

Transcript – Episode 62 – [Crafting Your Nonprofit's Language to Lead, Engage, and Advocate with Erica Mills](#)

Dolph Goldenburg: Welcome to the Successful Nonprofits™ Podcast where we're recording from the 2017 Board Leadership Forum. I'm your host Dolph Goldenburg, and we will be joined by Erica Mills today to share how nonprofits can better use language to lead, engage and advocate.

The words we use and the way in which we use them are crucial to how we are perceived and also how people hear our message. In fact, while drafting my thoughts for this intro, I actually rewrote that last sentence at least five times, and I'm not making it up. I spent more time on that last sentence than I did on the next three paragraphs, which are about me rewriting it. Why did I draft this so many times? Well, because the first time that I wrote it, it did not carry the tone and the impact that I really wanted to have. You see, I wanted to have kind of a serious tone, and I wanted to use words that I thought would make an impact on you, the folks that actually download and listen to the podcast.

When it comes to communication, we are all on a journey, and it's a journey of continuous improvement. It's not like we ever hit communication nirvana, so there are some days that I'm really good at the words that I write and the words that I say, and there are some days that it feels like no matter what I do, I cannot get the right words. So, I felt that it was really appropriate that we bring Erica Mills and to have a conversation with us about the words that we use. Now, she actually is one of the many very dynamic speakers at this year's Board Leadership Forum, and she is going to help us to use language to lead, engage and advocate. Before you bring her on, now let me tell you a little bit about her.

Erica Mills directs the Nancy Bell Evans Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy at the University of Washington, and she also teaches graduate school there. In addition to that, she has an active consulting firm. She publishes. She's been at the Stanford Social Innovation Review and the Chronicle of Philanthropy. She does research. She developed this amazing web APP, which we're going to talk about toward the end of our conversation today. About that app, I will give you a quick teaser on it. It's called Wordifie, and it's a free online tool that helps nonprofits amplify their words. It's really incredible. But we're going to talk about that later. The last thing I want to tell you about Erica is that she founded Claxon, a company that teaches nonprofits how to create marketable and remarkable messages. And guess what? I lied. I want to tell you one more thing. She's an author. She wrote a book that's called *Pitch Falls. Why Bad Pitches Happen to Good People*. So, you know, when I have to go back, when I'm introducing someone and tell you multiple times, I'm just going to tell you one more thing. This probably means they're really accomplished. And it probably means that we're about to learn a lot from them. So, now that I have raised everybody's expectations and Erica has a very high bar to hit, let's cue the music and welcome Erica.

Welcome to the podcast, Erica.

Erica Mills: Thank you. Thank you for having me.

Dolph Goldenburg: Your specialty is words. Tell us about this.

Erica Mills: That is true. Words, words and more words. You know, people frequently ask me kind of how I got into becoming a word nerd, and I don't have a great response to this, but I get asked it often enough that I reflect on it because I am truly obsessed with them. I think what keeps me hooked on it is seeing the impact of their really can have for organizations. I mean, that's true of organizations of all sizes, but I would say small to mid-size organizations in some ways have the biggest opportunity for leveraging language. I think about words as a renewable resource, right? There's a ton of them, and it really depends on which source you go to, but there's somewhere between 250,000 and a million words in the English language.

That's just a ton of words. There is a ton of words. And we can talk a little bit more about the research I've done and how we came to learn that nonprofits on average on their websites only use 0.03% of those words.

Dolph Goldenburg: Wow. I'm trying to do the math, right? I

Erica Mills: It's a municipal, hey. Oh, and by that, I mean, that's using the most conservative estimate that's using the 250,000 number. Right? If you use the higher one, it's, it's even less. So, you know, when we learned that through the research, it was like, Whoa, that's really sad. That makes me sad because it means that we're not communicating about the work in a very interesting way. And so, it's this sort of almost irony of organizations doing the most important work on the planet some of the hardest work on the planet in very resource-constrained environments.

They have this renewable free resource called words and totally not leveraging it. Right? I did grow up speaking French, and I was born in Canada. I did French immersion for the first few years. And there's something about French and the French. They do love language in a way that I have not experienced English speakers loving it. It's a love affair with words. So, I think that that definitely influenced me. Um, but what keeps me hooked is seeing just again and again and again, people both at the individual level, you know, staff board, volunteers, implement kind of the tips and tricks and super easy, straight forward stuff that once you hear it, you're like, "Well Duh, of course, I should be doing that." Seeing them, the individual and the organizational level.

Well and the impact that it can have. Just make those small adjustments. Is this amazing?

Dolph Goldenburg: So, I want to reflect on something. I love that you said there were a renewable resource, but you can use them too much. And what I thought when you said that was, "Wow, I never, I never quite conceived of it this way, but you can't use upwards, but you can wear them out.

Erica Mills: You could totally wear them out. You know, just presented at the Board Service Leadership Forum earlier and somebody asked a great follow up question, which I get pretty regularly wishes, you know? So, there's this balance between how to use words that people

understand so they're not having to work hard. Right? And so, it's like high reading ease, but still use words that are interesting. My common response is to use the science to create the art. Some of the tools I have developed, Flesch readiness, Fleschkin grade level, sort of all of these things to ground your thinking and your writing. Fundamentally, you know, you need humans. So that's the science meeting art. And the other thing is, you know, I really encourage people to think about not writing sentences or writing paragraphs or even writing your messaging, but building it or architecting it

Dolph Goldenburg: Tell me more.

Erica Mills: I advise that you start if especially so, so let's use mission statements as an example.

Every nonprofit has to have one, and most of them are terrible. We can talk about the research that, I mean, I'm not just sort of randomly saying that they're like quite bad. In the English language, we have 50%, approximately 50%, now it's 25% adjectives, 14% verbs. The rest is other things including adverbs. Start with your verb. Pick the verb so that you pick the verb that it's interesting, not just as interesting, but verbs are action words, right? And so, they represent the change that you're committing to creating. Great. And in your mission statement really is the change in your community to creating the world. Uh, and so that's contextual, right? But verbs are action words. So, when you, what I found is when organizations start with that as their initial building block, just, you know, like at a gate right away, everything that follows is going to be more compellingly written or spoken.

Dolph Goldenburg: So, you just helped me do my job better and make it a little bit easier. When I consult, and I've mentioned this on the podcast before, but when I'm helping with strategic planning process, we work on reviewing and revising the mission. And I always challenged the workgroup because we have a workgroup that meets six or eight times before the retreat, and I challenge the work group to create a mission that's 10 words, and the first reaction is, "We can't", and then I give them a list of 50 nonprofits that all have mission statements ranging from two words to 10, but what I'd never thought about doing was saying pick your verb. Pick your verb and build from there. And that's going to help these groups so much. Because up to this point, I've been like, well, other people did it. Go figure it out and come back and tell me what it is.

Erica Mills: I know when people first hear it, they're like, "Pick my verb. Like what is she talking about?" And then you're like, oh

Dolph Goldenburg: yeah, like do you heal? What do you do?

Erica Mills: What fundamentally do you do? There's also something about having a conversation about a part of speech, which is very crystallizing, you know, particularly in strategic planning processes, which can be a little like we're [inaudible], a little plotting a but also frankly noun heavy, right? It's not that I don't want us to focus on people, places and things. That's

fundamentally the work in the sector. But it's just so easy to get lazy with your verbs, and that's, that's not in service to the people and the places and the things that we care about in the end.

Dolph Goldenburg: I absolutely love that. You mentioned you've got some other tips and tricks, or as young folks today would call them hacks. What are some of those other tips, tricks and hacks?

Erica Mills: You know, I don't know if this is a hack, but I do think if they're clear on their brand first and specifically what I mean, is their adjectives in their brand personality? There are so many words and so that defining that picky three adjectives that really define the organization substantively, and they should, they should be different, right? So, you don't want to be like caring, kind, loving. That's all one bucket. You want them to be sort of substantively different. Caring, fierce, generous, for instance, you get a very different sense from that. If the word fierce would lead you to a different type of word, a different feeling to the words, that can really help. The other thing about that is that in an organizational context. If you don't have your brand personality defined for the organization, what happens is just a great big mushing up of everybody's individual likes, dislikes of words. It's the same when you do like a logo or anything else and you know, you show people the comps and they're like, but I don't like blue rather than getting into. But I like blue but I don't like blue. Let's do bright blue. It's like, is that fierce? Is Blue a fierce color? You can get like a visual of the different types. It's not a bank blue, but that's a different blue.

Dolph Goldenburg: I almost got myself sued by a major bank. I was going to say So-and-so's bank's blue is pretty fierce.

Erica Mills: I mean I write a ton. Obviously, I run everything I write through Reading Ease.

Dolph Goldenburg: I noticed you mentioned the Flesch Kincaid, and my mind flashed back to at Word 1994, 1995 because it used to give that to you. When you said that, I thought, I have not seen that on my spell check in so long.

How do you do it on Word?

Erica Mills: You go into, file > options. It gives me spelling and grammar, and there's a little checkbox that says, "readability statistics." Then, when you do the spelling and grammar check, it will automatically at the end it's going to come up with a box. In the box, it will tell you the two things you're looking for, which is the reading ease and then the reading grade level. And what you're going for is a reading new score of over 50 and a grade level of grade seven. So grade seven doesn't mean that you think that your audience, it's based on a huge body of work and research that says at that level, it is like the sweet spot for our brains. We will process the content and not get stuck on the words themselves.

Another way of thinking about it as like regardless of grade level, that is where we process most easily.

Dolph Goldenburg: So, what I hear you saying is grade seven means it's not like your science [tech].

Erica Mills: Correct. And about a year and a half, two years ago I started actually publishing every blog, every blog post on Claxton's blog with the reading ease. Once you get in the habit of this and it really does become a habit, you'll feel it. You can feel it when you're writing over and when it's too convoluted. And the things that it is looking for more or less a ratio of the number of syllables to length of sentence. So, organizations that have multisyllabic names are a little bit of a disadvantage. So, my one, like I don't know what the hack, but just put in *we*, because unless you're going to change the name of your organization, you're going to have like skewed statistics coming at you, and that's not useful.

So just put *we* and adjust that way.

Dolph Goldenburg: You just answered the question I was about to ask you. If you do get a score that's really high on grade level and really low on reading ease, how do you go back and fix it? You just answered that. Thank you.

Erica Mills: Yeah. And that gets back to the, you know, building and architecting the sentences.

Dolph Goldenburg: Do you see the language people should be using is different when it's in print form versus social media?

Erica Mills: I realized that in my mind I think of social media sort of is not print, but it's written. So, the distinction I make is between written or spoken, but the interesting thing about social media is that it sits in the middle, and I haven't done a lot of thinking about that. When I work with organizations or my students, they get subjected to the exact same things.

What I say is we're going to optimize first for the spoken word, right? This is even with mission statements, right? I want to optimize first for the spoken word because it is very easy because we speak more casually than we, right? So if you come up with a sentence that you can say so it's repeatable, it's super easy to take that sentence and elevate it if you need to in a written form. The reverse is not true. So, if you've written this in [a home], it's like so heartbreaking, you know? And he's like, [inaudible], and they are explaining that blood, sweat and tears have gone into the sentence, and it's beautiful, and they love sentence and they're like, "Oh, here's the sentence." And then people say it. And I mean they just sound like robots, right? Because it's too much. We don't speak like that. Then it feels like a demotion of your beautiful sentence, which is emotionally terrible. If you optimize for the spoken word, you can elevate, but not the other way.

Dolph Goldenburg: I'll share with you, there's an exercise that I do with clients. So, what we do is we take their old mission and we do - this is the full board retreat. And we put one word on a card, a three-by-five card. If they haven't currently have a 55-word mission, there's 55, three-by-five-cards. Each one has one word on it. And then we take their proposed mission, which has 10

words or less. So, you know, there are 10 or less, three-by-five cards. We divide them into two groups and we have a competition. And, and it's funny because what I love about that exercises, the people who are adamant that this word must be in our mission if they're in the group that has to decode at 55-word mission, they decide, you know what, this is a much more beautiful, elegant way to do the mission. Let's do it shorter. So it's funny cause like, cause that's, I think about the same thing when it comes to like a beautifully written sentence. If it was scrambled, and you had to unscramble it.

Erica Mills: How could you do it? That's a fun exercise. You know, having to be 10 words or less is based on this, "I would have written you a shorter letter, but I didn't have the time" principle, which we attributed to Mark Twain, which actually he was paraphrasing buddies Lee Prescott - a little factoid for your listeners, but it is harder. I mean it's much harder. I have my students, one of my assignments is that they each week have to not just synthesize or summarize the week, but you know, in 140 characters or less, they need to show me that not only do they get fundamentally what we were talking about, but they have to connect it to something else. They are policy students and also nonprofit leaders or aspiring nonprofit leaders, but what they are trained primarily to do is write a memo, which is a fantastic skill. I mean, and so I'm not knocking the memo writing, but to go from memo writing to writing a tweet, that's hard.

Dolph Goldenburg: Do you make them condense a memo down into a tweet, or what exactly is this assignment?

Erica Mills: You've heard the assignment, right? In any given week, they have you know, readings, sometimes some videos, we'll have a lecture. We have a lot of class discussions, pretty interactive. Like I'm thinking right now I'm teaching marketing and social innovation, and their task is to take that all in and whatever struck them, communicate it back. And I'll refer to character lists.

Dolph Goldenburg: And how do you grade that?

Erica Mills: I should know this off the top of my head. Four points if they get a key takeaway, right? Like it's not like, "Oh rabbits." We were actually talking about branding or messaging or, so there's no rabbits, right? So that's you know, I want to know that they kind of got it. And then three points for like bringing in are sort of referencing in some way readings or something that they were sort of given in class. Can they connect the dots? Three additional points if they find something else.

Dolph Goldenburg: Part of what I like about that is they are in control of their grade. If they want a bad grade, they just do one of these three. Smart. I like that a lot.

Well, Erica, we're going to take a short break, and when we come back, we're going to discuss your work with the Evans School of Public Policy and Governance at the University of Washington.

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Welcome back, Erica. So, tell me about your work at the Evans School of Public Policy and Governance.

Erica Mills: Whenever I get asked that, I'm never quite sure where to start. There's so much amazing stuff that happens there. So, let me sort of sift through my thoughts. I'm a senior lecture there, so I get to teach, marketing, communications, nonprofits and all this stuff. I am the Director of the Nancy Bell Evans Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy. And I co-direct that with another faculty member, Professor [Mary Kay Gugerty]. I've taught in various capacities at the Evans School for 10 years or something like that, eight to 10 years. The directorship is relatively new, so I started that about a year and a half ago. It's been around since 1993/94 and was much more kind of a like a traditional academic center, meaning that the support of the work of one faculty member.

When he went on to another institution, they did some stuff. So, the sector is having a moment, and it's one of those moments where it's like, we really need to step up. And it's one thing to say that, and it's another to know how to do it. We are mindful of that moment, mindful that nationally there's a whole bunch of support that happens for nonprofits, that capacity building space. We're really raising the floor in that way. Looking at like what you can uniquely do as an academic institution and what our strengths are as a school, where we're focused on is elevating the social sector. And for us that's nonprofits, foundations and social enterprise through research and leadership development, right? So how can we raise the ceiling to not only be focused on like... it's an optimistic view, right? It's like that floor is going to get raised like amazing things are already happening. They need to keep happening. More is being asked of us. So how can we position the sector so that they're ready for that, you know, whatever comes next? That's where we're focused now.

Dolph Goldenburg: It sounds like you're doing research, but also probably you're engaged in teaching the next level of and thought leaders and that type of thing as well.

Erica Mills: One of the things that I really love about the Evans School is we have a whole suite of services. Wherever you are and your career, if you raise your hand and you say, "I'm ready for that next step," there is something for you. I say what we're primarily known for is our Master's in Public Administration. Um, we had almost just shy of 200 incoming graduate students this year. Our biggest class ever. They just blow my mind. They're totally amazing. Uh, so we have the MPA, we have an executive MPA and then on either end of that continuum. So, if those people are early to just, some are mid-career executive. They've had more years of experience. We also have non-degree programs.

This is through continuum college, so that are noncredit offerings. But we have both the certificate in nonprofit management and also a fundraising certificate. Those are nine months, and they meet every week. I mentioned that because I taught in it for eight years, and I'm just like humbled. I mean these people are working really hard, and then they either come every Wednesday night, or they come every other Saturday, and I'm like, "Aren't you tired?" And, of course, it's important. People were like, "Yeah, but you're teaching, you're doing the same thing." But in some sense, they are more remarkable to me. We have that, which tends to be folks who have been working for three to five years. Some of them were like test driving the MPA.

They think they might want to do that, but others are not. They just want another set of skills. Then we have folks who have been in the private sector, and they want to switch into the social sector. Speaking in the nonprofit management certificate, it gives this wonderful, great, 30,000-foot view of that. And then we also, and this is the area where we're looking to do more. We have sort of executive noncredit executive offerings, which are week-long intensive. For 12 years we've had the Nonprofit Executive Leadership Institute, which is a cohort of about 30, um, executive directors every year who've gone through that. It's intense. It's a week and it's residential, right? So even if you're local, you stay in the hotel with everybody. And then we just had our first run at something, you call it accelerating social transformation, which was shorter. That was three days and intensive. But really looking at how can we look at other models? What does that look like? And then focusing, focusing on whatever the particular project organization was. And those folks came from all over the world.

Dolph Goldenburg: So, there are two things specifically I want to ask you about, but before I do, I have to explain, when we look at the downloads of the podcast, it looks almost like a nighttime electricity usage map of America. So, the east coast glows, the west coast glows. You see a dot where Chicago should be and a dot where about Houston and Dallas should be. And for anyone else in the middle of the country, you know we see like a milky way looking thing there, but it does not glow. And so all that is to say we have people from all over the country that listen to the podcast. So, the two things I want to ask you about: the executive MPA program. So, give me some information like how long does it take, how often does it meet, et cetera. One of the reasons I ask is I, I have an MPA, and when I got mine back in the 90s there was no executive MPA program. What it meant, because I had to work full-time, I took one class a semester for five years, and it was a long, slow grind. An executive MBA program, that would be good for someone who's working.

EM: It is structured very similarly to what you would think of for executive MBA programs, which is it is optimized for people working full time.

Dolph Goldenburg: I know we're going to be talking about some other online learning options in a minute, but does your program at the University of Washington have any kind of online learning?

Erica Mills: That's such a great question. I mean it's a really interesting time in higher Ed. We just, I would say early days at the Evans School, and you know, I don't want to comment on the rest of the university, but there's a lot happening online. But we are [in our] early days at the Evans School with really integrating online. We just had this first cohort. It has this acronym. So, I'm going to have to like dig deep in my brain for the Institute for Public Health Leadership. That's not right. But it's around there. So, we have a partnership with the Gates Foundation, bringing a whole bunch of wonderful professionals from Africa together into an institute, and that was a multimodality right. So they prior had gotten to know each other using technology, and then they came together in Seattle for some period of time, and then they went back, and then they reconvene in Rome, and then they're continuing that, you know, the connection, um, online. So, that is super exciting to us. This idea and looking at that accelerate social transformation, you know, we'd love to experiment with something similar, right? To have both the connection in the community aspect happening prior to coming together in person. I love all the technology. I love what it can do, and I'm still a big fan of in-person, you know, there, there is something magic still about breathing the same air.

Dolph Goldenburg: I'll share with you, I've been loving doing these podcast interviews in person at BLF as opposed to doing them over Skype, or I might see the person, but it's just not the same thing. So, I want to move on to the Off-the-Map question. Listeners are going to get a bonus because I thought of an Off-the-Map question before, but oftentimes I wait for the muse to give me an offer and that question. So, you know, I stalked you online. I checked out your firm's website. I found this really cool thing called *wordifier*, and I could put any word in, and it would tell me whether it was overused and if nonprofits should or should use it. So, for example, I learned that the word *impact* should not be used by nonprofits. It is way overused. Forget it, stop using it. But I thought, what's a synonym for impact? I typed in *outcome*. *Outcome* is not overused, so I loved, but I want you to pull the curtain back and not just say like, okay, here's how many words it is, but how did you actually develop this so that nonprofits can rely on it at no cost to them?

Erica Mills: You know, sometimes our best ideas don't come in a linear fashion. I became intrigued by novelty and what it could do for our brains and wondering like, could we use that to our advantage, right? Cause novelty our brains releases this chemical, you know, in our brains makes us happy. So, we love novelty, and I was sort of wondering like, could we apply that in some way and in order to apply that we would have to know which words were being used and not used. And I sort of naively thought that that data set would exist, and one of the really troubling things that came out of this research is just how minuscule amounts of primary research in general for our sector. And I would say specifically on communications. We're super light, and what we ended up doing is descriptive analytics, which is fantastic and it's super robust, which I'll mention in a minute.

But you know, we're almost nowhere with predictive analytics, right? We don't have the information to predict things. So, I gotta be in my bonnet about it, and we did pass on it first. And we're like, "Oh cool." So, we validated that you could do the web scrape and all those things. That was with [Tess], who at the time was a student, Seattle U, and now she's gone on to do

great things. And then Vicky came along, and Vicki is this civic with this amazing brain. And she was like, "So fantastic conceptually. And do you need to start over again in terms of how many websites you're going to scrape from." Because what I really, really, really wanted was a tool where you could like nonprofits, professionals do this incredibly important work.

I want them to have a tour they could go to and it with confidence, right? So that meant having a 95% confidence interval. Okay. And that meant we had to scrape every single word of 2,503 nonprofit websites. And I want to give a nod here to Vicky Williams cause she had to do it by hand.

Dolph Goldenburg: Does this mean every year she's got to go back and do it again to stay current?

Erica Mills: So, you know, we haven't done that. We would like to; we'd like to think of this is the baseline because then we could get some interesting information. I don't think she's recovered yet. So, two years, two years, she has recovered. That's how the wordifier came about was sort of this commitment, you know, my commitment to this idea that, you know, all of this is learnable.

It's all teachable; it's all learnable. And it's really just a matter of creating tools that are [going to] work for how busy people are and for how our brains operate. So, it's the same rationale for launching Claxton University, which is this idea of access, access, access. Because I mean, honestly, I get this dreamy vision of like, what if we solve the communications problems nonprofits face? Like what would that make possible? It would make it possible for them to do even more work, a commitment to the sector. I mean we don't charge for it because as soon as we charged for it, so many organizations are too tiny even to pay a tiny subscription. We get asked all the time like, "Why aren't you monetizing it?" And I'm like, cause I just can't bring myself to it

Dolph Goldenburg: And good for you. Because I could also see how even if it was a dollar and people are like, "Yeah, I don't know if it's going to be worth it," and they don't do it. Do you know about how many times a month, a week, a year, whatever, wordifier is used?

Erica Mills: It's about a thousand per month. We get an email saying, you know, "Thank you so much. I'm a grant writer, and I've hated this word for ages. I didn't have a neutral way of saying to my board chair, my boss that we should stop using it. Now, I just click it into the wordifier [and it] comes up red!"

Dolph Goldenburg: I think this is how you do monetize it. You need to develop and sell an APP that after someone has been on it for longer than 45 minutes, it shuts down. So for those of us that are obsessive-compulsive, we'd pay 10 bucks for that. That's how you monetize it.

Erica Mills: Because I really would love to do the updated scrape of websites and all the words and all of that. And then also I'd like to move into predictive analytics. I mean we need it.

Dolph Goldenburg: I promised you a second Off-the-Map question. And in the first half, this book jumped into my head, and it's actually one of my favorite books on the planet. I have to ask you, although I've already biased you because I said it's one of my favorite on the planet. So, but feel free to break my heart. I have to ask you whether or not this book is still relevant. It is *Elements of Style* by Strunk and White.

Erica Mills: Yes!

Dolph Goldenburg: Thank you! Back when I was an executive director, I used to give every fresh college graduate that we hire. So, if you are 22 years old as part of your welcome gift, I would give you *Elements of Style* by Strunk and White. I'd say this is short; you can read this in less than a day.

Erica Mills: His stuff isn't always short, but I love Steven Pinker's work. I don't even know where to start with Steven Pinker. He's a professor I think at Harvard, but I might have that wrong. He is a psycholinguistic guy. He does a lot of work around the history of language and what it means, you know, so you know, people like Ah, its demise of the English language, you know, he's sort of very calmly says actually no and actually if you go back, you know, 500 years you were seeing the exact same argument, which was, you know, it's the demise of the English language because of the Oxford Comma or there's always something, and now it is this whole like, "Oh short format writing. It's the end of the English language!" And I contend very strongly on that. It really is hard to try a shorter letter.

Dolph Goldenburg: Well Erica, thank you so much for joining us today. I am grateful that you joined us. I want to make sure our listeners know about a few things. I always want to give some contact information and share with listeners how they can work with you and learn from you some more. The first thing you briefly mentioned Claxson University, and I wanted to make sure that our listeners understood what that was. That is an online training module that is optimized for busy nonprofit professionals within small and medium-sized organizations. It's not free. It costs \$425, but you get really the equivalent of thousands of dollars of consulting by taking this online course. Number two, go to www.claxsonmarketing.com. You can find out not just about Claxson University, but you can use the wordifier.

You can see Erica's blog that; you can get lots of great information there. Number three, check out her program online at the University of Washington. Now that URL is so long that I am not going to read it on the air, but we will link it in the show notes. Number four, go and find Erica's Twitter. It's simple. Her name is Erica Mills, and she is at www.twitter.com/ericamills. Then the last three things that you will be able to find on our show notes. You will find a link to her book *Pitch Falls: Why Bad Pitches Happen to Good People*. You also find a link to the book that she had mentioned that the author that she had mentioned, and, of course, you will find a link to *Elements of Style* by Strunk and White. Erica, thank you again for joining us.

Erica Mills: Thank you so much. It's been a joy

Dolph Goldenburg: As always, you can go to our show notes at www.successfulnonprofits.com, and you can get any of those links. I know we hollered out a lot of them fast and you are probably walking the dog flying a plane, doing something that will not allow you to write them down right now. But you remember our URL? So, go there and check out the show notes. As I always say, while you are online, subscribe on iTunes, Stitcher or your streaming and app of choice. And if you really like this show and as you've listened all the way to the end, statistics show, by the way, that most podcast listeners do not listen all the way to this point where I am doing the outro. So, if you are listening, it means you are a fan. And if you are a fan who has not yet written a review, come on, write a review, help a brother out. That's our show for this week. I hope that you have gained some insight that will help your nonprofit thrive in a competitive environment.

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