuge wants to sell the idea of a new refuge to her board or funders. To improve her chances of success, she can make her pitch in a number of ways so as to touch on all the intelligences:

- **Logical/mathematical:** she can produce figures showing demand for safe housing is growing and a detailed account of the cost to build the refuge even down to cost per bed-night
- **Visual/spatial:** she can show them a model of the new project or an artist's impressions of the new centre being used. She could even use graphs to display the demand information
- **Physical/kinesthetic:** she can take them to the proposed site and let them take a guided tour while she describes where things will be. If the board or funders agree to the project, she can have a groundbreaking ceremony that they are physically involved in
- **Musical:** she can play a recording of poems or songs written by women and their children who have been in the existing refuge. These songs or poems reflect how important the refuge has been to them and are chosen to move the donors
- **Interpersonal:** she can bring some of the women who've benefited from the existing refuge to talk about how the organization has changed their lives. This created a strong relationship
- **Intrapersonal:** she can appeal to the listeners' values, to their religious beliefs and to the mission of the organization (or the funder's organization). She can ask them to reflect on the stories of the women in a moment's silence

Other ways to use multiple intelligences in yourself, your colleagues and donors

Gardner's *Multiple Intelligences* is a useful and practical fundraising tool. Be aware that we all have all the intelligences – we just have preferences or strengths in one or more. You can use or improve your MI in a range of ways:

- **Reflect on the intelligences.** Can you think of colleagues or people in the public eye who have these intelligences? If you can, you might like to study them and how they react to different situations. In what kinds of situations are they successful and unsuccessful? How can you model their behaviors?
- **Pay attention to your individual donors.** When with donors, notice their preferences and then frame specific asks for them in an intelligence they prefer. If you're communicating generally make sure your case statement/appeal switches on a number of intelligences in the way it's written to give it wide appeal
- **Organise your workplace try to switch on as many intelligences as possible in your colleagues** – have flowers to stimulate physical- kinaesthetic, replace your written mission with a tune that gets people moved to stimulate musical, have inspiring quotes to engage the linguistic and intrapersonal side. You'll find you have a more energised workplace and colleagues
- **Make sure you are aware of your preferences** – work at developing the ones you're not strong at. If you are strongly physical-kinaesthetic practice sitting still and emphasising intrapersonal intelligence. If you like to play with words – linguistic – try to think of the picture equivalent – visual-spatial

We know this isn't easy but the good news is we can help you with training and consultancy to turn you into a multiply intelligent fundraising team...see below on how to contact us.

About this download

This download is one of a series based on the book *The Influential Fundraiser* by Bernard Ross and Clare Segal, directors of =mc. To find out more about the book or to secure more downloads visit: www.theinfluentialfundraiser.com

About =mc

The Management Centre (=mc) is a global network of management and fundraising consultancies whose shared mission is to transform the performance of non-profit and value-driven organizations.

We work in the fields of fundraising, management consultancy, and management training. Our customers include many of the world's largest NGOs and INGOs including UNICEF, Amnesty International, Greenpeace, Oxfam, Médecins Sans Frontières, Habitat for Humanity, CARE, UNAIDS and The Red Cross Society.

We have a presence in Europe, USA, Australasia, South America and Asia. To find out more about our global work visit www.managementcentre.co.uk/international

Or for help with a specific enquiry contact:

Moi Tu

Practice Manager

+44 (0) 20 7978 1516

m.tu@managementcentre.co.uk

For a specific international site visit:

- **UK** www.managementcentre.co.uk
- **Australia** www.managementcentreau.com
- **Brazil** www.managementcenter.com.br
- **USA** www.managementcenterusa.com
- **Asia** www.managementcenterasia.com
- **Mexico** www.managementcentermx.com

=mc *transforming the performance of not-for-profit organizations*

© The Management Centre (2008). This download and its contents may not be reproduced without permission of the authors. Permission will be granted for small-run reproduction and circulation within not-for-profit organizations.
www.managementcentre.co.uk