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**How to Do Well by Doing Good: Generating Traffic And Profits Through Charity Projects And Community Involvement**

**By George McKenzie**

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You've heard the saying a gazillion times:

"Charity begins at home."

But in this age of mass media, charity that begins at home can also proceed straight to your bottom line—by generating traffic to your web site or your business.

And best of all, the mass media—especially the news media— are ready, willing, and more than able to partner with you.

Charity events and stories about community involvement appeal to the media for a couple of reasons.

1. They're very sensitive to criticism that "You only want to show bad news," and will make every effort to show uplifting, positive stories whenever possible.
2. It's in their best interest to build goodwill by taking part in community events.
3. In the case of radio and TV stations, they MUST show that they're serving the community. Otherwise, their FCC license would be in jeopardy.

4. For the most part (there are exceptions), they're good-hearted people who WANT to help others.

So, when you want to generate new traffic or more traffic to your business or web site, consider hosting a fundraiser for a charity or community organization. Let the media know you're involved through a news release. It's often a good idea to ask a high profile person from the media to be your honorary chairperson.

Also, if possible, offer the media a story about someone who has benefited from the charity. If you can "humanize" the work the charity is doing, "put a human

face on it" so to speak, your chances of getting coverage (that is, publicity), will skyrocket.

And don't forget to look for opportunities to pre-publicize your event, especially on radio talk shows.

Fundraisers and events that benefit the community amount to a win-win-win situation. Obviously, the charity gets money and attention to their cause, the station or newspaper gets points for its community spirit, and you get publicity that would have cost you thousands of dollars if you had to pay for it.

Early in my radio career, one of my friends used to sign off his show every day by telling his listeners this:

"Remember, do good and you'll always do well."

It's true in life. It's especially true when you want to get free publicity in the media.

## **Marketing For Just Cause**

**By Harry Hoover**

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Cause marketing is a relationship between a for-profit and a nonprofit that brings in money and resources for the nonprofit, while providing credibility and goodwill for the business.

According to the IEG Sponsorship Report, this category grew to \$733 million in the US in 2001. There are a number of reasons for that growth. A Cone Communications survey found that:

- 80 percent of Americans have a more positive image of companies that support a cause they care about
- nearly two-thirds of Americans say they would likely switch brands or retailers to one associated with a good cause
- more than half said they would pay more for a cause marketer's products or services
- 87 percent of employees at organizations with a cause marketing program feel a strong sense of loyalty to their company as opposed to 67 percent of those at companies that do not support causes

As you can see, adopting good causes can be beneficial, but your company's involvement should be planned just as you plan any other business activity. Here are five steps to developing an effective cause marketing program.

**Choose Your Cause Strategically.** Search for a single charitable cause that you and your employees can believe in, as well as one that helps advance your business objectives. For instance, a company may choose an educational cause to ensure it has a continuing pool of well-educated workers. Many companies seek issues that align with their products, services or geographic service area. Others look for issues that resonate with niche audiences or that differentiate them in the marketplace. You may want to consider choosing an emerging issue. This way, your company will be a pioneer rather than just another in a list of companies.

**Perform Due Diligence.** Once you have identified the cause, check out the individual charities involved in that cause just as you would any other strategic ally. Do they deserve your support? What is their public perception? Are they well run? What are their objectives, goals, successes and failures? Who are their executives and board members? Do they have any complaints lodged against them? How much of their money goes to salaries and overhead and how much actually gets to those it serves? Are they capable of helping you access intended target markets? Below is a link to a site that helps you evaluate charities. <http://www.give.org/index.asp>

**Establish Goals.** Now that you have selected your charity, determine what it is you want to accomplish with your involvement from a business perspective. There are tangible and intangible goals you can reach through cause marketing. Are you looking for networking opportunities at the board or donor level? Do you want to raise your business' profile through publicity about your involvement? Are you trying to build employee or customer loyalty? Or, do you just want to shore up support in your home community? Set your goals and then you can determine what resources, both time and money, to budget for the cause.

**Dive In.** Although writing a check to the cause will help, this should not be the extent of your participation. Choose a single cause and maintain a focused campaign that integrates the cause into the very fabric of your organization. Look at other ways to expand your involvement. Serve on the board. Become a volunteer for your selected cause. Encourage employees to get involved in projects with the selected charity. Give them a "charitable time" budget each month that lets them use business hours to perform their service with your chosen cause. Strategic allies and even customers may want to be involved if you have selected your cause wisely.

Communicate. Develop a simple, direct and compelling message that not only explains the cause but the reason your company is involved. Explain how purchases - if part of the program - are directed into the cause and how that contribution will affect it. Then, promote the cause in customer mailings and in your advertising. Create joint events with your nonprofit partner to attract customers, prospects and media coverage.

Selecting and supporting the right cause for your company can build profit, brand equity, as well as employee and customer loyalty, while improving the world. So, what could be better than that?



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