



ADVANCED NONPROFIT MARKETING STRATEGIES

6 ways to build your nonprofit brand

1. Know Your Audience

How well do you know the audience(s) most critical to your success?

What are the triggers—emotional and other—that make them most likely to act in the manner you desire? Having a firm grasp on your audience allows you to target your brand for maximum effect.

Research and outreach efforts yield big returns if done properly.

2. Own an Idea

When you hear “Volvo,” you think “safety.” When you hear “Apple,” you think “cool, innovative products.” When you see the Salvation Army, uniforms and coin pot.” The main goal of branding is to own an idea—the simpler the better—in the minds of your audience. What’s your unique “promise of value” to your audience(s)?

3. Sharpen Your Focus

If you’re seen as a jack-of-all-trades, you’re also seen as a master of none. The simpler and more straightforward the scope of your organization, the greater the strength of your brand and your ability to “own the idea.” The more you have to say, the less likely anyone will take the time to truly understand.

4. Pave the Way

Nonprofit organizations often have similar missions, particularly as seen by those in the donor community who must choose among a multitude of worthy causes. With so much competition for dollars, it’s critical to differentiate your organization through a claim of leadership. Have you pioneered a new approach? Are you the first, most-qualified, largest, or only group that does what you do?

5. Walk It Like You Talk It

So now that you have your brand message together—decided on the idea you want to own, sharpened your focus, defined your leadership—do your actions match your words? Your brand is your promise: every interaction your audience has with your organization—from the way the phone is answered to the way that correspondence is handled—must live up to that promise. Conduct an image audit, examining what people see, are the graphics and message consistent?

6. Say It Again . . . and Again

Building a brand is like getting a child to follow instructions: you have to say it over and over until the message sinks in. Consistency and persistency are the keys to having your brand message heard above the noise. If asked, would everyone in your organization describe it in the same way? Are you taking advantage of every opportunity to get your message “out there?” And if so, does the message remain the same from week-to-week, month-to-month, year-to-year, and employee-to-employee?

Just about the time you are really bored with what you are saying is about the time the image is just starting to be recognized by your target audiences—stick with it, don’t junk it otherwise you will start all over again.

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