

**Chapter 8 Communication Skills
Career Chatroom Career Profile**

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Q What do you do at work?

A Working at a mid-size, not-for-profit theater company means that each staff person wears many hats. I wear the management and fundraising hats—managing the organization’s operations and finances, the board of directors, and supervising the staff to make sure each facet of the organization runs smoothly. I am also responsible for raising funds to keep the company open and thriving, and for creating excellent community-engaged theater. This means researching and writing grants, editing grants written by my staff, and building and sustaining relationships with foundations. I also plan special events, and cultivate individual donors by having one-on-one meetings.

Q What was your first job in marketing?

A I was the director of a small arts organization straight out of college. I had interned there the summer before I graduated, and was able to try everything—from marketing, to event producing, to grant writing, to dealing with a board of directors. It was a great crash course.

Q What skills are most important to you?

A Strong writing and editing skills are a must. Active listening, the ability to collaborate with others, and planning are necessary when working as part of a team, and when building relationships with funders and other supporters. Also, the ability to step back and look at the work holistically rather than just diving in and dealing with urgent issues in front of you is crucial to efficiency, effectiveness, and longevity in a career.

Q What is your key to success?

A I am passionate about my work and make strong, informed choices. I think that the key to success is communication—this means speaking so people can hear you, and truly listening to others. Mindful, intentional communication has helped me create a lasting and growing network of colleagues. It has ensured good working relationships with my staff, and has made for trusting and authentic relationships with funders and board members.