



Where Can You Find the Marketing Resources You Need?

Even with a tight budget, there are ways to create a marketing plan.

Q: We are a small nonprofit organization with limited resources and a tight budget. How do we attract the resources we need to develop a marketing plan so that we can get the word out about our organization and find supporters?

A: I'm assuming you already have a strategic plan, understood and approved by your board, which spells out the mission, key constituencies, and direction of the organization. Use this plan as a guide.

Developing a marketing plan takes insight, research, and time. Where do these resources come from? Here are some ideas:

You may find some practical assistance from a board member or other volunteer in your organization. Many people involved in small businesses have developed their own marketing plans and are happy to share their expertise.

In many parts of the country there are groups of retired businesspeople who volunteer their time and skills to help nonprofits.

Approach the chair of the marketing department of your local college or university. See if a faculty member would be willing to work with you, possibly as a course project.

Marketing is too important to be left to the marketers.

Some MBA programs have consulting groups — student-run clubs where members gain experience by working on practical problems.

Hire an MBA student as a summer intern. One source of MBA interns is the MBA-Nonprofit Connection (MNC), which works nationally to encourage MBA students to consider careers in the nonprofit sector. It promotes a limited number of summer internships, which run about 10 weeks and must pay at least \$400 a week. Some nonprofits arrange for community foundations or other donors to cover these summer salaries. For more information, contact MNC at www.mnconnection.org.

Of course none of these ideas is a panacea. If you use interns, someone in your organization must be able to mentor them. Whatever strategy you use, be sure to involve everyone in the organization. Remember, marketing is too important to be left to the marketers. ■

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Note: For more advice, see these Nonprofit World articles (available on CD-ROM at http://www.snpo.org/resources/product_catalog.php):

“Are You Making the Most of That Intern?” (Vol. 7, No. 5), “Using Interns Creatively,” (Vol. 10, No. 2), “Supervising Interns Effectively” (Vol. 11, No. 4), “Putting Retiree Talent to Work for Nonprofits” (Vol. 10, No. 2), “Universities Offer Marketing Key” (Vol. 4, No. 1), and “Nonprofit Communications on a Shoestring” (Vol. 8, No. 2).

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