

The Extreme Fundraising Ezine, Vol. II Issue 3

"Creating Donor Evangelists: Creating Community"

Welcome to Extreme Fundraising! We're currently in the middle of our "Creating Donor Evangelists" series based on Jackie Huba and Ben McConnell's incredible book "Creating Customer Evangelists."

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I. Creating Donor Evangelists: Create Community

I'm increasingly convinced that nonprofits are way ahead of businesses when it comes to treating people as people and developing relationships with them. It's ironic that as we in the nonprofit world strive to become more business-like in measuring our results, so many of nonprofits are putting donor relations and alumni relations in the back seat. We seem to be totally unaware of losing our competitive advantage--the relationships with the donors that brought us to where we are today!

I'm writing this series to question that assumption. For our new subscribers, this series was inspired by an almost off-hand quote in the book "First Break all the Rules." If you need to catch up, the earlier issues can be found in the archives in the ezine section of the website <http://fundraisingcoach.com/>.

As a reminder, Huba and McConnell's six themes are:

1. Customer Plus-Delta: Understanding the Love
2. Napsterize Your Knowledge: Give to Receive
3. Build the Buzz: Spreading the Word
4. Create Community: Bringing Customers Together
5. Bite-Size Chunks: From Sampling to Evangelism
6. Create a Cause: When Business is Good

Today we'll explore number 4: Create Community.

BRINGING DONORS TOGETHER

Fortunately, whether conducting homecoming, alumni regional events, cocktail parties, or silent auctions, nonprofits tend to be good at bringing donors together. Since much of this step is review for us, I'll list the types of communities mentioned by Huba and McConnell without

explanation. I'll finish by highlighting some of their suggestions "putting people in your marketing."

Huba and McConnell explore the following methods for bringing customers together:

- in-person events
- clubs
- user groups
- online bulletin boards
- e-mail discussion groups
- e-mail newsletters
- fan web sites

Even as I typed their list, "fan websites" jumped out at me. Wouldn't it be cool if nonprofits started using marketing strategies like Lucasfilm and the folks behind the recent Lord of the Rings movies? They feed information to fan sites and make them a sort of "inner circle." How cool would it be if our donors were so psyched about us that they put up web pages bragging about our work?!

PUTTING PEOPLE IN OUR MARKETING

Huba and McConnell point out that communities are made of people so creating them requires a personal touch. Below are some of the ways they suggest for ramping up that personal touch. As usual, I've tweaked the wording to fit nonprofits.

1. Dump the stock photography.

Your nonprofit isn't stock, so why should your pictures be? Why not profile pictures of donors on your home page with one or two sentence blurbs about why they love you?

2. Feature your super-satisfied customers in your advertising.

If you've gone through the effort of #1, why not use those photos and testimonials in the rest of your advertising? Whom would you be more likely to believe: an employee or a satisfied donor?

3. Make contact information for your key people easily available on your web site.

This is so important. I'm shocked by how many nonprofits don't make their address and telephone number easy to find! To my knowledge, hiding has never been effective in fundraising. Let people know how to find you. Better still, let them know how to contact the head or executive director and all the department heads. Not many will really use the information but putting it there shows how committed the nonprofit is to being personable.

4. Give your business cards a face.

I have a hard time with this...it seems cheesy to me. But Huba and McConnell claim it will help people put a face to the name the next time they see you.

5. Feature portraits and bios of your company people on your web site.

This makes sense to me too. Parents and prospective students want to know who'll be teaching their kids. Donors want to feel some connection with the people on staff. Portraits and bios are an easy way to facilitate that.

6. Develop donor case studies.

Huba and McConnell say this is an effective way to prove your organization is helping solve problems. They advise not quoting project managers but satisfied customers. Which residents are pleased as punch with the results from the work of the local land trust? Who credits the school with turning them around? Which of your patients are thrilled with the care they received at your hospital? Write it up and brag about it wherever you go!

7. Humanize your company's e-mail correspondence.

The authors are so good on this point that I'll quote them directly: "Adopt a more casual conversational style of writing. Correspondence should come from a real person, not 'The Management.' If you send e-mail, avoid the dreaded 'Please do not reply to this e-mail.' If companies don't want people to reply to e-mail, they shouldn't send it in the first place."

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

What can you do this week to make your nonprofit more human? Also, what can you do to creatively and effectively bring donors together? Let me know your creative ideas by replying to this message or emailing me at: marc@fundraisingcoach.com.

II. Marc's new seminar

"How to Ask for Money Effectively - Top Mistakes People Make When Fundraising"

In this brand new three hour seminar, I'll give

- * the 6 most common mistakes people make in asking for money
- * 3 incredibly effective tools for crafting your message
- * and the "Get R.E.A.L." approach to making the ask

The seminar is on Feb 11, Wed, 8:30-11:30 a.m. and costs \$55. For more information or to register, call 1-800-891-2002 x280 or go to: <http://www.cmcc.edu/training/Money.htm>

III. Goals Program Reminder

The Goals Program continues to be a hit! "Challenging" and "clarifying," people are saying it helps them focus on what matters most to them.

Now I'm being asked to walk teams through the process! If you're interested in learning more about applying this process to teams and departments, reply to this email. To subscribe to the Pitman Coaching Goals Program go to the ezine section at (<http://fundraisingcoach.com>).

To your extreme fundraising success!

Marc

PS When I received a copy of the last Extreme Fundraising I realized how LONG these are getting. Hang in there, the "donor evangelist" series is rapidly approaching an end. After that, I'll try to rein in the length. Be watching your email for an announcement of an Extreme Fundraising Ezine "reader's poll."

Marc A. Pitman is an executive coach to nonprofit leaders. An expert in helping people identify their natural abilities, he's committed to providing down-to-earth information that will decrease stress and put the "fun" back into fundraising!

The Extreme Fundraising Ezine is a complimentary newsletter of The Fundraising Coach <http://fundraisingcoach.com>. Feel free to pass it on!

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