

# FUNDRAISING

## FORUM™

### Your brand identity

*Some of the strongest brands in the United States belong to nonprofits. Brand management experts have measured the worth of some of those brands to be in the billions of dollars. How did they get that way? They got there by following these simple principles. This report is by Thomas McLaughlin.*

With acknowledgement to  
**The NonProfit Times**  
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visit: <http://nptimes.com>

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**I**t helps to see brands as risk management tools for customers. Usually it's not risk in the sense of bodily harm or death, although it is a consideration when choosing medical providers.

Rather, it is the 'risk' of not getting what one wants. Hungry motorists in strange towns pick the familiar logo of a fast food restaurant because they're not sure what they will get if they stop at Paul's Diner.

Locals, on the other hand, might pick Paul's Diner because they know exactly what they will get, having experienced it before. Each group is practicing brand-based risk management.

The risk factor for nonprofits is greater than one might imagine. Government funders loathe making a bad choice because of the possible political repercussion. Foundation managers can feel pressured to make grants to responsible organisations, which is one of the reasons why the recipient pool tends to change slowly. Recipients with good track records greatly reduce the uncertainty of wasting precious foundation funds on a bad choice.

Service recipients practice risk management with a different twist. When given total choice among nonprofit service providers they are likely to behave the same way as retail consumers. But, their choices are often constricted by government or third-party funding. In this case, the trade-off might be reduced loyalty and an easily severed bond. To offset this, the nonprofit has to find ways to retain their loyalty should the external funding disappear.

#### **Make brand decisions invisible to customers**

Here is a truism of brand management: Most important brand decisions are made out of sight of the consumer. A brand identity is like a stage performance.

There are probably more people backstage than can be seen on stage at any one time, but a well-done production will keep one riveted to the stage where the visible action occurs.

The implication of this principle is that an organisation has to work hard to keep in mind that the consumer sees the brand differently. It is easy to believe that their perception of the brand from the inside is the one the consumer sees when in fact they are only seeing the brand from 'back stage'.

As a result, they tend to make decisions about a brand based on their personal experience with it, not on the consumer's perceptions.

This natural tendency to make 'inside' decisions about brands can skew certain results. For example, one nonprofit with which we are familiar, merged with two different organisations on separate occasions.

In each case they simply replaced the existing organisations' names with their own. Within a short period of time, both of the organisations had lost most of their donors. While the total amount raised by the donors was not large, it was enough to put the programmes permanently in a deficit position.

To manage a brand appropriately, the street-smart manager will find ways to get outside and see the full picture of the brand's meaning to consumers. This is the reason why consumer satisfaction surveys and similar tools are so important in brand management.

It is also why organisations that look at their brands only from the inside are likely to miss most of the meaning they have for consumers, including funders.

#### **Make your brand stand alone**

A corollary to the out-of-sight principle is that brands must be able to stand-alone and be functionally self-contained. The consumer's or funder's experience should require no additional assistance. This means that a good brand does not need support from another brand. Brands that are not clearly delineated from each other might confuse the consumer.

It can be hard and expensive to manage multiple brands in the same organisation. This central fact is one of the things driving the formation of multi-corporate organisations. Brands can fit neatly into the bounds of a corporate structure. This is one of the characteristics that lead to multiple corporations being created with governance ties to each other.

Although there is no reason why a single nonprofit corporate structure couldn't house multiple brands, the elegance of a one-brand-one-corporation model can be compelling.

#### **Make the brand experience replicable**

Brands reduce consumer risk by providing a replicable experience. In turn this means that strong brands must have strong systems behind

**Continued on page 7**

# Giving is literally a chemical reaction in the brain

*While donors will tell you their decisions are based on logic, they're actually based on emotion. This report from Patrick Sullivan.*

**D**onors make decisions based on emotion and justify their decisions with logic. Leah Eustace and Scott Fortnum recently gave attendees at the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) International Conference on Fundraising (ICON) a tour of the donor's brain.

'You need to lead with emotion in fundraising,' said Eustace, principal and managing partner at Good Works in Ottawa, Canada. 'It's far too easy to get caught up in statistics and institutional logical stuff.'

Eustace and Fortnum, executive director of The Living City Foundation in Toronto, Canada, talked about a phenomenon they called 'The Power of One.'

A University of Oregon researcher performed a study of three groups reading fundraising appeals. One group read an appeal about hunger in Africa.

The second group's appeal was the story of a 17-year-old girl in Mali, and the third had the story of the girl along with statistics about hunger in Mali.

The story of the girl by itself got the strongest reaction, according to Fortnum and Eustace. 'When we're trying to develop a communication piece, what pressure are we under?', Fortnum asked rhetorically.

'We want to report stats, people served, and demonstrate impact. (But) there is data out there that backs up the point that when you're working with a board or your boss, you've got to tell a story about one person.'

## One at a time

'If you can't tell the story of one, tell the story about one at a time.'

Fortnum pointed out that a good story evokes a physical, chemical reaction in the brain. He mentioned research that studied the chemical responses in the body upon hearing the story of a two-year-old with cancer.

The research found that the body produces cortisol and oxytocin, 'elements of distress and empathy,' he said. 'That allows us the opportunity and gives us the understanding that these stories are very powerful because they are eliciting a response far beyond logic. It's the emotional elements of a story that we remember.'

Fundraising appeals should be written with the science of persuasion in mind.

The principle of reciprocity often applies:

A donor benefitted from the organisation, and therefore wants someone else to benefit. Donors also respond to scarcity, so if it applies, use language such as 'limited time only'.

Donors are looking for organisations with credible leadership, which speaks to authority. Consistency, too, is key; McDonalds is popular all over the world because diners know what they're going to get, whether they're in New York City or New South Wales.

And, capital campaigns employ the principle of critical mass. Their quiet phases are long, so by the time the campaign goes public, donors see that many other people have donated and want to be part of the crowd.

Eustace said not to discount the effects of aging on the brain. As you age, she said, citing a book called *The Secret Life of the Grown-Up Brain* by Barbara Strauch, you become more right-brained.

You have more empathy and you respond to things more emotionally.

'That's relevant to us as fundraising leaders and managers,' she said. 'In terms of donors, their brains are aging too.'

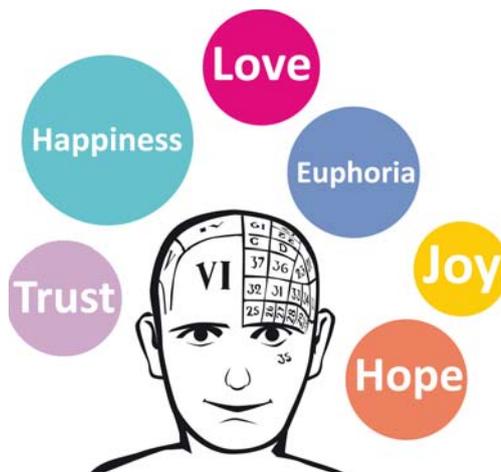
As our brains change as we age, so too do our eyes. For that reason, it's important to make your communications readable to older donors.

Black text on a colored background makes the text harder to read, said Eustace. She also said that older eyes have more trouble differentiating between blue and green than red and yellow.

Offline, print is easier to read if it's in a serif font, but online, sans serif is easier to read. 'If we design things for older eyes, it helps younger eyes too,' said Fortnum.

Though donors tend to be older, you should still be writing at a sixth-grade level or below. 'We need to understand that we can deal with very intelligent people, but we still need to keep communications at a level appropriate to what we're trying to say,' said Fortnum.

Eustace and Fortnum described an option in Microsoft Word called readability statistics that can tell you to what grade level you are writing when you run the spell checker. 'If all you do is change longer words to three and four character words or split them, the score will go down,' said Eustace. ■



## MILESTONE THINKING

On-target observations in brief

Extremely high spending on administrative costs can tip off donors to fraud or other problems.

With acknowledgement to  
**The Chronicle of Philanthropy**  
18 July 2013

You cannot hope to build a better world without improving individuals. We all must work for our own improvement, and at the same time share a general responsibility for all humanity.

**Marie Curie**

With the ever-increasing importance of online fundraising and the significance of your online presence, it is important to simplify and optimise the online (and mobile) giving experience. Invest time in these two aspects of your organisation's online giving programme and you will see great rewards.

With acknowledgement to  
<http://nptimes.com>

Board membership and fundraising go hand-in-hand, but all too often, trustees don't think that way.

With acknowledgement to  
<http://philanthropy.com>

Most charitable bequests originate from middle-class households . . . not from the aristocrats who occupy Downton Abbey, but from the generous hearts of normal people who watch Downton Abbey.

With acknowledgement to  
**Tom Ahern's**  
**Love Thy Reader e-newsletter**  
[www.aherncomm.com](http://www.aherncomm.com)

It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving.

**Mother Teresa**

The biggest single factor which can spell your ultimate demise as a fundraising professional is to listen too hard to others who haven't the knowledge but fancy themselves as fundraisers. Unfortunately these people always seem to be amongst your board members and other senior staff in your organisation.

With acknowledgement to  
**Michael Downes**  
in Downes on Fundraising



Skills training – like teaching women to sew – is just one aspect of POPUP's work.

## POPUP: a start-up to positive change!

**P**OPUP (People Upliftment Programme) is a non-profit organisation (existing since 2000) with a holistic approach to the upliftment of under-privileged communities thereby ensuring that all the needs of individuals are addressed – mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

POPUP renders services to people in Tshwane (Gauteng province, South Africa) and the surrounding areas and provinces. POPUP's main centre is situated in Salvokop, Pretoria and also expanded to Soshanguve during 2012. POPUP's leadership team aims to replicate the model countrywide.

POPUP offers accredited and non-accredited market-related skills programmes to unemployed people. Learners attend a compulsory 10-day Personal Restoration & Life Skills Programme that's aimed at restoring their lives; they are taught that their lives have purpose, resulting in changed morals and values. Learners trained at POPUP enter society as changed people who can make a difference in their communities, family, friends and working environment.

POPUP renders social services to the community through a soup kitchen, food parcels, POPKids Day Care Centre for 77 children and five medical clinics (primary health care, dental, eye, audiology and a HIV/AIDS testing & counselling centre).

Job placement and enterprise development forms part of the POPUP model and coaching and mentoring are part and parcel of the entrepreneurs' incubation process. A fulltime placement officer assists with job placement.

To contact POPUP or for more about POPUP, contact Marlene Freislich at [marlene.freislich@popup.co.za](mailto:marlene.freislich@popup.co.za) or visit their website: [www.popup.co.za](http://www.popup.co.za).

## FUNDRAISING FORUM™

**F**undraising Forum™ is a regular newsletter dedicated to the enhancement of management, fundraising techniques and the promotion of community service, welfare and not-for-profit organisations of all kinds.

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We welcome submissions for publication from all writers involved in not-for-profit work. Visit [www.dmi.co.za](http://www.dmi.co.za)

# Open debate, not politeness, is what drives nonprofit innovation

*Everybody in the nonprofit world these days talks about innovation, but not about what drives change: open debate and critical thinking. Cynn Gibbs reports.*

**I**n science, technology, business, academe, and elsewhere, people are encouraged – and are given forums – to express opinions and disagree with each other publicly.

But nonprofits and foundations continue to embrace a culture of silence and politeness that gets in the way of their growth and vitality.

Yet it's impossible to change the world unless we create more opportunities for people to regularly call into question whether a nonprofit's or foundation's activities are effective, ethical, and strategic.

We don't need to dive into the pool of vitriol and incivility that marks the current state of public discourse. But we can pursue a middle ground by building a culture that encourages healthy skepticism.

The peril of not taking this approach is that we risk wasting money, time, and other resources that are already stretched too thin.

We all know of nonprofits with high-profile brands, savvy marketing skills, or charismatic leaders that receive tons of foundation money even though the evidence shows they're not achieving their missions.

Rather than raise questions about this publicly, however, we usually hunker down and complain behind closed doors, in between conference sessions. That practice, though, has a cost: The money keeps going in that direction, making it harder for organisations that are getting results to attract support.

The same thing happens when nonprofits are held up as exemplars of innovation even though they're really just recycling ideas. Rewarding them with grants and publicity sends a message that being an effective organisation doesn't really matter; what matters more is how it's packaged.

It's tempting to blame the lack of critical thinking on the 'power imbalance' between grant makers and nonprofits. While that may be one cause, it's not the only reason: Nonprofits themselves are reluctant to engage in healthy public discussions about whether what their peers are doing makes sense.

That silence is understandable, but it can be unhealthy and ultimately self-defeating. Nonprofits aren't given the chance to have thoughtful and open conversations about the findings in ways that could help them strengthen their own activities.

And philanthropists don't have the benefit of getting honest, first-hand perspectives from a broad array of organisations with expertise.

The irony is that we live in an era in which

institutions in other domains are embracing transparency by inviting public feedback and critique, due to the proliferation of new technologies that demand it.

But that same technology can have a downside. It can lead to echo chambers – areas of cyberspace where ideas that may be implausible are repeated, overheard, and repeated again (often in exaggerated form) by like-minded people.

That can and does happen in the nonprofit world when everyone listens to the same anointed sources and what they say becomes our form of reality.

Fortunately, a small but growing cadre of critical thinkers is trying to change things by starting to ask tough questions and demanding honest answers from grant makers, their peers, and their constituents. But what questions should we grapple with as we confront tough issues?

Here are some to consider before racing to pronounce the 'next big new important thing'.

Is what's being touted as 'new' really new or is it just something old with different packaging?

If it's not new, then it's important to know whether the approach worked in the past. If it didn't, understanding why might help to point out fixes that will allow it to succeed next time.

## **Beware jargon-filled hype**

Programme and mission-related investments which have been around for a long time, are now promoted as essential components of 'impact investing'. Both are important concepts, but we don't yet know how well they work.

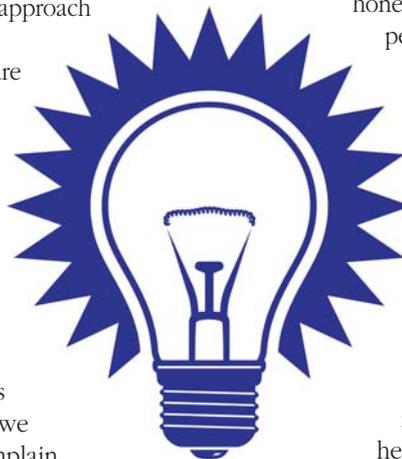
## **Is there evidence to show the idea has promise**

If an idea has been tried, proof about its worthiness should be available, based on a rigorous methodology – one that goes beyond self-reports, marketing language, small case studies, or biased samples.

Take social-impact bonds, for example. The results are not in yet from a rigorous study now under way in the U.K., so nobody knows yet whether this idea works; yet it hasn't stopped nonprofits, donors, and governments in the U.S. from pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into the approach.

## **Who's behind the idea?**

It's important to know whether someone or some organisation benefits from marketing an idea as new. Ask what experience the group has in adopting the idea to work in the places where its leaders want to try it next.



# Fundraising in tough times

(continued from Issue Number 96 June 2013)

TECHNIQUE

## 6. Engage your donors

Stewardship is more than a timely thank you. Stewardship is about touches, response, emotion, knowledge, power, pride and a whole host of things that are/can be more than just thank you. (Lesson #6: Spend as much time on relationships with your donors, friends and key supporters . . . plan it out).

## 7. Pay attention to the pipeline

Getting potential new donors (at whatever level) to begin the association with your organisation is vital (examples: test more in your mail programme; invite a bigger list to your events; adjust donor-giving levels). (Lesson #7: Increase your time and financial budgets for prospecting).

## 8. Look for collaborations

Institutional donors begin to look at 'who's partnering with whom' when giving gets tighter. Whether it's in programme delivery, cost containment/bartering, shared resources or a host of other areas, find a partner that enhances or supplements what your organisation does. (Lesson

#8: No organisation lives on an island or in a silo any more . . . find someone to dance with!)

## 9. Celebrate the living, honour the dead

A bequest promotion effort is perfect during difficult economic times (the donor doesn't have to write another cheque). The identification and annual shepherding of those older donors from your file will ensure that your endowment/safety-net grows, giving your organisation a foundation of stable operational support every year. (Lesson #9: Studies show that most bequests are changed 18 to 24 months before death . . . get close to your older donors).

## 10. Give your volunteers a rest

When the cycle begins to turn around, think about giving your volunteers/boards/staff some time off. Difficult circumstances take an emotional toll as well, people need a chance to recharge, renew and reignite their passion for your organisation. (Lesson #10: Let everyone have a little vacation down time . . . just not too long . . . good people are tough to find, train and replace). ■

*If you're going to meet your fundraising targets when the economy takes a dip, keep calm, have a clear plan, tell your story and be sure to ask. Ed Laity, CEO of DVA Navion in North America, shares five more guidelines in the second instalment of this article.*

*To see the first five points of this article, please download issue 96 from [www.dmi.co.za](http://www.dmi.co.za)*

# Open debate, not politeness, is what drives nonprofit innovation (continued)

## Continued From page 4

And always find out whether they are eager to make an idea broadly accessible if it's successful or whether they are hoping to keep it to themselves so it can become part of the group's image and brand (therefore making it easier for the group to get more money).

Even worse is if the idea is being plugged by 'important people or foundations' that point to other 'important people or foundations' also supporting it. That's not proof that something works; it's an echo chamber.

## Is the idea pitched in jargon-laden hype suggesting it can solve every problem?

Few ideas can really do as much as their promoters say. Even the most exciting hypothesis may not yet be proven and may not work in every situation.

## What realistic potential does the idea have to being expanded to other places?

Too often people race to suggest that an idea should be copied elsewhere without understanding that what may work in one place may not work in another.

## Does the idea take nonprofits away from their missions?

Does it help them or simply divert their resources into building expensive systems that this new thing requires? Nonprofits often forget that when they get a new infusion of money for a programme, they may have to pay for a whole new set of expenses. If the expenses outweigh the new grant, it's probably time to look elsewhere.

## Has the idea been designed with suggestions from the people it's supposed to help?

So often new ideas, like microfinance or impact investing, are deployed before anyone has listened to the people the approach is supposed to benefit or asked them to get involved in developing a new approach.

## Is the goal to help an entire community? Or is it mainly to increase revenue for one group?

Many new ideas touted for nonprofits are mostly about changing where the revenue comes from: For example, in the case of social-impact bonds, private investors rather than government. But as Kate Barr, executive director of the Nonprofit Assistance Fund, says, the real question should be: 'Will it result in better outcomes for people?'

Getting the answers to such questions is a first step to encouraging vigorous critical thinking, discussion, and analysis.

Nonprofits need more, however. It's time to create public forums and spaces that encourage critical thinking and questioning.

And we need all of our organisations and leaders to value and practice strong critical thinking, rather than suggesting that it's an attempt to dispute the good intentions behind nonprofits' work.

Such changes would mean that money would be used well, fewer opportunities for change would be missed, and every nonprofit and donor would do better in meeting our duty to society.

That would be one goal nobody would need to debate. ■

# How often should I mail my donors?

*If you've ever wondered how many times you should mail your donors during the year, then read on.*

**If you have a direct mail fundraising programme (and if you don't you're missing out on an opportunity) then somewhere along the line – you – or someone within your organisation, has asked this question.**

For the most part, it is prompted by a concern that mailing too often will cause 'donor fatigue' or create a negative reaction. And it's a perfectly acceptable question to raise – because no-one wants to upset their donors. But wait, are we sure that mailing too frequently is a way of upsetting donors?

Over the more than 40 years that I've been involved with mailing programmes, I've seen more evidence of donors feeling neglected and ignored than I've seen complaints of being mailed too often. And very often, the complaints come from the way they're mailed, rather than the frequency.

So let's look at what might constitute a typical annual direct mail programme aimed at existing donors:

- Four renewal mailings to the entire donor file.
- Two newsletters also to the whole file.
- A major donor mailing to a small number of donors who've joined your major supporter group by giving an additional large gift each year.
- A major donor newsletter to this special group.
- A 'thank you' mailing to your monthly donors mailed mid year.
- A Christmas/Season's Greeting card to your monthly donors at year-end.

To this you might add a special mailing to donors of 65 years and older inviting them to enquire about your bequest booklet, and another special mailing to lapsed donors with a strong incentive for them to renew their support.

So your typical donor mailing programme might have no fewer than 12 mailings each year. But, of course, not all going to the same segments of our donor file and not all would contain a direct 'ask'.

Only your four renewal mailings, and your Major Donor mailing would have direct 'asks' plus a donation form and a reply envelope. Each of these mailings would also be 'themed' with a specific project or seasonal reason for the donor to support. So they wouldn't just be 'yet another letter asking for money'. Each would recognise the donor's past support and would add a compelling reason for why you're approaching them again.

The two newsletters (and the Major Donor newsletter) would have, as their main purpose, providing feedback to donors on how their money was being used.

However, they would contain a deep flap, pre-addressed reply envelope with a low key 'ask' along the lines of 'please keep this

envelope for the next time you'd like to support some of our projects'.

## Costs covered

And the addition of just that envelope with what we term a 'soft ask', will ensure that you receive sufficient income from the mailing to cover the entire cost of the newsletter. In fact, income from a well produced newsletter will often produce donations equivalent to double the total production and mailing cost.

## Three fundraising truths

The major donor newsletter is the only one that might not contain this reply envelope as these folk are already giving very generously and, as the list is likely to be a small one, the cost of sending them a newsletter is not great.

If you're still a bit skeptical about the number of mailings that I am recommending, then think about these three fundraising truths:

1. Never attempt to think for your donors. They'll let you know if you're annoying them by mailing too often (and you should quickly and courteously respond to all complaints). But beware the tendency to react to a small handful of complaints when the majority have voted positively by sending you additional donations.
2. Every additional mailing to existing donors will produce an increase in net income for your direct mail programme – even if you mail each and every month.
3. With the large number of other organisations who are communicating with people who are often your donors, you should ensure that your organisation isn't forgotten because you aren't communicating as regularly as some of your competitors.

In summary, you probably could, and certainly should be mailing your donors more often than you are at present.

But you should be doing so with an intelligently planned and well-constructed programme that incorporates plenty of feedback and acknowledgement of their support. And, finally, don't forget to show them how their money's being put to excellent use. ■



With acknowledgement to the late Terry Murray in **The Art of Asking + 60 More Fundraising Tips and Tricks**

# 75% of young donors turned off by out-of-date websites

**O**rganisations that want to persuade people in their 20s and 30s to give and volunteer don't have much of a chance if they're not updating their websites frequently, a new study in the USA has found.

Three out of four donors born from 1979 to 1994 – a generation often referred to as 'millennials' – said they were turned off when a nonprofit's website had not been updated recently. Six in 10 said they wanted nonprofits to share stories about successful projects and programmes and appreciated information about an organisation's cause and the people it serves.

What especially bothers them: Too much information about the group itself, said Derrick Feldmann, chief executive of Achieve, a consulting company that advises nonprofits on how to work with young donors.

The company conducted the survey of 2 600 young donors to learn about their attitudes.

## Monthly giving appeals

Most of the young people surveyed had given only small amounts to nonprofits – 23% said their largest gift was \$51 to \$100, while another 40% said their largest donation was \$1 to \$50.

But young donors are open to making small donations more frequently: About 52% said they would be interested in making monthly gifts to an organisation. Another 70% said they would be willing to raise money for an organisation they cared about, and 64% said they had raised money in a fundraising event.

The donors also prefer to give online, with 84% saying they want to give through a website.

The second most-popular way to give, with only 48% of donors, was to make a donation in person at an event.

## Showing action

To help nonprofits learn more about how young donors view their sites, Achieve's researchers videotaped young people as they viewed nonprofit websites and asked whether the sites motivated them to give and volunteer.

In the videos, many of the participants called attention to websites that failed to provide enough information about the organisation and its results.

## Among the survey's other findings

- More than eight in 10 young donors have smartphones and use them to read e-mails and articles from nonprofits. Three-quarters of those donors said their biggest frustration when interacting with a nonprofit on a mobile device was finding that its site was designed for a desktop, not for easy access on the go.
- More than 65 % of young donors receive e-mail or newsletters from as many as five organisations, and 49% said they follow up to five organisations on social networks. Three in four young donors have liked, retweeted, or shared nonprofit content.
- Almost five in 10 volunteers said they were frustrated that they were asked to attend long training sessions when they thought their time could have been better used by learning procedures online and spending more of their time doing meaningful work to advance the nonprofit's mission. ■

*Websites for organisations like Repair the World need to show how volunteers help them achieve their mission, a new study has found. Cody Switzer reports.*

With acknowledgement to <http://philanthropy.com>

## Your brand identity (continued)

### Continued From page 1

them. Just like their for-profit counterpart, the nonprofit consumer (as well as funders and donors) is seeking a reliable experience with a desirable outcome. This is perhaps the most difficult part of brand management because good systems are often extremely difficult to create and maintain, especially for small to medium sized nonprofits.

This is why some brands may seem to be more of a name on the door than an indicator of reliability. The true brand experience is replicable.

### Treat your brand like an asset

A good brand is literally an asset. In the for-profit field, assets are regularly bought and sold. The Abercrombie & Fitch brand, which people in their teens and 20s recognise instantly, used to be a much different brand for their grandparents. Years after that original A&F line went out of

business, the name was purchased by a new company for use by the chain of stores that are now ubiquitous in malls in the USA.

The chief applicability of this principle to nonprofits is that a good brand represents enduring value and should not be treated lightly. The three or four dozen of the best-known nonprofit brand names know this intuitively. These organisations resemble for-profit franchises in many ways. The national office of nonprofit organisations is usually responsible for the care and protection of the brand name just as in for-profit franchises, and they charge a franchise fee as well, except that it goes by a different name – member dues.

Streetsmart nonprofit managers should treat their brand names like the assets they are. They may not be bought and sold, but they manage consumer demand and are a critical part of a nonprofit's effectiveness. ■

## Far flung missionaries go mobile to connect with donors

**M**issionaries are going global to raise more money. The year-old Love Global Foundation in Canada, helps missionaries working in remote areas use mobile technology to document and share their experiences and connect with donors who might be half a world away.

'It used to be you only heard from missionaries once a year, maybe in the form of a few paragraphs on the church bulletin board,' says Darian Kovacs, the charity's director and co-founder. 'We wanted to try to revitalise missionary work and bring new life to it. Our focus is on crowdfunding and storytelling, and these are what missionaries need.'

### Text messages and videos

The nondenominational organisation provides missionary workers with personal fundraising web pages along with tools and training to allow them at the very least to use text messages to submit reports from wherever they are working.

A Canadian electronics retail company also provides small, rugged video cameras for free so that missionaries who have web access, such as at Internet cafes, can transmit photos and videos.

'Donors who traditionally heard little from missionaries are now getting real-time updates and video from the actual field in Uganda or Sri Lanka or Southeast Asia,' Mr. Kovacs says. 'This allows them to really feel they are in the area and on the ground.'

Mr Kovacs equates the unedited updates to 'reality TV for missionaries,' with the ultimate goal being to motivate donors to

support the work.

For some missionaries, like Kevin and Matildah Van Ravenstein, a husband and wife who work with needy children in rural Zambia, the ability to post videos has helped build deep connections with donors. The couple, who mix video posts with photos and blogs, have raised more than \$43 000 in donations.

### Donors' fundraising pages

Love Global has also set up its website to make it easy for supporters to set up their own fundraising pages on behalf of any missionary they want to support and use social media to spread the appeals.

Mr. Kovacs says the approach has been especially effective in helping missionaries connect with young donors.

In its first year, the charity raised \$460 000 from 1 200 donors, 80% of whom were under age 40 and 90% of whom had never previously donated to a missionary.

Love Global takes 20% of donations to cover administrative and infrastructure costs. The charity is helping 755 missionaries, and Mr. Kovacs says the foundation hopes to raise \$1-million this year. The organisation might also expand to the United States at some point.

'We would love to open a branch in the U.S.,' Mr. Kovacs says. 'Right now, though, we really want to do a good job in Canada to prove that we are able to do this work.'

This began as an experiment and is turning into something that really works.'

### Storytelling from half a world away:

#### Advice from Love Global Foundation

- Give workers and volunteers inexpensive video cameras to help them record stories of the people they serve.
- Use blog software that allows workers in rural regions to post news updates, photos, and appeals from their cellphones.
- Encourage supporters to share stories about aid work through social networks such as Twitter and Facebook.

With acknowledgment to Brennen Jensen in *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* 27 June 2013.



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**Fundraising Forum** prides itself on keeping South African fundraisers right up-to-date with developing attitudes, trends and techniques, both here and overseas. We are grateful to the following international publications, which are regularly quoted and highly recommended:

- **The NonProfit Times**, 190 Tamarack Circle, Skillman, NJ08558, USA, (\$129 per annum) website: [www.nptimes.com](http://www.nptimes.com)
- **The Chronicle of Philanthropy**, PO Box 1989, Marion, Ohio, 43306, USA, (24 issues – per annum at \$95) website: <http://philanthropy.com>
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