RESOURCE MEDIA

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK JANUARY 2018

ASPIRATIONS	
Mission (Why RM exists)	Resource Media develops and implements communications strategies to build power for sustainable and equitable social change.
Vision of Change (What we want the world to become and how RM contributes to that)	Resource Media imagines a world where community level power drives policies and practices in support of a more just and sustainable world. We help the individuals and organizations create this change by animating and amplifying a narrative that focuses on what's possible rather than what's wrong. We believe our communications expertise can help move people beyond the "us versus them" frame that divides us by focusing on concerns we have in common, like family, fairness, health and economic opportunities.
Values/Guiding Principles (Our non-negotiables vis-a-vis who we are and how we act)	Values/Guiding Principles • We are committed to the "long game" of power and movement building that supports long-term changes in policy and practice. • A deep commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is both a moral and a strategic imperative; a key ingredient to building power. • The more we acknowledge and work to dismantle institutional racism in our organization, in our work and in the communities where we live, the more effective we will be in achieving our mission. • Individual policy outcomes are important way stations. But we will also measure success by the breadth and reach of the coalitions we support, our ability to draw connections between issues and the strength of equity and social justice goals in the projects we take on. • We believe being opportunistic is a strength, not a weakness, as long as it is guided by our organizational values. • Communications to build power is a marathon, not a sprint. This requires long-term relationships built on trust and two-way learning. • No issue or cause exists in a vacuum. The connections between health, justice and sustainability are both strategic and real. The narratives we seek to create and promote support this connection. • While our roots are in environmental advocacy, we now understand that our job is to build bridges between issues, not build walls around them. • We can't do our work alone. We need partners and fellow travelers. We view our brand as a strategic tool. Project goals dictate whether we are publicly identified with our work or remain behind the scenes to support the work of others.

	● A free and empowered media is a foundation of all movements for social change. While we know that facts alone do not change minds, we embrace the truth and reject lying as a communications strategy.
Long-term Intended Impact (What will change in 5-8 years as a result of RM's work)	Resource Media will have contributed to the building of a burgeoning movement with real power, both social and political, that demands action and creates policy to accomplish the following: ● Public and private institutions that work to promote equity and dismantle institutional racism. ● Just treatment of all residents regardless of where they came from or when they got here. ● Protection and restoration of clean air, clean water and open space that benefits human and ecosystem health. ● Improved public health, especially among historically disadvantaged communities that face the biggest health inequities. ● An equitable and forceful response to carbon pollution and global climate change. ● A vibrant democracy that is open to all, bolstered by a free and empowered press.
THE CONTEXT	
Evolving STEP Conditions (Trends and major forces that RM needs to account for over the next 3-5 years)	Socio-demographic ● The US will move toward a "majority-minority" country as white demographic dominance continues to shrink and communities of color continue to grow. ● Migration from rural to urban areas will continue to grow. ● Millennials are emerging as a political force. ● Baby boomers are retiring. ● A huge intergenerational transfer of wealth is under way. ● The growth of "celebrity" culture will continue. ● The population is quickly growing younger. Technological ● Migration to mobile platforms continues. ● Artificial intelligence and virtual reality applications becomes more widespread. ● Big data has a larger impact on strategy. ● Clean energy continues to grow in use and importance. ● Hacking and other security breaches are more widespread.

	● Filter bubble and other aspects of social media make fragmentation and polarization more severe and finding common ground more difficult. Economic ● Gap between rich and poor continues to grow. ● Income gap continues to fuel displacement and class conflict. ● Crowdsourcing grows as a way to attract both charitable and investment dollars. ● More of the people and organizations we want to support are not able to fully pay us monetarily. ● Fastest economic growth is outside the US. Political ● Continued dysfunction at federal level. ● The intense polarization of the American public. ● More philanthropic focus on state and local ● More effort going to global initiatives since problems like climate are certainly global in nature and US leadership role is compromised. ● Groundswell of community organizing and movement building will continue. ● Full assault on our civic institutions by Trump Administration and supporters ● More potential scrutiny of nonprofits
Opportunities and Challenges (Conditions that RM can utilize to fulfill its aspirations)	The groupings of trends and conditions outlined above each present Resource Media with opportunities and challenges. Socio-demographic The services Resource Media provides are very much in demand among groups working in disadvantaged communities and communities of color. What's more, these communities are critical members of any movement to build power for change. However, to fully engage with this opportunity Resource Media must continue its own path toward internal equity, build cultural competence, and empower staff with that expertise to shape Resource Media's work. Technological The fast-changing world of information technology offers tremendous opportunity to firms that keep pace

and a tremendous challenge for those that don't. The issue for Resource Media is more nuanced. We need to choose wisely where we invest in staff capacity and where we pursue strategic partnerships that are perhaps more formal than in the past. This is especially important in considering social media platforms that have the potential to shape and amplify the narrative. Making these decisions and investments will also require more dedicated resources (both money and staff time) than in the past.

Economic

Many funders are paying at least lip service to supporting equity as a goal and groups working in disadvantaged communities. Resource Media needs to develop the relationships and the approach that allows its work to be funded without diverting resources from communities in need. Strategies for this are outlined below. Navigating the growing gap between the rich and the rest of us will require us to both build our internal understanding of white privilege and reflect that understanding in the work we do.

Political

Many funders appear to be emphasizing state and local work, which is a strength of Resource Media provided that we are intentional about how the geographic distribution of our staff can best support this work. At the same time, the hostile and fragmented political climate presents real challenges when segments of our population cease to share any common truths. This trend presents an opportunity if we can help translate what information providers like Google, Facebook and others are doing to counter the corrosive effect of "fake news" into our strategies and our relationships.

| Our Unique Niche (How RM is positioned based on its strengths and differentiation from other providers) | Resource Media has several unique attributes and values:

● Our status as a non-profit mission-driven organization, which is rare among communications firms
● Our ability to work across a broad swath of issues, which is rare among non-profits
● The long-term, ongoing nature of a high percentage of our work; something to which many consulting firms aspire.
● Our commitment to equity and building the capacity of community-based groups; thankfully no longer rare, but certainly spotty among potential competitors.
● A broad network that cuts across specific issue-based silos that allows us to be a connector for our clients.

The combination of these attributes and values suggest a niche that applies top-level communications skills to creating narratives (or frames) that can define the way target audiences view elements of social change for years; long enough to build real power. Because the term "narrative" will be used extensively in ensuing sections of the |

plan, it is important to define how it differs from "story" Here's one stab at a distinction between the two from Arizona State University's Center for Strategic Communications:

> "Let's define story simply as an "event unit." It relates the 'who, where, when and how' of an event that occurred (or will occur if we're talking about 'prophecy,' although prophecy is prefaced as something 'revealed' in the past). A narrative is made up of several of these interrelated "event units" that work together as a system."

Here's another key distinction. Stories are "closed". You can only observe. Narratives are "open". You can actively participate. Marketing consultant Keith Reynold Jennings describes the difference this way:

> "A story is a structured narrative. It has a beginning, middle and end. It typically contains other ingredients too, like characters and a plot. With the exception of experiencing it emotionally, we cannot physically participate in a story as it is told. We play a passive role as listeners/observers.
>
> A narrative, on the other hand, is a sequence of events. It has no standard form or structure. No distinct beginning or end. Yet we can play an active role in it — participate in it."

Think of this in the context of social change where participation and empowerment are key ingredients. Resource Media is uniquely positioned to build and sustain narratives that build power to create the world we outline in our aspirations above.

OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION(S)	
Program Goals (3-5 years) (SMART intermediate goals toward long-term impact, to ensure focus on the right things)	1. Establish long-term narrative development as Resource Media's defining tactic. Measured by • The percentage of our work that is long term (more than 12 months) in nature • The percentage of our work that involved building narrative as opposed to a single policy focus 2. Expand work across the multiple issues that align with our long-term intended impact (see above). Measured by • The percentage and dollar amount of our work that is focused beyond our traditional base. • The number and dollar amount of new funding sources for this work.

	3. Help build the communications capacity of organizations working in disadvantaged communities in a way that is respectful and non-exploitative. Measured by ● The number of ongoing mutually beneficial long-term relationships with groups working in frontline communities. ● The percentage of our work that has an equity component.
Operational Goals (3-5 years) (SMART capacities that RM should bolster, to ensure focus on doing things right)	1. Better define, measure and maintain financial stability. Measured by ● Balanced budget. ● A fixed reporting schedule that is met accurately. ● Growth in the board designated reserve. 2. Improve safe, internal knowledge sharing and communications. Measured by ● Document management system that allows for better organization and sharing. ● All committee and board work is reported on internal Slack channels. ● Security assessment and upgrade 3. Make internal systems more efficient, cost-effective and supportive of our mission. Measured by ● Admin bandwidth increased through outsourcing. ● New accounting platform meets our tracking and efficiency needs. ● Pooling projects, revised cost accounting and equity line item allow more ability for pro bono work and innovation.
Core Strategies (How RM will achieve program goals, in operationally feasible manner) Tactics are in rough order of priority)	1. Create narratives around sustainability and social justice that support long-term change: ● Each development area should have an optimal narrative we can fundraise around. ● Focus conversations on "yes" rather than "no." ● Become experts in establishing narratives through digital technology. ● Develop a series of thought pieces in narrative strategy. ● Define narrative more clearly ● Increase paid advertising expertise ● Raise more money tied to narrative promotion rather than policy wins ● Identify places where we have shaped narratives and learn from them

- Create a common internal language around narrative

2. Engage diverse and underserved communities in a way that builds power and compels action:

- Diversify our own leadership.
- Continue to diversify staff, board, vendors and contractors.
- Actively drive resources to underserved communities through joint fundraising, pro bono work and influencing funders and partners.
- Empower internal experts on multi-cultural work, perhaps through a designated unit.
- Increase formal partnerships with groups working in frontline communities.
- Continue to invest in regular staff training on equity and cultural competence.
- Identify and collaborate with other groups who provide resources to frontline communities.
- Mandatory evaluation and follow up for projects to promote learning and relationship building.
- Center equity conversation on racism.
- Grow fellowship.

3. Invest in bolstering our capacity for digital strategy:

- Prioritize digital expertise in future hires.
- Build a digital "bench" through hiring and internal training.
- Create a digital team that empowers our internal experts.
- Create minimum competence levels for all program staff and provide training to meet those levels.
- Develop digital service package designed for small "scrappy" organizations.
- Create line item for acquiring new digital tools each year.
- Use large grants to subsidize experimentation with new digital approaches.
- Partner with cutting edge firms.
- Clarify service mix.

4. Prioritize deep, authentic relationships:

- Make relationship building a priority when raising money or considering business opportunities.
- Launch and fund pro bono program and prioritize potential long-term relationships.
- Solicit feedback from partners.
- Use larger grants and contracts to build new relationships with priority groups.
- Pursue joint fundraising opportunities.
- Maintain issue flexibility.
- Better train staff on RM development approach.

	● Create templates for formalizing relationships.
What does RM look like?	Organizational Structure
	Resource Media is poised for moderate growth to an organization with a budget of $5 million within three to five years. This size will allow us to achieve increased operational efficiencies while growing our capabilities in multi-cultural work, digital communications and narrative development. We will remain housed in dispersed offices. Office expansion, while not a priority in itself, is possible, particularly in the Midwest and Northeast where our work is growing rapidly. We continue to become a more diverse organization, particularly at the staff leadership level.
	Program
	While sustainability and the environment remains our largest issue sector, work in other areas, particularly community health and social justice, continues to grow. We are no longer organized exclusively by issue teams, but instead also have internal units that capture and focus staff expertise on digital media and multi-cultural outreach. We also have more formal partnerships with other organizations that allow us to seamlessly offer a wider array of services. Another key aspect of our work is building the capacity of community level groups without draining their already insufficient resources. This also involves new partnerships and shared fellowships that we are already starting to design. This, combined with our pro bono program allows us to build long-term relationships in diverse communities that we know are critical to increasing our impact. Our approach to narrative and how to measure its evolution and effect has been written up and Resource Media is recognized as a leader in that field.
	Operations
	Operationally, we have more bandwidth to support finance and administration, an accounting platform that better meets our needs and a new approach to cost allocation that allows more flexibility on how we spend our program time.
	Fundraising
	We have completed our transition to value-based pricing. This has required us to gain a much better

	understanding of the market for our services. Most of the growth in our budget has come from sectors outside the environment, most specifically community health, global development and social justice. We have relationships with new (to us) funders in each of these groups driven by annually updated issue-by-issue development plans. Each of these issues has a clear narrative we are trying to support. In the community health sector in particular, local government has become a bigger source of funding.
KEY RISK FACTORS	
Financial	The large fundraising balance we carry into each year can make it difficult to be proactive about the work we take on and makes it intimidating to contemplate growth. We are still reliant on environmental foundations for the biggest slice of our funding.
Operational	Under our current system, growth in operational capacity needs to be supported by commensurate program growth to carry the additional overhead. With high profile hacking, document and communication security is more of a concern and can be expensive to address.
Talent/Human Resources	Top-level talent in both digital and multi-cultural communications is difficult to find and retain.
Compliance	Political changes on the federal level may lead to more scrutiny or even harassment from federal agencies.

MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING	
Key Performance Indicators	- How many projects contain equity/social just goals and/or connect across issue silos? - What is the composition of our staff and board, particularly in leadership levels? - Have we increased our expertise in multi-cultural communications, digital strategies and narrative development? - Have we created an organizational structure that ensures this expertise is available across the breadth of our work? - Have we made enhancements on the operational side that allow us to utilize fund-based accounting to improve our approach to pricing and cost allocation? - What percentage of our work falls outside of traditional environmental advocacy? Has our support for work in health, global development and social justice sectors increased? - Have we grown the Board designated reserve and increased our ability to withstand economic and fundraising downturns? - Have our fellowships and pro bono initiatives led to a broader network of relationships and business opportunities. - Who approaches us for assistance? - Where can we demonstrate lasting capacity we have added to ground-level groups.