

# **Strategic Marketing Planning for Non-Profit Organizations**

## **1. Introduction to Strategic Marketing Planning**

Non-profit organizations are constantly looking for ways to increase their exposure and the funding they bring in to enhance the effectiveness and outcomes of their programs. Adopting for-profit marketing principles and approaches has proven quite effective in increasing the mission-based work of non-profit organizations. Successful marketing has the potential to be a strategic weapon for transformation that enables an organization to achieve its mission and maximize the impact it can make. The essence of achieving the potential for success is strategic marketing planning. Marketing includes, but is not completely represented in, public relations, advertising, direct mail, promotion, publicity, and the internet. Furthermore, the tenets of marketing are built upon several principles and processes that operate in the context of a strategic marketing plan. This information is presented assuming a limited knowledge of marketing principles and includes specific information about the ways in which the principles need not be adapted for marketing non-profit organizations.

Strategic marketing planning is a process that starts with understanding who an organization's stakeholders are and listening to them. It is a plan that takes into account the problems and opportunities an organization faces, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of an organization's internal environment. It utilizes this information to create marketing objectives and strategies that result in a plan that puts a consumer advocate perspective first and positions and/or packages an organization's programs or services to meet and exceed the expectations of an organization's stakeholders in a competitive service delivery market. Non-profit organizations seeking marketing and strategic marketing principles can use this report to understand how and where traditional principles must be adapted when considering the various non-profit MVFAs presented. A marketing plan or marketing strategy is a plan built on a philosophy that consists of two main ideas that are necessary for the marketing concept: understanding of the market or markets in which an organization is trying to deliver services, information, and/or products to

their customers and the use of a consumer advocate model. As a result, a marketing plan must address the four or eight key marketing principles or marketing management process components, including: A. Understanding the Situation B. Market Analysis C. Competitive Analysis D. Assessment of Consumer's Willingness to Use the Product or Service E. Developing Marketing Objectives and Strategies F. Understanding the Organizational Environment G. SWOT Analysis H. Applying the Marketing Mix of Price, Product, Place, and Promotion.

## **2. Understanding Non-Profit Organizations**

For-profit business enterprises and non-profit organizations are typically distinguished by their extent of operation and establishment. While business entities exist to make a profit, regardless of the size of activities, non-profit institutions are established from the standpoint of benefits to society and engage in various activities to achieve such objectives. Both entities can be contrasted based on many aspects such as founders, organizational goals, extent of operations, particularly tax incentives, and profit sharing in the case of businesses. Thus, in a non-profit organization, the members cannot share the profit earned by the organization. Income earned does not go to the employees or members who handle the organization; it is distributed in pursuing the mission of the organization – providing services that are desired in the market or redistributing income in a more equitable way than it would be distributed in the market, promoting specific ethical codes or practices, etc.

Non-profit organizations include a great variety of types and a range of sizes from local volunteer efforts that typically have no formal organizational structure to well-known national entities. Popular types of non-profit organizations that could use strategic marketing management are: Associations, Charities, Cooperatives, Employment/labor service entities, Faith-based organizations, Foundations, Fraternities/sororities, Independent living homes, Political/lobbying/advocacy organizations, Service organizations, such as shelters or relief organizations, Social clubs or associations, Youth programs or associations. These organizations exist to serve the public interest, to improve the quality of life of specific groups of people, or to correct a disparaging situation of some sort. The non-profit status is earned by an organization whose entire financial effort is expended in doing this. These organizations have no stockholders or claimants to any earnings or property. They are usually regulated by a board of trustees/directors who are uncompensated, and they decide policy and expenditures by adapting written bylaws, guidelines, etc. to

keep in mind the mission of the organization. These institutions also employ all stakeholders; these are the entities that use the services or programs to greater or lesser degrees. These include donors, volunteers, and the people who benefit most from the mission of the organization, etc. These organizations rely on grants, donations, sometimes service income, endowments, etc. to survive and accomplish their mission statement. These types of organizations also give freely of their knowledge and skills to help their clients become more integrated into their community and to share their skills with others. For the competitive advantage of non-profit organizations through using strategic marketing activities, the complete picture of these organizations is necessary for better achievement in the strategic marketing that will be discussed.

### **3. Strategic Planning Process for Non-Profit Organizations**

The strategic planning process for non-profit organizations is based on the basic principles that guide such entities: missions, visions, and values. The strategic goals are launched under this umbrella, and the decisions, plans, implementation, and monitoring of the marketing actions of these entities are carried out in alignment with the mission of the organization. The strategic planning for marketing will consist of the following components: strategies, analysis, programs, and planning.

In the first component, it is essential to base decision-making on the identification of the mission or task of the business. Within the institutional framework, the mission describes the organization's reason for being and the criteria a business uses to make its decisions. In order for the mission to be useful in managing a business, it has to provide a clear understanding of what a business aspires to in achieving its vision, and the values and policies that guide employees to achieve the vision. This will guide decisions and behavior, at the same time offering objectives that encourage employees to think about where their business is heading and how to get there.

The marketing objectives are derived from the strategic goals and are concerned with the performance of the institution. In the third type of decisions for non-profit organizations, marketing decisions should be directed to the identification of the target audience. When the beneficiaries are monitored and identified, marketing strategies of differentiation and placement are of significant importance to non-profit organizations because they allow them to stand out from the competition.

### **3.1. Mission, Vision, and Values Alignment**

Non-profit organizations begin with a passion to help their targeted constituencies in many ways, from serving community needs, meeting the needs of specific groups, such as children, women, refugees, people with disabilities, or mental health issues, protecting the environment, or elevating art and culture. These service orientations are something that care providers and nurses may naturally feel comfortable with, as most of the time nurses offer needed care services rather than marketing the sale of the services. Getting the word out about the needed services, however, is a requirement before people will seek treatment or care. The importance of having a clear and compelling mission is critical. More recently, marketing has been pointed out as a critical part of becoming mission-driven. The mission identifies the business of the company and is why the organization is in business and where it is going.

The mission statement guides the direction of setting company goals. Many elements are used to clarify a company's purpose, such as values, purpose or mission, ethics, principles, or beliefs. The vision identifies what the organization strives to be. It conveys the organization's preferred future state, that is, the inspiration, values, principles, and philosophy that frame action. The vision declares the future direction, setting the tone and direction of the organization and the driving passion. It should be reviewed and redefined when an organization changes its services or target audience. It is important to distinguish the differences between the mission and vision. While the mission provides the direction, it is the vision that ignites the passion. The vision inspires staff, board, and consumers to stand behind the cause. Marketing should align the organization to the correct value for patients, partners, funders, and the community that will be better for their engagement. The local trends of the market serve to develop the targets by saying why, what, and who is important in the marketplace and for mission fulfillment.

### **3.2. SWOT Analysis**

A SWOT analysis is effective for strategic planning because it combines identifying an organization's internal strengths and weaknesses with the identification of external opportunities and threats. Identifying strengths helps an organization understand what makes it unique, uniquely able to fill the identified needs of its clientele, or do so more effectively than other organizations. When it comes to strategic marketing, understanding those strengths enables an organization to communicate them more effectively to donors. Additionally, strengths can also form the foundation of a guide for organizations deciding how they should ideally help,

i.e., help according to their unique strengths. Identifying weaknesses helps an organization understand where it may be more vulnerable, recognizing threats helps it understand where it may need additional resources or support than it currently has, and identifying opportunities in the environment can help an organization understand where to focus its growth strategies.

Additionally, weaknesses can pose the risk of misperception leading to ethical issues if not corrected by their respective organization's donor communications. By identifying weaknesses, an organization can both identify areas in which they need growth and set goals for where it wants to be in the future. While SWOT analysis includes all four quadrants of both an organization's internal and external environments, analysis may not always be needed for each quadrant. For example, in a relatively static organization or industry in which the environment offers few opportunities or threats, the SWOT analysis would merely confirm such points to be addressed elsewhere in a planning discussion. Nevertheless, proactive environments and organizations can expect neither all internal nor all the possible opportunities, threats, weaknesses, or strengths can be listed, but having as many as possible can greatly inform the marketing plan's analysis of objectives.

### **3.3. Setting Objectives and Goals**

Organizations also develop objective statements. An objective is developed from a goal and states what an organization or program is going to do. The objective is more specific than the goal and states a measure, target, and deadline for achieving the goal. In addition, the objective has a responsibility center and a measure of performance.

Objectives are used to guide activities and decisions and the allocation of resources to decisions. They guide achieving goals and reaching the mission of the organization or program. The process of developing a goal or set of goals for a social marketing program or initiative is guided by the same parameters. Goals define what you want to do and are usually focused on a time frame of about five years and address broad objectives. Goals are broad and ambitious and provide the foundation for incorporating objectives into the development process. One of the keys to developing a goal is developing the goal statement using SMART criteria.

Choose concise and moderately complex goals for your organizational or marketing plan. The objectives are time-phased with target dates. By describing the objectives with time-phased actions, it makes identifying them and what work is in what phase

easier. Tailor the number of objectives to what is manageable and feasible given the size of the program area or marketing plan. Proposed safety objectives are stages of progress that can be measured. For the project manager, they are a roadmap to know whether the program is moving in the direction of safer farms. Regular tracking of objective achievement assesses program results and effectiveness. These stages are selected to result in -15% at five years and -25% at ten years. Measurable impacts of objective progress would be documented changes in knowledge and attitudes related to the behavior of interest as well as an increase in the number of farmers reached as objective levels present greater program growth. All objectives must be reviewed on an annual basis and revised as appropriate in order to account for changing conditions.

### **3.4. Target Audience Identification**

Who has the greatest interest in benefiting from the organization's offers? The project's primary audience is the group that is to be directly addressed and "offered" the opportunity for change or project funding. This can be various groups but are generally either the beneficiaries or user groups for campaign messages and are generally a smaller group than the secondary audiences (but not always). Secondary audiences are those that the campaign will also impact; they are pathways to impact. These tend to be a larger group that requires addressing to create support for the offer and to enable it to happen, but the mission of the campaign is not about them, and they don't engage with the offer in the same way. Their main need to identify fully is to understand why you do things in relation to their own audience, i.e., volunteers/supporters or other providers of offers. Generally, the largest group also requires different types of offers covering different needs in order to drive them to promote or engage with the offer in the same way their target audience would. This is essential if you are looking to combine behavioral change projects with income generation offers.

Your target audience may consist of one audience or several distinct audiences. Your target audience could be equally diverse; for instance, people with learning disabilities, or it might just be people wanting to find out more about low-emission vehicles. The better you are able to understand who makes up your target audiences, the better you can put together an outreach and engagement campaign to involve them. Understanding the subcategories of the audience can be done from opinions and viewpoints of what works, as discussed. It allows you to focus activity on areas that are important to your target audience and avoid doing work that won't



achieve results. The main reason for undertaking target audience mapping, though, is to be sure that the offers available and the methods of engagement used will appeal, talk to their needs, and therefore achieve the desired engagement levels. Good practice should involve investigating potential offers and activities with your target audience.

Development via Further Research should continue into each of the audiences. This can be done by researching existing data, reviewing internal data, undertaking surveys, and looking at trends and impact indicators. Data can be taken from up-to-date research to gain further knowledge and produce a fuller picture of your target audience. For example, research into a target audience regarding insulation offers should tell you about:

- Demographics such as average age, gender, number of children, single couples, or families.
- House type they are in and details about their home.
- Attitudes toward insulation; for example, I believe cavity wall insulation is the most important.
- Behaviors – i.e., they don't open the door to cold callers or shop a lot online. How can this be fed into your research?
- Where they look for information pertinent to the offer/provision.

Personas: A useful tool in looking into potential target audiences is to develop some personas for each of them. Percentages are always a good tool; for example, 60% of each target audience could be seen as interested in one offer over another.

### **3.5. Positioning and Differentiation Strategies**

The importance of being able to clearly communicate why an organization is different and better than others in a meaningful way to stakeholders is critical. Unfortunately, while few would debate this simple premise, operationalizing it so that it works for the organization is where the difficulty sets in. We can all think of organizations that have attempted to "position" or differentiate themselves by asserting that they are the best, but without support for that opinion, it can come off as brash and reduced in credibility. As such, it is important to refer back to the components of the strategic marketing plan that we have touched on as markers for, and justifications of, the claims of an organization. By identifying key populations and needs in the community, and specifying with some exactness the space the organization carves out, it helps ensure that an organization's position is merely the culmination of strategic thinking and successful planning.

The unique proposition is the message the organization sends about how it is distinctly positioned, and it must be clear to the reader exactly what that positioning

entails. Services are the organizational activities, interventions, or programs that the organization actively provides. Using services as a positioning lever might involve stating that an organization is exclusive to a particular clientele group or is active in a select geographical area. Other positioning possibilities are: the outcomes or interventions that an organization emphasizes over others, the manner in which those services are delivered, the fields with which others currently provide in the communities they serve, the reason an organization was established. If an organization is relatively new, its strategies will contain a community education aspect about a rapidly growing and new issue, and some organizations exist to provide new solutions to persistent problems since they value innovative attributes. For a well-developed organization, it is generally the innovative strategies that will be the emphasis components of the positioning strategies.

Branding is a key component in gaining emotional buy-in from stakeholders. Emotional buy-in is important because it leads to meaningful loyalty, and in the case of the SPO, it develops stakeholders who may simply sign up for a regular check-off, drive-by donation, or potentially donate anywhere from thousands to millions of dollars with stakes in the future of the SPO. There can be no check-writing activity if the brands have not entered into their minds and then written a story so compelling that stakeholders cannot refuse. These reasons are also where differentiation of the marketing positioning of the SPO and the DPO will emerge in their planning. The more difficult users will be the SPO because not only will branding focus on differentiation of similar causes also looking for dollars, but SPO branding emphasizes newness and excitement about the possibilities of the future. This is necessary because this demographic can donate to another cause worthier of time and resources since the problem is also not available. The SPO brand will have to demonstrate why their creative, innovative take on the future is worth the upbringing. The brand will also have to scream opportunity with these people, a clear tie to wealthy individuals who are used to investing for a profit at the end of the day.

#### **4. Marketing Mix for Non-Profit Organizations**

The marketing mix is a concept based on the idea of developing a product that is customized for consumer preferences, consumer behavior, and consumer priorities, and then using the '4Ps'. Some adaptations for non-profit organizations that have been suggested include a shift from the product to the service, recruits, services, and programs, and from pricing to fundraising, donors, and donor expectations. To build



a strong base for this strategic marketing, the organization should structure a plan, given as follows:

**Product strategy** Define the service or program that the non-profit is offering. The basic product of a non-profit organization is the service or program that it wants to offer to society in response to that society's needs and its own mission. Non-profit organizations often perform a great deal of research and testing in order to make sure that the public needs the services they are offering.

**Pricing** Just as businesses have costs of production, non-profits also have costs that must be covered. This impacts donor behavior, just as varying prices impact consumer behavior. There can be internal and external pricing differences. Because different factors influence a person's decision to give, the non-profit may choose to develop a marketing plan geared towards increasing sustained giving by focusing individually on the different donor segments. This provides a frame of reference and standards for evaluating donor interest and involvement. Psychologically, people can identify with the transferred understanding of the scope of their donation.

#### **4.1. Product/Service Strategies**

Product/service dominated sectors of the economy have become increasingly service-dominated. As organizations gear up for the 21st century, most of them are placing a premium on marketing their service capabilities. The main strategic marketing planning emphasis for these types of organizations is developing the most effective service strategies. Some important product/service characteristics for any type of organization to consider include: defining the product's/service's bottom-line benefits; developing the product/service line from these benefits; designing the product/service offer; developing visible services which can attract consumers; and striving to build a distinctive product/service line. Some important issues for non-profit organizations to consider in this section of the marketing planning process are: clarifying what business they are in; what 'business' they want to be in; and how they can work with their community to help solve problems. The components of a service strategy, such as service philosophy, service vision, service mission, service objectives, and service procedures or criteria and standards do not require the same fundamental meaning checks as are required for product/service alternatives. In fact, the main orientation in this strategic service planning is to change these components as new techniques or refined products and/or services become part of the operating plan. The procedures and products, technologies,

markets, and services that an organization decides upon finding out the needs and problems of its 'customers' are actually organizational resources directed objectives for the strategic operational plan to be implemented at the departmental levels.

The product/service strategy is not as fundamental a part of the planning process for non-profit organizations as it is for profit-oriented entities. Non-profit organizations usually take some of their operating principles from their environments, stakeholders, or assumed strategic operations. However, there are some important marketing perspectives that can be utilized to help the planning of these service and 'manufacturing' strategies. As such, the success of a non-profit organization often depends on its offering of pursuits and impressions, ideas, services, and its outlet with an assorted line of cafes and productive organizations. Non-profit organizations need to understand that the continued support from people, business participants, and governments for their programs, services, and productive efforts is crucial for their long-term success. Non-profit organizations are encouraged to answer the customer/client question 'how can we take advantage of what your organization can provide to us?'. A more internal type of question to ask is: 'What business should your organization be in?'. For non-profit organizations, another rephrased version of this question is: 'What does our community want?' or 'What services can and should our organization be offering to the community?'.

## **4.2. Pricing Strategies**

### **Pricing**

#### **Pricing Strategy Definition**

Pricing is handled slightly differently by non-profits than by most for-profit businesses because non-profit services are “sold” in part to clients or their families and in part to those who provide the money that makes it possible to subsidize the fees that are charged. Since most non-profit organizations subsidize their services so that clients pay only a portion of the actual cost of services – or even nothing – non-profits derive funds from a mix of sources, some of which include government contracts, grants, individual donations, and earnings on investments. Setting a price requires some knowledge of how services are currently paid for and what is charged in the marketplace.

#### **Current Environment**

Many non-profits are re-evaluating how they are funded and how services are purchased in a changing environment. Non-profit organizations use a variety of methods to calculate or set prices and subsidies. Since prices are needed to pay for services that are not subsidized by some stream or source of funds, the challenge for organizations is to use this resource more creatively and navigate these financial waters carefully within the context of their mission and community needs.

#### Reasons an Organization Might Need to Adjust Prospect Fees

To help clients plan for the future, organizations need to project fee changes well in advance. Here are a few factors that might suggest a change in your organization's pricing structure:...

### 4.3. Promotion Strategies

While numerous promotional strategies are available to a non-profit organization, a well-rounded promotional plan features a blend of traditional and digital tactics. Determine which tactics best reach your target audience based on their consumption habits. This is determined after conducting a target audience analysis. If the target audience is less likely to be online, digital promotions will not be as effective. As promotional strategy continues to evolve, a blend of online and offline strategies will be essential to be visible to consumers regardless of where they get their information.

Many non-profit organizations rely on a variety of traditional promotional tactics such as print media, flyers or brochures, direct mailers, and event-related promotions. While these tactics are still good options, engaging potential supporters online can be accomplished more quickly and cost-effectively. The following are some key traditional and online promotional opportunities that should be considered:

- TV • Radio • Billboard • Print • Social Media Outlets • Email Campaigns • On-Site Promotion • Traditional Blogs vs. Telling Stories • Cultivating and Leveraging Local Partnerships for Visibility • Engage the Community to Better Understand Their Opinion and Ensure Consistent Messaging • Be Consistent with Messaging • Cross-Promotion • Ambassadors • Verify and Evaluate

As a marketing tool, all promotional opportunities should be measured and evaluated frequently. Use data from the prior evaluation to inform future decisions.

Did more people return their opinion? What promotional activity resulted in the most buzz? And the least? Which promotional activities resulted in more donations? What can be replicated? What must be revised? It is important to evaluate promotional metrics regularly and make changes as necessary to better reach your target audience. The ultimate promotional strategy should reflect your organization's mission and desire to remain exhaustively informative and help your organization reach a large audience. Considering promotional costs, flexible media partnerships should be considered. Print and other media outlets will frequently offer donation in-kind opportunities in connection with broader promotional and advertising packages.

#### **4.4. Distribution Strategies**

Non-profit distribution strategies are concerned with making sure the services and programs are reaching the intended audience or audiences effectively and efficiently. Moreover, programs also have to be available to those who need them. Reaching these goals involves considerations beyond simply distributing important non-profit activities through direct aid. A key issue non-profits must deal with is the question: "Which channels are appropriate for the distribution of our services?" The advancement of technology has increased the number of distribution channels available to non-profits, including physical and electronic channels.

Non-profits are not likely to have all necessary expertise in-house required to reach distant audiences, so collaboration with organizations that do have that expertise may lead to more effective community service. Non-profit stakeholders should examine the variety of channels available for delivering needed services to the public or a particular audience. Identifying and evaluating the accessibility and potential for broad coverage of the various channels that might be used is one way of looking at the extent of a potential universal service delivery system. Strategies to ensure access to diverse populations should also be considered and potentially built into the partnerships working to establish service availability. Ensuring universal service and access to diverse audiences both within a local and statewide context can be an admirable goal and may earn positive media and community attention. There are a variety of distribution channels and mediums, both traditional and newer, that non-profit organizations can utilize to reach their audiences. Identifying the most appropriate channels, then developing outreach and content is strategically important for the effective launch and sustainability of a community-based behavioral health program.

## 5. Digital Marketing for Non-Profit Organizations

Digital marketing has emerged as a game changer for non-profits in more than one way. Compared to traditional marketing methods, online marketing helps in interim engagement and accurate outreach initiatives, and is highly effective in finding possible volunteers and funding opportunities across a vast audience. Many non-profits utilize some form of digital marketing to reach their target audience and are involved in various kinds of software for automation and lead generation processes. Below are some components to consider when crafting a sound digital strategy.

An organization's website is the best place to start a solid digital strategy. A website has the potential to increase an organization's visibility. Ensure the website is interactive in a manner that results in an excellent user experience and is optimized to be found in searches. A presence on social media platforms is an essential aspect of an organization's digital marketing strategy. In social media, storytelling is an effective tool to create layered talking points for the audience. Multimedia formats work best in capturing emotions. Moreover, create an online community for donors, recipients, and stakeholders to share resources, thoughts, and communicate the organization's mission along with updates. Create an editorial calendar to maintain momentum and ensure consistency. Generate fresh content using photos, videos, and blogs, capturing the organization in motion. Email marketing reconnects potential donors and supporters with the operations of the organization. The regular or occasional transmission of newsletters, stories, photos, statistics, and resources ensures constant outreach to the donors. Ensure that the emails are concise and mobile-friendly for the audience. Conduct business analytics, open rates, clicks on corresponding links, and follow-up engagement assessments. Search Engine Optimization will work on the content and website strategies to bolster online visibility and reach by people searching for key terms and phrases associated with the non-profit. This operation includes conducting keyword research to achieve higher ranks in various search portals.

Digital marketing is one of the broader arenas to thrive in given the rising digital and tech era. It is necessary for non-profits to not only have but also be well-versed in several inventory management software for a spectrum of networks. Opting for the right kind of strategy that caters to the non-profit operation can effectively increase both community engagement and, as a result, funding opportunities among various other pointers. The digital world has fostered brand-new ways by which non-profit organizations can connect with their target audience; the world of digital

marketing has democratized the manner in which people can communicate and share information. In this fast-moving, digital interaction-dominated world, non-profits would do best to ensure that all of their advertising strategies encompass digital marketing moves.

### **5.1. Website Development and Optimization**

There are many good reasons for non-profit organizations to have a well-designed, functional, and thoughtful website. Your website often serves as a central hub for all information and engagement with your organization. On your website, your stakeholders can view your upcoming events, keep track of the ongoing news, learn about your programs, and find out ways to get involved or donate. Good non-profit websites appeal to your different stakeholders in different sections or pages. If a lot of the support for your non-profit comes from private donors, having at least one section of your website with positive information about the impact of philanthropy can be just as important.

Developing a website starts with the information that your users will want to see. If your private donors all meet your staff face-to-face, perhaps the date and location of the next event are more important than a contact address. Research and improvements to your user experience should also include regular maintenance on website speed, mobile viewing options, and search engine optimization. A website with a search tool saves time for stakeholders looking for the exact page on your site that appeals to them. Websites should be designed to encourage or remind visitors of actions that could be taken next, such as action links scattered around your website in parts that discuss specific programs. You should also connect these next actions with your more general navigation. User experience testing then examines the impact of website changes you are considering. Analytic tools are used to not just report on the number of hits to a website, but should also help a non-profit diagnose what most contributes to donations, program promotion, or blog views.

### **5.2. Social Media Marketing**

At the turn of the 21st century, information technology shifted from mass marketing to revolutionize individualized, direct marketing. Customer relationships became the objective rather than the by-product of promotion. In recent years, we have seen another shift toward social engagement and community among consumers, and the world of non-profits is no different. Social media can provide connections, tell stories, and serve as a game-changer for your cause. Social media platforms offer a



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chance to share stories about the organization, its staff, beneficiaries, and the causes they are working to solve. They provide the opportunity to thank supporters and volunteers, celebrate success, and share progress. Companies use social media as a business development tool and as a showcase for connecting with business partners, contractors, and suppliers. Social media is often the platform for in-the-moment news. Share news stories about your organization, as well as pictures and the latest digestible content.

The goal is to connect internally with the community we have, so we attract supporters who share our values and beliefs. So, what platforms will be most useful for your organization? The one that your audience uses. That might be a platform because the average age of those at our residence is in their 20s, and another to reach students who have the time and interest in a quick micro-look at our organization. We may post these micro-inform stories on social media too for a quick way to reach friends of our organization, as well as potential donors, volunteers, and supporters. Regardless of content theme, the key to social media use is to be authentic. Make sure that posts illustrate the unique feel of the organization. Don't replicate a national non-profit's message from across the country; of course, that is just one example. Create consistent, authentic content. Qualitative, in-the-moment pictures will always receive more responses than posed stock photography. Because of the way the algorithm measures responses to previous publications, if no one is hitting like on your posts, it is less likely to show up in the newsfeed of your current followers. This can be costly, budgeting time and resources to create content that very few see. Call to action: Don't just post to post; create some action. Every post should have a call to action and the option for interaction. Include polls, etc., in your post. If social media is a channel to drive donations, create a call to action and link back to your website. If it is functioning as a volunteer cultivation tool, include a call to action. Include an emoji or GIF: interactions and engagements are the holy grail in social media. Posts will reach more people if there is some interaction from your existing followers. For social media, take advantage of emojis.

### **5.3. Email Marketing**

Email marketing is still by far the most effective communication tool that a non-profit can have. There is nothing more effective than communicating a message directly, personally, and in a format that is wanted by your recipient. Your database of people who have opted to receive your message is the most valuable asset to your team. Being able to segment and have other channels actively interact and grow

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your database beyond just strategically placed advertisements or organic content will be your CRM's effectiveness down the road. Building an email list comes together from a few activities, first being the opt-in on web forms or other digital outreach so your audience is actually interested. From there, you can see if your direct mail converts those straight over to being a donor, and if so, have a content extension via an e-newsletter that they might be interested in. It becomes very important to message and thank each channel separately. Also, be sure not to disappoint them by making them wish their inbox was safe from your content. Segmenting the list allows you to be strategic; thanking donors who gave specifically to a recent appeal or event, asking lapsed donors who volunteered in the same town, or advertising sponsorship opportunities to business owners only. Then, you have to ask—don't make them find the Donate button after spending 20 seconds looking at the beautiful pictures you are showing them. Give them a meaningful call to action that's trackable, such as RSVP so you can track who clicked the link and engaged beyond reading the invitation details. For our research, about 91.3% of our responses came from these calls to action. Like everything else in direct marketing, organizations should be testing as much as they are able to within their team capacity to see what has the best response. Email can be an effective way to build community support and donations if you are able to give good content to your reader that is relevant and informative to your cause. Timing of emails is also critical. Leaving a donor alone after they have given, frustrating them with too many irrelevant emails, or labeling long-time inactive donors as lapsed are major aggressors in pulling remarketing unsubscriptions. Opting out has been on the rise, too, due to the misinformation about email being dead.

#### **5.4. Search Engine Optimization (SEO)**

Also noteworthy is search engine optimization. SEO is a vital tool in the quest to improve online visibility. Approximately 53% of site traffic comes from search engine results, and potential supporters cannot find a business that is not visible. SEO strategies consist of extensive keyword and competitor research, on-page optimization, monitoring for backlink opportunities, and executing off-page optimization. One of the biggest indicators for top search engine rankings is long-form, high-quality content. Create valuable content that is relevant to the audience. Use keyword research to find out what they are searching for and write about it on the web page. Shareable content produced for a specific targeted group as part of a larger digital marketing plan is crucial in creating organic traffic opportunities. To

sustain a solid online presence as a nonprofit organization, it is a best practice to review analytics and adjust organic search optimization strategies regularly. Review keyword performance, including click-through rates, impressions, and further evaluate the bounce, conversion, and quality of traffic to a site from search. Right now, SEO and the impact of search are greater than ever! Is your nonprofit organization getting left behind when it comes to SEO practices? Fill the top of the funnel using SEO best practices and watch the potential constituents roll in. SEO is a nuanced way to improve your online visibility and increase your constituent base within the same digital marketing strategy.

## **6. Measuring and Evaluating Marketing Effectiveness**

Measuring the effectiveness of one's marketing efforts is one of the most challenging aspects of marketing for a non-profit organization. Still, it is a critical expected result. Measuring and knowing one's marketing impact is key to strategically identifying a marketing challenge or opportunity, monitoring progress over a reasonable period of time, providing feedback on what works and what does not, and focusing and fine-tuning attention. For marketing strategies and marketing communications activities to be effective, evaluation should be viewed as a process, not a once-in-a-lifetime task. Before investing time and resources, marketing managers responsible for designing the who, what, where, when, and how of marketing plans must have some sense of what they intend to achieve. To harness the potential benefits of evaluation, non-profit organizations must select or develop meaningful key performance indicators, or KPIs, that will enable them to determine success in achieving their mission, marketing goals, operational objectives, and marketing outcomes.

There are many different types of KPIs that can be used to measure effectiveness. Some are used to measure performance in different functional areas; others may be used to measure overall performance in meeting objectives and driving strategic advantage. Therefore, it is incumbent on the organization to choose KPIs that will gauge the effectiveness in achieving its overall intended change in its target constituencies and advocate groups and/or movements to others outside the defined audience. One common mistake in evaluation is collecting too much information and/or information that is not available in meeting organizational goals. The strategies used should garner data that is available and cost-effective to gather. Multiple techniques can be used to gather data. Some of these are conducting surveys, interviewing stakeholders and potential members, obtaining data from

published information sources, using professional evaluators, and using internal data. Technology and marketing skills, as well as extra resources in these areas, can make a qualitative difference in terms of producing cost/benefit and effectiveness data in the effectiveness of an organization's marketing strategy. Once evaluated, whether by an outside evaluator or a marketing committee, report the results in a clear and understandable manner. Short-term dashboards can provide regular reports to the management team, while more in-depth, longer-term reports can contribute to the strategic evaluation and reinforcement of organizational strengths and quality of services for target constituencies. The frequency of the evaluation is dependent on the marketing strategy and performance objectives. Continuous evaluation of all activities is essential if the organization is committed to agility and responsiveness to marketplace demands. Organizations have several levels of constituencies that demand reports. Results should be compared with industry or societal norms. Emphasizing effectiveness as part of a marketing strategy also allows management to make a case in terms of the worth of its organization. Effectiveness carries the message that the organization is indeed a wise investment of time, energy, and financial resources.

## **6.1. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

### **6.1. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

KPIs are measurable values that demonstrate where an organization is in relation to its goals, vision, and mission. They track an organization's success at multiple levels, from the overall mission and broader goals to more specific projects and activities. By closely aligning objectives and KPIs, organizations can communicate priorities and areas of focus to stakeholders. As milestones are reached, KPIs demonstrate impact and create sustainable growth and continuity. KPIs should be both specific and relevant to an organization's goals and can include quantifiable or qualitative indicators. In the context of non-profits, fundraising targets, outreach, engagement, organizational capacity, growth, and changes in behavior and attitude are common KPI areas. Fundraising indicators might include funds raised, regular monthly gifts, number of donors, or retention rates. Outreach and engagement might be demonstrated by the number of people reached and the online engagement percentage, including open rates, click-through rates, and social shares. Indicators of organizational capacity, growth, and changes can include staff and volunteer numbers, churn rates, and increases in supporters and social following.

Successful KPIs are not created and forgotten; rather, they require regular review and constant progress check-ins, which will encourage the continued commitment of staff, stakeholders, funders, donors, and patrons. They need to evolve as the situation, culture, and world in which they are set change. Here, the establishment of strong indicators will guide decision-making and ensure that energies and resources spent will have the predicted effect and the greatest return on investment. KPIs encourage and demand honesty and can align accountability within an organization, as they hold up a mirror to performance and progress. It is more effective if all key stakeholders are involved in setting KPIs, and clear roles and responsibilities are defined from the outset, centered around collective agreement to deliver successful outcomes to achieve progress and create positive change.

## **6.2. Data Collection and Analysis**

In strategic marketing planning, understanding and measuring the effectiveness of these activities is important. In many cases, the ultimate effectiveness and efficiency of nonprofit marketing activities are only fully realized over time. Data is one of the most important elements of a structure for measuring marketing effectiveness. This data is to be collected in the liking of the marketing messages by all stakeholders. The types of data that the organization can collect are qualitative feedback through interviews with stakeholders, surveys, and quantitative data that can be collected through analysis of digital tools.

Collect data for marketing effectiveness done by an organization and establish a structured way of processing, analyzing, and representing the findings that incorporate the use of data visualization software tools to track findings over time through visuals. Making sure that the organization has safeguards built in to ensure there are data privacy policies as well as data accuracy for a period of time. Lastly, using the data that is collected for input into future marketing initiatives. The data should be analyzed to understand marketing effectiveness by creating a database of results using a spreadsheet. Establishing the approach to entering the results into the database will ensure that the results are reliably compared, as well as the trends over a period of time, helping the organization to understand how to address strategies. Data measurement enables organizations to learn from captured metrics and supporter behavior, identify constraints that can emphasize strategic thinking and planning, and develop an evidence-based approach that can be embedded in the organization. Learning how to measure and evaluate these marketing activities allows organizations to constantly reevaluate their strategies and approaches, refine

their thinking, create key messaging aimed at identified markets, show evidence in the planning process, ensure inclusivity, and finally innovate as well as continuously improve.

### **6.3. Reporting and Dashboards**

6.3.1. Reporting Nonprofits and other social sector organizations should report on effectiveness in the use of contributed funds, transparency in their operations, and accountability for their operations. Individual marketing reports are used to communicate effectiveness in marketing spending to the stakeholders—staff, governing body members, the public, donors, beneficiaries, etc. These reports are also good for marketing team members to critique and better understand their actions and data. Reports are most useful when there is a system of best practices to create the best marketing reports for your organization. Best practice reports are appealing because their visual design is consistent and aesthetically pleasing, data is well-structured, the reports focus on metrics that have been designated as critical, and reports are informative because analysis is shared in combination with the selected data points.

6.3.2. Dashboards Most nonprofit organizations have, at the very least, board members reporting. It seems easy so they can be held accountable; the stakeholders of nonprofits—including funders—should be engaged to become involved in the mission of the organization and what makes their contribution so incredibly effective. Regular reporting is a possibility for engaging and reengaging stakeholders to make your cause theirs. Nonprofit staff, contractors, and volunteers at most levels are interested in performance: Are we making things better? Are we being effective? Are we making progress? Dashboards are fast, concise, and continual ways of communicating the organization's progress towards objectives in real time.

## **7. Ethical Considerations in Non-Profit Marketing**

Ethical marketing is of particular importance in non-profit organizations. Organizations must communicate honestly with stakeholders, including the public, when discussing their mission, what they do, and how they conduct their activities. The community will contribute external resources only when trust and credibility are present, as stakeholders and shareholders will inevitably require evidence of effective performance. The organization's communications must be based on the best available evidence and must accurately reflect the nature and extent of the



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organization's programs and activities. Non-profit organizations need to be transparent and honest about their operations and activities with their stakeholders; however, this can be difficult in practice.

In recent years, non-profit organizations raised concerns regarding earnestness in fundraising and the over-management of donors at the expense of those they help. The ethical implications of these critiques reach beyond the sector of charitable organizations. Non-profit organizations that offer a service must also be mindful of ethical considerations when marketing to clients or potential clients. Some non-profit organizations operate in vulnerable communities where service users need to be treated with the utmost respect and regard. Non-profit organizations are sensitive to exploitative marketing approaches, and their marketing needs to adequately reflect the degree of respect and protection with which clients and potential clients are treated. Non-profit organizations will, from time to time, form alliances, partnerships, trading relationships, or collaborations with other organizations. Crucial partnerships require transparent and forthright communication about the pivotal issues affecting the planning and operation of the enterprise. The marketing of the collaboration or partnership needs to be clearly articulated; position and clear authority must be negotiated at the point of commencement if the interests of the groups involve political and social values. Internal and external customers or clients who have a vested interest in the collaboration also need to be informed of the collaborative arrangement in a forthright manner. Clear ethical guidelines on whom to tell, the nature of the community audience, how much emphasis is given to a partnership agreement, and how much stress is placed on making necessary competing external values apparent need to be articulated in the groups' marketing plan. The basic ethical principles that should guide marketing decision-making in non-profit organizations are honesty, respect and protection of human dignity, accountability and transparency, fairness, and civic-mindedness. The ethical principles of non-profit marketing are aligned with best practices in the broader marketing discipline. Ethical principles are outward articulations of an organization's values. They are important if buy-in from employees is to be achieved. Ethical principles must be taken seriously as they tend to shape the reputation and brand development of an organization. Do our activities, programs, and mission statement give clear evidence of our adherence to robust ethical principles? The basic rule when it comes to formulating the code of ethics is to never include any statement that cannot or will not be abided by. Commitments must be made sincerely, and in using those commitments as the

marketing springboard, they will be more successful. In agenda and program planning assignments and partnerships, ethical guidelines need to articulate this position.

## **8. Case Studies and Best Practices in Non-Profit Marketing**

There are many examples of successful marketing campaigns from non-profit organizations, some of which have used simple, low-cost strategies while others have achieved great success as a result of highly innovative approaches that can reach a broad audience. A total campaign budget of \$90,000 and staff marketing time of 500 hours, plus significant bartered services, gained a 40% increase in prospective donors — largely individuals who were not previous contributors. Raising nearly \$14.5 million, a campaign took a comprehensive and systemic approach, focusing on local press and outreach. Supporters pooled their resources and efforts to raise the funds necessary to increase security systems. Using cutting-edge campaigns, several organizations raised both funds and awareness, and/or support from thousands in the community.

By reading this section, you can learn about successful marketing campaigns of these non-profit organizations, including information on: distribution of services and growth that was created from a modest beginning. A campaign changed its yearly tagline to focus outward — like a dollar coin campaign does. Additionally, the campaign worked with local business leaders to kick off the contract giving drives. Moreover, the body of this paper showcases innovative campaigns and marketing efforts, tapping into a new approach to reaching a huge market through both traditional means — direct mail and boots on the ground — plus catchy guerrilla marketing techniques to increase market potential for funds, supporters, and volunteers. Many marketing efforts within the nonprofit sector are leading-edge and can/should inspire creativity for those working in the field. Staying informed of leading strategies from these organizations can heighten the innovative nature of marketing efforts.

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