

Non-Profit Marketing Strategies to Increase Membership and Member Involvement

Key Takeaways from Our Recent Fineline University

Membership and member involvement is the goal, but when you consider how many messages and stimuli people are exposed to every day, the reality of the situation sinks in: your message may be lost in the shuffle. The following are some relatively simple things a non-profit organization can do to stay ahead of the pack.

Blogging

Blogging, which isn't an easy habit to get into, is a relatively easy method of drawing traffic to your site. Unfortunately, the results are not always immediate and we are often left thinking: why did I spend my time on this, who is really going to read this, and what is so beneficial about my blog? If you don't see a difference right away, don't give up. It will often take six to eight months before a noticeable increase in website traffic occurs. The most important thing you can do to be successful is to be committed.

Benefits of blogging also include keeping you updated on the latest trends in your industry, keeping your website updated, strengthening your credibility, and expanding your reach in the community. Remember to keep the content fresh and relevant with a creative and interesting headline to grab your audience's attention. If you do these things, it should pay off.

Fundraising

Fundraising strategies are relatively straightforward when the economy is running smoothly. But when the competition for those funds heats up, it's time to rethink how we do things and actually revisit the fundamentals with extra vigor. It is essential to increase and maintain a working list of donors and/or a list of connections to potential donors. There are two underutilized avenues for achieving this: your vendors and your board of directors. By virtue of their positions, they are poised to help and both have access to a wide variety of connections you may not have considered. Be sure to utilize them and all they have to offer.

Once you have your list of prospective donors, call on them weekly. This does not mean to bombard your potential donors for requests; instead focus on maintaining an active relationship with them. And remember, a "no" does not necessarily mean "leave me alone;" it likely means "not right now."

Direct Mail Campaigns

In today's electronic age, direct mail is often considered behind the times. However, it is a proven fact that consumers are more likely to visit and participate on your site with a mailed piece in their hand. And, 14.2% of prospects visiting a website are there because they received a mailer, while only 1.5% of prospects visit because of an email.

However, a direct mailer is only as successful as you make it. You should constantly update your database. Make sure your list has been checked against the NCOA (National Change of Address) service in the past 95 days to save on wasted postage to bad addresses. Your mail provider will do this for you. You should also contact your vendor to make sure your piece is "mail-able". This will also save you time and money.

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Non-Profit Marketing Strategies

Another way to ensure success with your next mailer is by updating the content to be engaging and relevant. By updating your mailer's graphics, you have given your audience a fresh message that will engage them all over again. Consider using a large postcard instead of an envelope on your next mailer. Something like a large postcard might be more expensive to design or produce, but it will grab your audience's attention and pay off in the long run.

Cross Media Campaigns

Finally, utilizing cross media strategies, such as personalized urls (PURLs), will engage your audience in your message. Campaigns involving PURLs will stand out from the crowd because you have just customized each piece to each individual in your audience. And by directing your prospects to your landing page through a direct mailer, you can track who is interested and who participated in your campaign. Direct mail that integrates with your campaign's landing page is statistically proven to give you a higher response rate and return on investment.

No matter what marketing strategies you implement, always remember to keep the content relevant, valuable, engaging, and repetitive. If you follow these basic criteria, you will see an increase in membership and member involvement within your organization.



Our Presenters

Raquel Richardson
Principal
Silver Square
Topic: Blogging

Raquel Richardson has 12 years of experience in the non-profit industry working with clients such as the Indiana State Department of Agriculture. She has served on multiple boards, including the Noblesville Boys and Girls Club.

Jessica White
President
Jessica White & Associates
Topic: Fundraising

White has more than 28 years of experience in all facets of fundraising. Prior to establishing her private consulting firm, she served as Director of Development for The Children's Museum of Indianapolis.

Dana Foster
Direct Mail Specialist
USPS
Topic: 2010 Direct Mail Essentials

Foster has more than 20 years of experience with the United States Postal Service and has worked in many cross-functional departments across the country from advertising to distribution operations and is a certified training consultant.

Josh Driver
Sales & Marketing Director
JFM Concepts
Topic: Cross Media Campaigns

Drivers has extensive experience in developing marketing campaigns for domestic and international clients, such as Home Depot, utilizing social media, personalized URLs, and cross media strategies.

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