

Don't Be Green — Be Like Kermit

By Ronald M. Moen

In our current economy, the term green implies some level of commitment to ecological friendliness and environmental stewardship. Our business language craves buzz words, and being green in business today generally evokes feelings that are morally positive and socially responsible. Everywhere you turn — people, products, and services are all stamped “green.”

Can you remember a time when the word green was used in a negative context? If someone was described as green, didn't that indicate being naive? If a company was tagged as green, didn't that suggest a level of inexperience? For as long as I can recall, green has been a synonym for rookie.

Thank you for reading far enough to understand that the title “Don't Be Green” is not my rallying cry for wasting natural resources and overflowing our landfills. I am not against recycling and reuse as easy ways to reduce our human impact on the global environment. The title is a challenge for you to be more mature in your business approach, and to create opportunities to leap to new experiences.

What about Kermit? What does Kermit have to do with not being green? Kermit is one of my favorite of Jim Henson's Muppet characters. Amidst all the wacky hilarity and implausible situations, Kermit is at the center, pulling all the players together.

As the stage manager, Kermit takes responsibility for the presentation of the show, having the right people in the right place at the right time. He teeters

close to wits' end, but somehow pulls it off, and the cast receives their applause. As the straight man in joke sequences,

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Kermit asks all the questions that prompt the slapstick and punch lines. His rhetorical approach often allows the audience to smile in advance of the reply. As the news reporter, Kermit describes the chaos behind him with calm determination, committed to keeping his composure. Many of the events he shares with the camera are so outrageously laughable that he gets moved completely out of the viewing frame. Jim Henson described Kermit's role perfectly: “Kermit's job on *The Muppet Show* was much like [my]

own—trying to get a bunch of crazies to actually get the job done.”

As a professional in our industry, you often fit the role of stage manager, straight man, or news reporter. You’ve got staff to encourage, budgets to manage, and stories to tell. You’ve got programs to create, logistics to navigate, and constituents to hear. Your board members, committee participants, volunteer leaders, and staff team may not behave as wildly as Kermit’s co-comedians on a day-to-day basis, but I believe your challenges are similar to his. You are responsible for pulling all the players together for the benefit of your audiences.

When you turn to an outsourced partner for assistance, you are inviting solutions that are not bound by the status quo in your organization. You are tapping into collective years of experience—mistakes survived and outcomes championed—without adding a full-time, long-term head count to your team. Outsourcing can provide the resources that nonprofits need to achieve the same success that Henson attributes to Kermit—getting the job done.



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