

Marketing Minute ~
Marketing for Non Profit Organizations
Some Basics, and My Best Recommendation ~ Social Media

Marketing is an unfamiliar concept for many non-profit organizations. It's important that these organizations understand that marketing is more than just the old sense of making a sale or obtaining a donation. The main thing you need to remember is that many of the same basic profit business and marketing techniques and strategies also apply to a non-profit business. Marketing is a way to satisfy the consumer and donor needs, but where does the non-profit organization start? Here are a few steps that will get you started in marketing ideas that could make a significant difference in the bottom-line of your organization.

- 1) Define your target market(s), research similar organizations and associations.
- 2) Determine the desired outcome of your marketing efforts - your goals.
- 3) Using the information from #1 and #2 above, develop brochures and other marketing materials that describe the benefits, services, donation opportunities, and values of your organization.
- 4) Develop a social media marketing strategy.* Social media such as Twitter and Facebook can provide you with ways to reach out to those interested in your organization in a low-cost and effective way. Consider building your own blog to provide a two-way conversation opportunity with others interested in the same causes that you have. Social media works great when it comes to reaching those who are passionate about causes that individuals hold dear to their hearts.
- 5) Develop and maintain a professional internet marketing presence by creating a website. You can use a website as a great resource to display useful information, news, monthly newsletters, events, create a community (as with a blog), share alternatives to donating money, and showcase the benefits of your organization.
- 6) Research and maintain your prospect and customer databases. Do not let these resources be wasted nor forgotten. Use them for special mailings, follow-up telephone calls, event invitations, alliance development, research profiling, and market segmentation.
- 7) Show and advertise the results and objectives that your organization achieves. You will find that it is effective to showcase those who are receiving benefits, inventions, activities, and projects.
- 8) Always actively search for alliances with other organizations, commerce, government, advertising media, and business. This step alone often brings the most benefit to non-profit organizations.

My best recommendation - Social Media Marketing *

Social media marketing consists of the attempt to use social media to persuade consumers that one's company, products and/or services are worthwhile. Businesses using social media want to sell their products or services, but need to be perceived as members of the social media community, willing to interact with other members. This two-way 'conversation' results in higher rate of results and interest than 'blatant sales' techniques. Many businesses today are finding that they benefit from social media marketing, because it enhances their image of customer service by finding out what their customers are thinking and saying about them and what they really need from them. This is at the heart of successful marketing, something that today we call Relationship Marketing.

Social media gives you a voice and a way to communicate also with peers as well as customers and potential consumers. It personalizes your brand and helps you to spread your message in a relaxed and conversational way.

Wells Fargo was one of the first to take advantage of new electronic marketing, such as blogging. The company was founded in 1852. They launched their first blog called Guided by History in March 2006. It originally was meant to be a temporary blog, as it was launched to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, which were important parts of Wells Fargo's history. But the blog was so successful, the company decided to keep and expand it. The company also launched a virtual game called Stagecoach Island. Later in the same year, Wells Fargo added the Stagecoach Island Community Site and Blog, where players could give feedback, chat and share pictures and set up real-time events. Then, Wells Fargo launched a MySpace page in early 2008. What Wells Fargo learned from all of this online marketing activity is that they suggest that every financial institution should have a blog with an RSS Feed, even if it just disseminates press releases and other company-approved messages. It shows that the company cares about publishing information in user-friendly formats.

Other businesses have become successfully involved in social media. **BMW** utilizes Facebook to promote their 1-Series Road Trip and they have created a Rampenfest Page for fans. **Dunkin Donuts** have found value in social media and have set up a Twitter account. And our **President Barack Obama** was a leader in the use of Twitter during the Presidential election. He has over 170,000 followers and is following over 165,000. And what about non-profit organizations? Oh, yes, many have begun incorporating social media marketing into their campaigns, such as **Goodwill Industries**.

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What role should social media marketing play in your marketing? If you are a non-profit organization and you have not adopted social media marketing, it's time you put it in your strategy as soon as possible. In a time when donations are down and fundraising is difficult, why not try it?

Non-profit organizations actually have been setting the pace for the use of social media in marketing since 2007. Why? It's easy. Social media is a cost-effective option for non-profit organizations to market themselves without needing an exorbitant amount of funding. An updated study showed that even today 89% of charitable organizations are using some form of social media in their marketing. This includes the use of blogging, podcasting, message boards, social networking, video blogging, and wikis. Consider this - more than 45% of these organizations stated that social media played a very important role in their fundraising strategy.

There are many benefits to social media marketing for non-profits, such as:

- Stakeholders take an interest in causes that relate to them and social mediums create an overall integrated experience with those very same stakeholders.
- Additionally, social mediums enable non-profit organizations to create relationships and engage with their constituents. This allows them to nurture their online communities which, in fact, creates a viral marketing effect with little or no effort. And the costs associated with this marketing effort are often less expensive with better return-on-investment than traditional marketing efforts.
- The realm of social media helps equip organizations with an outlet and tool to help in growing their business, as well as enabling individuals who have a specific interest in a charitable organization and who want to share it broadly.

As a non-profit organization, it's important to take the proper steps when delving into social mediums which have proven to be beneficial to many other organizations. Where do you start? You must create a plan, as well as a social media policy. It is important when entering into social media that if you decide to do it internally, you'll want to create a social media policy and a marketing plan to uphold the core principles of your organization. Decide who will be your spokesperson, the voice of your organization. Will that voice be personal or professional, what would that split look like? Who will be in charge of responding to conversation and social media buzz that is created? Who will monitor the effects? How will you protect your brand? Which vehicles in social media would you use?

Your policy must be clearly written and easy for everyone within the organization to understand. Your strategy must identify what tools you will use and how they will be used. You will also want to identify who is responsible for answering conversations and participating in the social media venues. The worst thing that could happen is that you start a social media marketing campaign, but do not interact or engage with the community that develops. Make sure to use social media to enhance your business and marketing strategy and the results might surprise you!

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