

Get More Bang for Your Charitable Buck

By Kristen Luke

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Do you support a charitable organization? Give a monthly donation? Attend the annual gala? Serve on the board or a committee?

Whatever your level of involvement is, you can probably still do more. This is especially true when it comes to incorporating your charitable support into a marketing strategy for your own business.

You don't support a charitable organization for your own personal or professional benefit; you support the organization because of your connection to its mission. That doesn't mean your business can't benefit from your generosity as well. In fact, by examining your charitable involvement from a marketing perspective, both the charity and your business may reap greater benefits than from your individual support alone.

Here are six ideas to boost your business and increase donations to your favorite charity at the same time.

Host a reception at your office

To support your favorite charity, host a wine and

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cheese reception at your office and invite the executive director or founder of the charity to give a 20 to 30 minute presentation about the work they do. Invite your clients, prospects and centers of influence (COI) to attend and encourage the charity to invite their board members and major supporters as well. After the presentation, leave time for mingling so that guests can speak to the charity's representatives to learn more about the organization. The end goal is to have your guests eventually volunteer with the organization or make a donation. Position the event as an orientation so that guests don't feel pressured to make a donation. State that your purpose is to introduce them to an organization that is making worthwhile changes in the community. This event will create goodwill with your clients, prospects and COIs, strengthen your relationship with the charity, provide introductions to the charity's top supporters and possibly raise money for the organization.

Invite clients & COIs to fundraising events

Does the charity you support host an annual fundraising event? If so, purchase a table or group of tickets and invite some of your "A-list" clients and COIs to join you. This provides an opportunity to nurture your relationships while supporting the charity at the same time. If your guests are well connected in the community, they may also be able to provide you with introductions to other guests in attendance. If you are already planning small client appreciation events, purchasing a table at a fundraiser can be considered one of these events.

Make a donation in your clients' names

Instead of sending a holiday gift to your clients, make charitable donations in their names. Send an elegant holiday card to each of your clients announcing the donation and how they can make further donations if they wish to do so. This tactic creates goodwill among your clients and the charity will appreciate the donations.

Promote Your Support

Announce your continued support of the charity by including a badge in your newsletter or on your website. The badge could highlight an event you are sponsoring or just state something like "ABC Company proudly supports XYZ Non-Profit in its continued effort to end world hunger." Hyperlink the badge to the organization's website, an online donation site or an event registration page.

Make a donation for each new client



Instead of making general donations to the charity, offer to make a set donation for each new client you bring on board during a calendar year, guaranteeing a minimum donation amount. Contact the charity and see if they will publicize this arrangement on their website and newsletter. In addition, promote the offer on your own website, newsletter and in marketing materials you provide to prospective and existing clients.

Encourage survey participation with a donation

If you plan on conducting a client survey, offer to donate a set amount of money to the charity for each survey returned. This not only encourages survey participation, but also creates goodwill with your clients as they see your continued commitment to the community.

The next time you are about to write a check to your favorite charity, stop and think about how you can get more bang for your charitable buck. It's not only in the best interest of your business to promote your involvement, it's also in the best interest of the charity. Increase the reach and magnitude of your charitable support by creating a marketing strategy around your involvement.

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