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Marketing & Management Consultation

Does Marketing Matter for Nonprofits?

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As a non-profit, your organization is helping to change hundreds, thousands or even millions of lives each year. People should be beating a trail to your door to help support such a worthwhile cause. So why worry about marketing? Isn't that just another way to spell Public Relations?

The reality, of course, is quite different. The non-profit marketplace is crowded, and the role of different organizations is often unclear. You may work in partnership with a group one week, and compete for the same donor dollar or grant opportunity the next. Cooperation has evolved into "coopetition," and the role of marketing has in fact become more important.

Marketing encompasses all of the elements required to build the strategy around the organization's purpose, identify potential supporters and develop effective ways to communicate your message.

Whether dealing with a national, billion-dollar non-profit or a citywide group struggling to break six figures, three areas always deserve ongoing attention:

Clarify your Brand

Chances are other groups work in similar spheres of influence. Make it easy for people to understand why they should support you. Don't make the mistake of believing that adding to your services or programs will generate more support. The more cluttered your offering is, the less likely people are to "get it" and support it. Prioritize your efforts.

Expand the Funnel of Supporters

Awareness alone doesn't translate into money or time. Engagement does. Don't be the wallflower – find ways to get people involved in your organization at any level (volunteers, donors, participants, etc.) so they can see the difference you're making. Identify current supporters and find a way to expand that circle. Move people along the 'engagement curve': Apathy – Attention – Action – Advocacy.

Communicate a Sense of Urgency

Supporters act based on two key variables – agreement with your mission and belief that their support makes a difference. Supporters want to have an impact; people gave during Katrina & the Tsunami in record numbers because they felt they were needed. Don't create false deadlines – that misses the point. Instead, help people to realize their support can have an immediate impact. Give them a clear call to action.

Obstacles to implementation always exist. Time, resources and staff are continually stretched. Even so, don't wait to move forward. Marketing does matter, and developing effective strategies will ensure that your organization can increase its stability and sustainability.

Want to know more? Contact Reji Puthenveetil at reji@groupnewhouse.com or call 919-845-3282.

Reji Puthenveetil is founder and President of Group Newhouse, a marketing and management consulting firm that helps organizations understand what truly drives the customer decision process and how that intelligence can be used to build engagement, generate loyalty, and drive revenue. groupnewhouse.com