

PENELOPE BURK - biography

Author, trainer, presenter and President of Cygnus Applied Research, Inc.

Penelope Burk has over forty years of experience in not-for-profit management, fundraising, and research. A native of Montreal, Canada, Penelope began her professional career in market research, public relations and fundraising, becoming known as a “turn-around specialist” who advocates innovative solutions to improve revenue and institutional performance.

Penelope and her company, Cygnus Applied Research, Inc., are known for their leading-edge research with donors and their skill in helping clients adapt their fundraising operations to reflect donors’ changing needs and preferences.

Penelope’s innovative work, her advocacy for donors, and her passion for the philanthropic spirit led, in 2003, to the publication of her second book, ***Donor-Centered Fundraising***. This best-selling text established her as the industry’s foremost authority on fundraising research, training and strategic planning based on the principles of Donor-Centered Fundraising. The book is the only statistically-based research ever published on the effect of meaningful communication on donor retention and gift value.

Last year, Penelope published ***Donor-Centered Leadership***, which focuses on making more money by building and sustaining a high performance staff/volunteer team in fundraising. Informed by five years of research with 12,000 professional fundraisers, CEOs, Board members and Donors, ***Donor-Centered Leadership*** tackles one of the most frustrating and costly problems in fundraising (and in business) today -- the high turnover rate of staff. The book has been hailed as "timely, transformational and totally essential".

Penelope authors the industry-acclaimed ***Cygnus Donor Survey*** that investigates how donors are changing the ways in which they give and how fundraisers can raise more money in a rapidly changing marketplace.

Penelope Burk is a highly sought-after educator and public speaker whose training sessions and forums are widely acclaimed as unique, engaging and among the most effective in the third sector. She has written more than sixty seminars, training programs and dramatic plays, all written specifically for not-for-profit organizations.



ABOUT CYGNUS APPLIED RESEARCH, INC.

Founded by Penelope Burk, Cygnus Applied Research, Inc. is an international firm of senior fundraising consultants providing strategic advice and research services to the not-for-profit sector. With offices in the US, UK and Canada, Cygnus is recognized as the innovator of one of the most important modern-day fundraising philosophies, Donor-Centered Fundraising, and for leading-edge research that has transformed stewardship, donor relations and fundraising management.

Cygnus boasts two decades of uncompromising service to some of the most recognizable organizations around the world, led by an international team of senior consultants providing expertise in fundraising, marketing, planning, communication and leadership.

Cygnus Applied Research is an acknowledged expert on donor research and fundraising/stewardship strategy, and our staff frequently headline national, international and regional industry conferences.