

Boards 2.0 – September 2007

Our Fridays 2.0 sessions continue to fill the training room at TLD, 303 N Alabama, Suite 250. Come see the expanded space on October 12, 2007 from 8:30am-10:30am and join the team from marketing firm 360 and some of their local nonprofit clients to discuss Branding and Marketing. There is a \$5 charge for refreshments and handouts. Register for the October 12 session at Amanda@LeadershipVentures.org .

This month's theme was inspired by the branding Leadership Ventures (formerly Trustee Leadership Development, Inc.) has undergone over the past six months. To learn more about this bold new venture in leadership, visit www.leadershipventures.org .

Marketing for Nonprofits

(Easier than it seems, and more essential than ever.)

Nobody said running a nonprofit, as a board member or executive director, would be easy. Take marketing, for example. As a nonprofit, you face a far more daunting task than your for-profit counterparts. After all, the media landscape isn't any less cluttered or congested just because you don't have a king's ransom to draw from to break through.

This shouldn't stop you from trying, however. The fact is, nonprofits have plenty to gain from marketing, and marketing aggressively. For starters, they are competing for the same dollars as other nonprofits – and, in some instances, for-profits. What determines where these discretionary dollars are spent? In effect, the nonprofit that markets the most effectively receives the biggest share.

Once you've settled upon the need to market (see below for some resources), you'll need a plan. A basic rule of thumb is this: It's worth the extra time it takes to be clear about your mission and your objectives, so you can design your integrated marketing effort accordingly.

Of course, your mission depends largely on your organization. If you're competing with a for-profit for "customers," your mission might be to illustrate points of differentiation. If you have a unique service to offer, it might be to draw attention to this fact. If you're an arts organization or a community-oriented media outlet, it might be to build an audience and keep it. This is a key role for the board to play in any marketing effort. Reviewing and honing the mission of the organization and figuring out what the organization provides that no one else can will allow your marketing to become focused.

The next step is to develop a strategic marketing plan. Essentially, the marketing plan is the blueprint on which everything else is built. It may include a new or

updated identity (name, logo, etc). It may include an aggressive PR plan or a targeted online initiative. It should all stem from and refer back to your organization's defining mission. The biggest point of all is this: Without a plan, valuable dollars will invariably be wasted. This can be a role for staff but also for a committee. The board needs to be aware of the plan and provide the support for it to flourish.

Sticking with the plan once it's established may be the most important point of all. No campaign that is rolled out today will be successful if it is changed tomorrow.

Finally, a word on staffing: Depending on the size of your nonprofit, you may need an employee dedicated to marketing. The advantage of this, of course, is having a single individual whose sole focus is getting your message out in the most effective way possible.

On the other hand, and it may sound self-serving for a marketing professional to say so, but a second option is to partner with a firm that can help achieve these communications goals for you. You'll benefit from their concentrated expertise, as well as from the relationships they have already built within the industry. It's difficult to go it alone, even with a talented marketing professional on staff. An agency partnership gives you access to writers, designers, and media consultants than can help shape your message and sort out the countless outlets you have at your disposal to disseminate it. You'll also have more dollars that can go directly into making an impact. No small consideration in today's media saturated world.

Article written by 360- an integrated marketing firm

To learn more about what marketing entails and for some free checklists and resources, visit:

<http://www.managementhelp.org/mrktng/mrktng.htm>

Marketing Quick Tips from www.indycauseconnection.org

Take all of your current promotional pieces and lay them out on the table. Bring up your website. Do your pieces have the same feel? Do they all look like they've come from the same organization?

Always remember that you are working to establish a brand. You want to be not only recognizable, but also memorable.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

Use new technology. Try it. It's fun, and it has a lot of power.

- If you don't ask, you don't get. Just ask.

- Always be promoting your next event to ensure that you have a year-round presence. How are you keeping your organization or cause top of mind?
- If you've received a donation in the form of creative assistance or promotional materials, indicate that on your promotional piece. Your donors want to know that you are giving the most money possible to the cause. This is also good for the donor.
- Find your unique selling point or what makes your organization different from others. Sell that. Spread that.
- Consider printing on the blank side of national promotional pieces. This can be very cost-effective.
- Before you create a promotional piece or begin to market, think about what your goal is for the piece. What is it intended to do? Who are you communicating with? Understand your target demographic and be sure you know how to reach them. You don't just want a piece that looks pretty, you want an effective communication tool.
- Join hands. Join forces. Partner.
- Constantly size up your needs.
- Think about what activities/events the organization has during the course of a year. Create a calendar. Think about how you will promote those events. As much as you can, schedule out the marketing & public relations efforts related to them. You are doing great things. Don't forget to share them with people!
- Train more than one person! Don't create something that only one person knows how to manage. Make sure a few people have at least a basic understanding of what is being done.
- Make your results visible! Show your donors and your volunteers what is happening as a result of their donations of time and money.
- Think of your marketing efforts in a pyramid form. You have to have a stable base to build upward. Don't jump levels too quick. Be sure that your communication is clear on the basic level before expanding your efforts.