



Three Things to Do with Old Marketing & Fundraising Materials

When it's time to create new materials, here's how to bid the old ones good-bye.

By Elaine Fogel

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Two attributes many nonprofits share are frugality and a deep desire to put hard-earned funds into the mission. Both are admirable. However, there are always exceptions. Sometimes what's motivated by a desire to save money can actually hurt an organization.

Several years ago, I worked for a nonprofit that grossed \$1 million from a door-to-door campaign. Over time, what had been a cash cow evolved into a drain on resources with declining nets each year. Because the organization had been conducting this campaign for many decades, it was difficult to replace the revenue.

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The organization's managers realized they needed to build the brand as the organization fell behind the fundraising "A" list to a "B" position. But they were reluctant to spend any more on the campaign's infrastructure. When I suggested they upgrade their campaign materials, they resisted because of cost.

I was concerned that the look of older brochures was dated, with black and white photos similar to what one would have seen in the 1970s. Although the organization's tagline had been revised, this change wasn't reflected in the older materials. That sent a confusing message.

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It took me a few years of pestering my senior colleagues, but at last I got the go-ahead to create a new brochure. The organization finally had an opportunity to show itself in a more modern light, giving its case for support a stronger vehicle with a more convincing message.

So, what to do with the old brochures? I came up with three answers. Use these ideas yourself next time you're wondering how to say farewell to stale marketing and fundraising materials.

1. Archive them.

Collect samples of each piece and store them in archive boxes. Having older records is valuable for historic purposes and will come in handy when you celebrate a milestone anniversary down the road.

2. Recycle them.

If you have one-sided fliers or other materials you won't be using, give them to your local business store or print supplier to cut down to memo size. Use the blank side for scratch paper to jot down phone numbers and messages.

3. Pitch them.

Confusing and stale materials are counterproductive to your purpose and dilute your organization's brand. So if they're printed on two sides and can't be recycled as

scratch paper, suck it up and throw them out!

A major component of branding is consistency. Your organization needs to look and feel the same no matter which department or staff members are distributing messages to their "customers." It's worth taking time to do a communications audit to ensure that all organizational messaging and collateral materials are consistent in tone, look, and brand identity. ■

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RESOURCES

- Lauer, Larry, "How to Use a Total Marketing Approach to Renew Your Organization and Make an Impact," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 13, No. 3.
- Ott, Christine, "Nonprofit Communications on a Shoestring: Thriving in the Midst of Chaos," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 8, No. 2.
- Zimmerman, Joel S., "The Nonprofit Branding Exercise," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 26, No. 1.

These resources are available at www.snpo.org/members.