

## **ESC Creates Value for Local Think Tank**

"The Center for Tax and Budget Accountability (CTBA), a small Chicago think tank, needed a plan to improve its communications. Though unfamiliar with Executive Service Corps, initial meetings showed that they could tackle the assignment at nominal cost. ESC assigned an energetic top-drawer team that painstakingly worked with us to analyze our reputation and brand, evaluate our current communication efforts, and craft alternative positioning statements. The process was robust and the final product valuable." - Dave May, Board Chairperson

The recent ESC Engagement for CTBA represents an excellent example of how ESC successfully helped a nonpartisan Illinois-based think tank develop a much more focused value proposition through a thorough assessment process, by utilizing ESC team members with relevant skill sets, and by creating an aggressive yet realistic work plan that resulted in the achievement of the engagement's deliverables.



1- Assessment: ESC held several meetings with CTBA to determine exactly what it wanted to accomplish. CTBA initially was not clear what it wanted from a consulting organization.

2- ESC Team Recruitment: The four ESC team members brought very relevant and diverse skill sets to this engagement. Two members (Geoff McClelland and Chris Hogan) had strong advertising/marketing communications backgrounds. Another (Don Adler) was a corporate tax specialist who was also an Oak Brook Village Trustee. The last member (Mark Michaels) served as an Illinois teachers' union executive in Springfield.

3- CTBA Work Plan: The engagement had two important and demanding components that were completed in a timely manner:

a) Conducting communications research about the perceptions that outside stakeholders had about CTBA as well as their perspectives on how CTBA should develop its value proposition.

b) Using the input from the research to craft a very disciplined value proposition that was enthusiastically agreed to by the CTBA client.

To engage the Executive Service Corps in helping your organization fulfill your mission contact us at [www.4org.org](http://www.4org.org).

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## ESC Consultant Spotlight: Paul Brenner

Paul Brenner is an independent consultant with a practice focusing on management and technology issues. Paul began his career at Baxter International, where he most recently provided internal consulting services and led the corporate E-Business initiative. In these roles, Paul's clients appreciated his skill in helping diverse groups identify common goals, set action plans, and work together to address issues that naturally arise during the execution of a plan. He brings to ESC expertise in general management, communications, meeting facilitation, Board development, systems and information management. As a coach, Paul is committed to helping people turn their vision into reality. He takes a direct approach with the objective of enabling his clients to frame their issues and develop action plans that are energizing, empowering and achievable.



Through ESC, Paul has contributed to many organizations, including Illinois Joining Forces, Youth Technology Corps, Chiaravalle Montessori School, and Shorefront. He has also volunteered as a facilitator at the Nonprofit Leadership Roundtable. He has completed ESC training in Consulting, Project Management, Advanced Retreat Facilitation, Coaching, Emergency Leadership Planning, Board Development, Strategic Planning, Focus Group, Fund Development, Total Assessment, and Urgent Action Teams.

In addition to his work with ESC, Paul volunteers in several Evanston organizations that focus on empowering young children and youth. He is also a disaster services volunteer for the American Red Cross. His wife and two grown sons are all actively engaged in educational initiatives. Paul enjoys travel, cycling, scuba diving and photography.

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## Current ESC Career Opportunities and Searches

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[Director of Support Services and Education](#) (Full time, paid)

- [Click here to review the job description.](#)
- To apply send your resume to [DSSE@execservicecorps.org](mailto:DSSE@execservicecorps.org).

[Executive Director](#) for Dream Big (Full time, paid)

- [Click here to review the job description.](#)
- To apply send your resume to [Kelly@DreamBigEducation.org](mailto:Kelly@DreamBigEducation.org).

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## Tips to help your nonprofit use Instagram to achieve your mission

1. Explain your mission by telling the story with images and captions.
2. Make posts custom to Instagram, don't just link up your platforms.
3. Follow those who like and comment on your posts.
4. Reply promptly to comments on your posts.
5. Use your cause's hashtags. Make sure to also use a hashtag of your organization's name and one for your mission.
6. Tag your organization in your photos and in your captions. This helps reposts convert to views and followers.
7. When appropriate, like and comment on your followers' posts.
8. Follow your stakeholders' Instagram accounts. You can find them by syncing your contacts or using links from their Facebook pages.
9. When posting photos of your organization's activities, tag those who are present.
10. Use your cause's hashtags to find like-minded people and engage them on the platform.
11. Thank donors who have Instagram accounts, including their account. Don't include the amount of the donation unless you have their permission to do so.
12. Promote and show your progress on your fundraising campaigns.
13. Invite people to your events and then share lots of images of the events during and after when they happen.
14. Thank current volunteers and board members including tagging them in images.
15. Use the direct message function to send personal invitations to events to key supporters.
16. Make at least one post daily.
17. Follow other nonprofit organizations and nonprofit leaders to create a community of support.
18. Share your impact, not just your needs.
19. Count down to big announcements, campaigns, or events.
20. Celebrate the milestones on the way to achieving your organization's mission.



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To learn more about nonprofit best practices and to work with ESC visit [4org.org](http://4org.org).

**20 Ways to Stay Motivated at Work on a Dreary Fall Day**

1. Ask for feedback and advice from your supervisor and/or executive coach.
2. Break enormous tasks into smaller steps.
3. Commit to doing your best.
4. Consume your preferred media daily.
5. Diversify your after-hours personal activities.
6. Focus on the things you can control.
7. Get inspired by others' success.
8. Make and tick off a daily to-do list.
9. Network off hours with like-minded professionals.
10. Participate in professional associations and events.
11. Reflect on the impact of your work.
12. Reward yourself.
13. Say thank you to someone who has helped you.
14. Schedule time with your friends.
15. Send a note of congratulations to a colleague who has achieved one of his or her goals.
16. Set and track your progress towards your goals.
17. Take breaks away from your work station.
18. Try something new.
19. When you are off duty, put your phone on airplane mode.
20. Engage an executive coach to keep you moving.



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[www.ExecServiceCorps.org](http://www.ExecServiceCorps.org)

**[Click Here to Engage ESC in Helping Your Nonprofit Achieve Your Mission!](#)**

