

Cause Marketing.

Promoting a worthy cause
is good for your company
and the community.

Cause Marketing.

Your brand can make an impact.

Save the planet. Cure cancer. Stop child abuse. Help homeless pets.

You hear these messages as you shop, browse the internet, and watch television. **Where did the calls to action – or at least the call to care – come from?** For today's consumers, messages promoting causes of all kinds are not just coming from non-profit organizations. They're also coming from brands that benefit from supporting good causes.

What is cause marketing?

The most successful marketing creates an emotional connection with the target audience and compels action. There are many ways to do this, but today's consumers are increasingly responsive to a specific kind of warm, fuzzy marketing.

Cause-related marketing, or cause marketing, aligns a brand with a charitable cause with the goal of generating business and benefiting society. Cause marketing can take infinite forms. The "transactional philanthropy" model includes co-branded products sold specifically to support or promote a cause. Other models include brand sponsorship of special events and brand incentives for volunteering or donating.

Although not new, cause branding is gaining in popularity. In fact, many brands today are founded with support for a specific cause built right into their business model.

- Cause sponsorship is predicted to reach **\$1.84 billion in 2014**, a projected increase of 3.4% over 2013.

IEG Sponsorship Report

- **91% of global consumers are likely to switch** brands to one associated with a good cause, given comparable price and quality. *2013 Cone Communications/Echo Global CSR Study*

- **50% of global consumers** said they would be willing to reward companies that give back to society by paying more for their goods and services (44% in the U.S. and 38% in Canada). *Nielsen 2013 Consumers Who Care Study*

How does cause marketing benefit my brand?

Highlighting your brand's good deeds and charitable values is always a good PR move.

Of course, you want customers, employees and partners to see your brand in a positive light. But image isn't the only reason to engage in cause marketing.

Supporting a cause that your customers believe in can result in better returns. Today's consumers are increasingly willing to pay more for products and services if they believe their purchase helps support a charity. This is true for male and female consumers of all ages, although some generations are more influenced by cause marketing.

For many people, engaging with a brand's cause marketing campaign is an easier way to contribute to a charitable organization they believe in. It can even impart the same warm feeling as direct personal engagement.

Cause Marketing and Millennials

Millennial consumers, born between the 1980s and 2000s, gain more buying power every year. They are your customers. They are your employees. They are decision makers at home and in business. Contributing to the greater good is a common value associated with millennials. They expect brands to collaborate and engage with their favorite cause. They are more likely than any other demographic to say they will pay more for a product or service that "gives back." For this reason, a solid cause marketing strategy can especially resonate with this group.

- 34% of millennials make direct donations to causes.
- Half of them donate using their mobile device.
- Millennials are more likely to engage their favorite causes by persuading others to join them.
- Millennials are more likely to engage in transactional cause marketing through the purchase of items associated with a cause.

The key to successful cause marketing is to create shared value - for the cause, your customers and your brand.

Tips for a successful cause marketing campaign.

Keep it simple.

According to a 2013 study, 70% of consumers are confused by the messages companies use to talk about their cause marketing initiatives (*2013 Cone Communications/ Echo Global CSR Study*). Make it easy for your audience to understand what you are doing with clear messages – and partnerships that align with what your brand is about.

Go beyond dollars.

Money matters, but so do time and other resources. Provide an opportunity for participants - whether they're customers or staff - to volunteer, donate goods or contribute to the cause in some other way. That could mean something as simple as posting about or following the cause on social media.

Make it sharable.

People want other people to know they are doing good. Tie your cause initiatives to your social media marketing efforts. This may involve creating a hashtag or even a special web application. For online transactional campaigns, be sure people are prompted to share what they've done with their network immediately after donating or purchasing. You can even provide prewritten tweets or statuses that will help your campaign go viral.

Give from the heart.

Choose a cause that relates to your business and that your brand community (including associates) will genuinely support. Insincere or conflicting efforts are not worth the investment and can even open up your brand to criticism. For example, a Harvard Business Review article suggests that a hamburger chain's breast cancer awareness initiative failed because it was a poor fit considering the company's usual marketing targeted young male consumers using scantily clad women.

Formally align.

Even for a smaller, community-based cause marketing effort, it's worthwhile to formally engage with the benefiting organizational at the onset of your campaign. In appreciation for the support, they are apt to promote your initiative in a newsletter or via social media. This increases your brand reach and can positively influence the outcome of your campaign.

How do promotional products and cause marketing work together?

Promotional products and cause marketing are made for each other. In fact, a significant amount of Staples Promotional Products' business involves the creation of custom merchandise for our customers to use in cause-related events and campaigns.

What products you choose depends on your initiative and desired impact of the merchandise. Do you want custom T-shirts to commemorate a charity event? Are you selling promotional items to raise funds for a cause? Are you incentivizing donations or participation?

Your promotional products consultant can help you choose the best solution for your cause marketing needs.

Case Study: Generating Likes and Warmth

During a particularly cold winter, Staples Promotional Products embarked on a cause marketing campaign with the United Way of the Siouxland.

Goals

- 1) Help needy people in a community where we do business.
- 2) Increase our Facebook following.
- 3) Provide a positive point of engagement for our brand audience.

Strategy

After taking the idea to the United Way, our organizations worked together on a strategy to promote the campaign, including social media mentions, blog posts, email and a press release to alert the local news.

Call to Action

We promised to donate one coat (up to 984) for every new Like received in a certain window of time.

Results

We surpassed the goal two weeks early, increasing our Facebook following by about a third. Our company was also mentioned in several local print and broadcast news stories. Because we beat our deadline, the coats were received by United Way and its partner organizations early and before the last winter storms.



Colorful event materials are one way to step up your cause marketing campaign. For free name tags and stickers you can print, visit: www.YourBrandPartner.com/content/printables.

Case Study: Global Day of Service

To promote volunteerism and give back to communities where the brand is involved, Newell Rubbermaid invited employees to participate in a Global Day of Service.

Goals

- 1) Make a positive impact in local communities around the globe.
- 2) Empower employees to give back.
- 3) Provide a way to commemorate the day.

Strategy

Newell Rubbermaid partnered with Habitat for Humanity for a campaign that would bring visibility to both brands and provide volunteers for various Habitat building projects around the world.

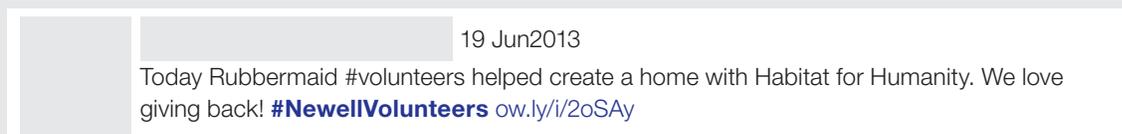
Call to Action

“Give a little, gain a lot” was the slogan for Rubbermaid’s Global Day of Service. The phrase was intended to inspire both employees and community members. Rubbermaid employees who participated in this campaign received custom T-Shirts to wear while volunteering and to commemorate the day.

Results

More than 1,000 Rubbermaid employees participated in the Global Day of Service, working on 73 Habitat projects worldwide. The company and employees shared pictures and videos throughout the day using a dedicated hashtag.

As seen on Twitter on Global Day of Service:



Contact your Staples Promotional Products representative today to learn more about the cause marketing possibilities for your brand.

SmartPapers™

At Staples Promotional Products, we're dedicated to helping you meet your marketing and promotional goals. That's why we've developed our exclusive SmartPapers™, expert guides that address real world issues facing businesses in every industry.

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