

## Cause Marketing ... Doing Good is Good for Business

Cause marketing has been growing in popularity ever since businesses determined that doing good can be good for business.

Connecting your business to a philanthropic cause is not only a way to give back to your community and excite your employees, it's a way to grow your business.

### Selecting a Partner

It is important when considering a philanthropic partnership to create an emotional connection between your brand and your charity of choice. Consumers will feel good about purchasing your product or service with the knowledge that they are contributing to a greater purpose.

The cause marketing initiative must also blend with your corporate culture, values and brand attributes. A retail clothing store may form a partnership with Dress for Success, Goodwill or the Salvation Army while a grocery store may donate its goods to the Red Cross disaster relief, the Free Store Food Bank or a local soup kitchen.

No matter the partnership, if the campaign is not authentic your efforts may feel self-serving and could become counter-productive. The partnership should be something that excites your employees, the employees of the philanthropy and your customers.

Another important item to factor into your cause marketing partnership is input from your employees. Select various causes and allow employees to weigh-in on their choice. Seek to create opportunities for employee involvement and support them by allowing them time to participate.



### It's More Than Money

While giving monetary donations to a charity is generous, there's more to a partnership than writing a check.

Volunteerism is a great way to boost employee morale. Set an example by getting executive management involved. Company-wide participation in a cause marketing initiative shows genuine interest in the nonprofit and a firm commitment to the partnership.

### Getting Started

If your company doesn't have the influence of a multi-national corporation like P&G, GE or Macy's, think about starting small. Team up

with a local nonprofit to test the waters and learn how to maximize the benefits for both your company and the nonprofit. Remember to create that emotional connection between your brand and your charity of choice.

Once you have picked an organization, stay committed. You should expect your cause marketing partnership to be for the long term. A campaign only lasting a few short months could look like a publicity stunt to the community and to your employees. Communication, consistency and time make up a strong foundation of positive relationships.

Aligning your business in goodwill for the benefit of another organization is not only a good business practice, it's a simple way to gain visibility and cement your reputation as a beneficial member of the community.

Your public relations department or outside agency should be the starting point for developing a cause marketing initiative. In time, it should involve the entire company.

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