

Marketing Insights

Marketing & Public Relations Strategies from Bay Marketing Consultants

Strategic Community Relations – Making the Goodwill of the Holiday Season Last Year Round

Every holiday season business owners and managers are barraged by requests to support charities in need. The choices can be overwhelming when there are limited dollars to dole out. By organizing a community relations - or giving program - that is in place throughout the year, companies can maximize the power of their contributions and provide greater year-round impact for selected charitable organizations.

The key to successful giving is to have a strategy in place that makes sense for your organization and to evaluate the success of your donations and efforts based on pre-determined indicators.

Following are nine steps to set up an organized, strategic program for your organization:

- Delegate authority to organize and manage the program. This can be done internally or by an outside consultant or foundation.
- Consider creating an advisory board to approve or recommend proposals, identify prospective recipients and advise on worthy programs.
- Prepare a budget and identify ways you can support the community beyond financial resources. For example, some companies loan out executive talent, allow employees to volunteer during work-time or provide in-kind donations of services, use of facilities, equipment or supplies.
- Establish goals and create a mission statement.
- Determine what criteria must be met in order for your organization to support a cause. Many organizations limit donations to specific types of organizations (i.e. charities that support children, economic development, etc.) or to programs that their employees support or suggest.
- Agree on employee participation. Will employees represent the company at charity golf tournaments? If so, discuss what happens if they win a monetary or expensive prize. Will it be donated back to the charitable organization or is the employee permitted to keep the winnings?
- Once all aspects of the program are finalized, prepare a one-page written guideline for applicants. If possible, post it on your website.

Evaluating Corporate Giving

It is also important to evaluate the results of your program at least once a year.

- List all organizations that received donations and the annual total provided.
 - Identify any programs that were not consistent with the mission of the giving program or another business goal.
 - Survey employees to determine awareness and involvement with the program.
 - Survey recipient organizations to evaluate their use of the support provided.
 - Determine if the program has adequate funding and if any changes are necessary to the overall mission of the program.
- When you are ready to launch your program, consider organizing an event to maximize visibility with employees and community leaders. Look for opportunities to stretch awareness of your support. If your donation or sponsorship calls for signage or an advertisement, make sure to take advantage of these benefits with high-quality materials that enhance your company's image.
 - When donations are made, publicize them internally through bulletin boards, newsletters and Intranets. On the external side, be sure to partner with the recipient organization to maximize publicity results.





Justin deMatas, Holiday 2001



*Bay Marketing Consultants
wishes all of our friends a
very happy holiday season
and continued success
in the New Year.*

Bay Marketing Consultants Donates Services To Lions Club Hearing Center

Already recognized worldwide for their service to the blind and visually impaired, members of metro Detroit Lions Clubs have turned their attention toward assisting the hearing impaired. Bay Marketing Consultants has provided pro-bono media relations support to help the Lion's achieve their goals.



Randy and Teri deMatas accept a plaque of appreciation from Robert H. Mathog, M.D., chairman of the Lion's Hearing Center. The presentation took place at the organization's first annual fundraiser held this past fall.

The Lions Hearing Center of Southeastern Michigan is a cooperative venture between area Lions Clubs, the Detroit Medical Center and Wayne State University. It is located in the Detroit Medical Center's downtown campus. The Center's goal is to provide educational and social services to assist persons with hearing impairment and to research cures and prevention of hearing disorders.

Approximately one in 10 Americans suffer from some degree of hearing loss and every year 12,000 newborns leave a United States hospital with some type of hearing impairment.

For more information about the Lions Hearing Center of Southeast Michigan call 313-745-4664. Lions Clubs around the world have served the world's population since 1917. With 1.4 million members and 44,500 clubs in 187 countries, Lions Clubs International is the world's largest service club organization.

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