



**The Cutting Edge:  
Communication  
Essentials for 21st  
Century  
Foundation, NGO  
and Movement  
Leaders**

## The Cutting Edge: Communication Essentials for 21st Century Foundation, NGO and Movement Leaders

Nonprofit, movement, coalition and foundation leaders and their teams are operating in a hyper-polarized environment. Driving change in tough times requires skilled communicators who can effectively motivate, persuade and influence individuals and communities to take action. Organizations can use communications to create and deepen relationships, set agendas, move solutions, build trust, inspire big change and so much more. To use communications to its full power in polarized times, organizations need to understand how to stay true to their values and also bridge the gap between their base supporters and those potential movement members who may not see themselves as belonging to your movement just yet. To effectively bridge that gap and win on the issues that matter most to you, organizations must embrace not just implementing communications but being a communicating organization.

**What is a communicating organization?** It is one where everyone involved with the organization — from staff to the board to coalition partners — understands that they play a role in communications and know how to play that role well. Communicating organizations have strong external AND internal communication strategies, and both are executed well with feedback loops in place to see where there is room for improvement. The organization spends more time on proactive rather than reactive communications and is able to communicate well in a dynamic environment where change is viewed with a sense of opportunity and strategic pivots are something to look forward to because they build creative muscle.

That is why Spitfire is launching **The Cutting Edge: Communication Essentials for 21st Century Foundation, NGO and Movement Leaders**. The Cutting Edge training curriculum creates communicating organizations, giving everyone from the board to staff the skills they need to use one of an organization's most valuable resources well: its voice. Explore the training options below to find the perfect fit for your needs.



# The Cutting Edge - Spitfire's Training Program for Communicating Leaders

**For organization leaders and board members looking to refine their foundational communication skills, define their organization's voice, and/or navigate sticky and tricky communication challenges.**

Spitfire's The Cutting Edge sessions are designed to provide the communication training, skills and tools needed for foundation and nonprofit communicators to ensure their organization is ahead of the curve and ready for any challenge and opportunity. These quarterly in-person two-day sessions take place across the United States and will take even experienced participants' skills and strategy to the next level. In 2025, Spitfire will host four training modules in different locations around the country. At each location, we will welcome up to 25 organization leaders for a two-day session to focus on a different skill set in each location as outlined below. Each session is tailored to the issues and needs of the specific participants and provides cutting-edge tools and strategies to encourage organizations to be proactive and successful. We will pair each leader with a coach, and they can sign up for just one module or all four.

## Foundational Skills

### March 2025 in Washington, D.C.

*Every organizational leader needs to understand and direct their communication strategy. This Foundational Skills training will focus on developing the skills and strategies to ensure you know where your organization needs to go and that you have the skills to take it there.*

This session starts off with the foundational communications that every organization leader needs to ensure their team has a strong plan and strategy to help them manage the year ahead. This two-day session is designed for organization leaders who want to move their teams from reactive to proactive work. We will start with the most necessary form of communications for a leader: your communication strategy, with the [Smart Chart 4.0®](#). This session ties your organizational strategy to your communication planning and covers narratives, stories, framing and identifying your priority audiences. The second part of the Smart Chart introduces Spitfire's message box to help you tailor messaging that moves audiences. We will draw on Spitfire's recent messaging research and share lessons about how to bridge the gap between our base supporters and those we want to convert to our base but who may not see the connection between your work and their lives. Participants will build their plan as they learn how to use the tool and finish up with the tactics and evaluation needed to ensure the plan is usable and doesn't sit on the shelf. We close the day with individual coaching time to help move the plan forward.

The second day starts with a powerful approach to branding that lifts up your organizational promise. We spend the latter half of the day focused on critical skills and strategies to ensure your organization's internal communications, board engagement and support for communications will set you and your organization up for

success in the coming year. You will leave this session with the foundational skills and plans to give you the edge so that your organization excels as a communicating organization. Spitfire coaches will work with each participant to support their implementation and provide counsel as needed. Each participant will get three coaching hours for support after the session.

## **Your Organization's Voice**

### **June 2025 in San Francisco or Los Angeles**

*Organizational leadership is more than just making smart decisions; it requires smooth media appearances; visionary speeches; and leaders to inspire and engage their staff, communities and potential supporters with powerful stories. This Voice training will focus on writing powerful stories and speeches and then delivering them across your platforms and media and to the audiences that need to hear them most.*

This session is focused on empowering and lifting up a leader's voice for their issue and organization. For an organizational leader to reach and inspire their audiences and bridge to new audiences, they need to create engaging content and deliver it in a meaningful manner. This two-day session is designed for leaders to shape the stories that allow folks to see themselves reflected and learn the most effective channels and skills to deliver them. We will start with the simplest way to connect: your elevator pitch. You will have a chance to hone your pitch skills and meet your fellow participants. From there, participants will map out their organization's content strategy and explore the visual, strategic and data stories they can tell. Once participants have developed their stories, they will build their skills and strategy in delivering them through media interviews and powerful presentations and via their digital platforms. Participants will close this two-day voice session by writing and delivering their visionary speech. You leave this session with the voice skills and strategies to give you the edge. Spitfire coaches will work with each participant to support their implementation and provide counsel as needed. Each participant/organization will get three coaching hours for support after the session.

## **Sticky and Tricky Communications**

### **September 2025 in New York City**

*In today's dynamic communications landscape, successful leaders know that their organization needs to stay ahead of the curve to win. From preventing the opposition from derailing your strategy to strategies to combating disinformation, this Spitfire Sticky and Tricky Communications training will provide leaders with the understanding and strategy needed to lead their organization through the noise, to reach new supporters despite their opposition.*

This session for Sticky and Tricky Communications is designed to equip leaders with the tools, skills and strategies to tackle the newest and most pressing communication challenges and opportunities. Leaders need to be aware of the latest communication tools and changes to help their organization meet the moment. This two-day session is designed for leaders who want to understand and overcome mis- and disinformation with an overview

of the techniques and rhetorical strategies used in social media and news to manipulate audiences and further divide us from each other. Using Spitfire's [Just Truth™](#) guide, we will provide communication strategies including messaging to prevent the impact of disinformation and tackle the oppositional pushback on progressive values and justice, while bridging the gap with those who have yet to join our movements.

We will start the second day with a focus on developing the best-case scenario for your organization in these polarized times with a strategy to get ahead of a polarized media ecosystem and foster productive conversations — not dangerous escalations. From there, participants will learn how to shift to asset framing in their messaging, tell hope-based stories and engage influencers to amplify your issues. We will also cover the questions you need to answer before deciding whether you should use artificial intelligence to create content. You will leave this session with the latest skills and strategies to give you the edge. Spitfire coaches will work with each participant to support their implementation and provide counsel as needed. Each participant/organization will get three coaching hours for support after the session.

## **Heading Off and Navigating Crisis Communication Situations**

### **November 2025 in Chicago**

*The best way for organizations to deal with a crisis or polarizing issues is to be prepared with a solid plan. Organization leaders need to navigate internal and external crises in addition to moving through a polarized landscape impacting their mission, staff and donors. This Navigating Crisis Communication Situations training will provide leaders with the understanding and strategy needed to preserve trust, maintain credibility, and protect the organization's reputation.*

This session for Navigating Crisis Communication Situations is designed to equip leaders with the tools, skills and strategies to prepare for any crisis whether it is internal or external. The best way to deal with crises is having a strategy and plan. This training series will start by using Spitfire's [Smart Plan®](#) to develop your organization's crisis plan and provide leaders with strategies to stay ahead of the conversation. We will walk participants through a scenario-planning exercise and provide a tool on how leaders should decide whether to respond to global or critical local events. The second day will focus on building or restoring trust in the organization. Using Spitfire's [Replenishing Trust™](#) tool, leaders will be able to measure their current trust levels and determine measures to increase it. Once you have a plan for building trust, we will work on your plans to engage the community and create messaging that motivates priority audiences. You will leave this session with the latest skills and strategies that prepare you and your organization for any situation. Spitfire coaches will work with each participant to support their implementation and provide counsel as needed. Each participant/organization will get three coaching hours for support after the session.

## Budget

At each location, we will welcome up to 25 organization leaders for each two-day session in each location as outlined above. Each participant will be paired with a Spitfire coach to support them throughout the training and will receive three hours of additional follow-up coaching to help them put their lessons into action. Breakfast, lunch and beverages will be provided both days. The cost for each two-day session is \$10,000 per participant. Leaders can sign up for all four sessions or just one.

### **Nondisclosure agreement**

*This Proposal is being submitted with the understanding that you agree to the following. Acceptance of the Proposal will signify your agreement. The Proposal contains Confidential Information including but not limited to information, technical data, and know-how relating to strategic communications and campaign planning, training, counseling and the tools to maximize the impact of such communications, and may include written, video or online training materials disclosed by Spitfire in electronic media, in writing, orally or otherwise, all of which is proprietary and protected under this Agreement, the US Copyright and Trademark laws and applicable common law. By accepting this Proposal, you agree not to use Confidential Information for any purpose except to evaluate whether you wish to hire Spitfire for the full development and implementation of the Proposal. Confidential Information that becomes publicly available other than as a result of your acts or was in your possession prior to the disclosure by Spitfire, or becomes available to you from a source that, to your knowledge, is not bound by a confidentiality agreement with Spitfire prohibiting such disclosure, shall no longer be considered to be Confidential Information. All Confidential Information furnished to you shall remain the property of Spitfire and nothing contained herein shall be construed as giving you any license or rights with respect to any Confidential Information or materials except as otherwise agreed by the parties in a definitive agreement. The restrictions and remedies contained in this Agreement will survive any termination of the negotiations relating to the contract.*