



### Why Nonprofits Should Market to Women

In *The She Spot: Why Women Are the Market for Changing the World—And How to Reach Them* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, www.bkconnection.com), Lisa Witter and Lisa Chen, two communications experts, explore gender differences to show that women aren't a niche market but the primary audience for nonprofits.

Marketing to women will advance your cause because women give. Although they're tougher customers, they're loyal, they volunteer, and they share information. Marketing to women draws in men as well, because of the way both women and men make decisions.

Men and women think differently, and these differences shape what matters to women and how they make decisions. Women's tendency for empathy can be harnessed as a force for change. Speak to their hearts with stories and humor. Appeal to a sense of group identity. "High-touch" marketing will yield longer relationships than traditional appeals. Women value relationships, and creating community can catalyze activism.

The book is aimed at helping nonprofits market more effectively. Business-as-usual—that is, perpetuating male-dominated preferences and perspectives—won't create change. Marketing to women is an inclusive, not exclusive, strategy, thanks to the way women typically make decisions to support causes they care about and their inclination to build community. □

—reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

### Five Easy Savings Tips

A streamlined spending plan could be your key to saving thousands of dollars. Alliance Cost Containment (ACC) offers these tips, based on its assessment of where nonprofits can save the most money:

**1. Be strategic when sourcing print.** Nonprofits tend to spend a great deal on printing services. But they do most of their sourcing at the department level rather than the organizational level. This reduces their ability to leverage buying across the organization to receive better terms and services. Assess your print needs across the entire organization, and negotiate with printers to serve all your needs.

**2. Use a single merchant services provider.** If you receive online revenues, be sure they're processed through a single provider. Getting all online revenue under a single merchant card processor saves money and reduces risk at the same time.

**3. Audit your invoices.** Many organizations think that once they've negotiated a good price, their work is done. But there may be thousands in overcharges due to inaccurate billings that don't get caught in the invoice review/approval process. Conduct at least quarterly audits of a sampling of your high-cost vendor invoices. Look for inaccurate charges, and make sure you recover the overpayments.

**4. Watch out for cramming,** which happens when a third-party company adds a service to your telecom bill simply because you didn't opt out of a service you never wanted. These charges tend to get buried in the back of invoices, and you may assume they're just part of the telecom provider's charges. If you find any such charges, call your telecom provider immediately to have them removed.

**5. Look for alternatives.** Office supplies are a great area to review for lower-cost alternatives. For example, a name-brand manila folder may cost 50% more than a private-label brand, yet most people choose the name-brand. Look at alternatives to the products you currently buy for easy opportunities to save money. □

### Make the Impossible Possible: A Counterintuitive Approach to Change

While the authors of *The Power of Positive Deviance* (Harvard University Press, www.hup.harvard.edu) admit that "positive deviance" is an awkward, oxymoronic term, the concept is simple: Look for outliers who succeed against all odds, and adapt their innovative ideas to meet your organization's needs.

To discover positive deviant behaviors, find these outliers and ask them probing questions such as the following: What do you do when X problem happens or you are faced with the challenge of Y? Most people have had problems with X and Y; how have you overcome those difficulties? Can you show us how? Steps critical to the success of the positive deviance approach include:

- **Focus** on what's working against all odds rather than what's wrong, what's broken, or what's missing.
- **Discover** uncommon but successful strategies through inquiry and observation.
- **Invite** people to approach a problem by reframing it from their perspective.
- **Host** conversations in which new ideas are explored. Articulate a preferred future that's different from the past.
- **Design** an initiative based on the findings. Make progress real by asking people to develop their own indicators to assess improvement.
- **Evaluate** initiatives at regular, frequent intervals. Document and share results. □



### Need a Mentor? Forget the Expert

When people early in their careers seek mentors, they often target those with a depth of experience. But experts can be too far removed from your day-to-day work to help you solve problems. Select at least one mentor with only a few more years of experience than you. Someone who has recently walked in your shoes can give you practical, relevant advice on the challenges you face.

— adapted from *Guide to Getting the Mentoring You Need*, Harvard Business Review Press

### Secrets of a Harmonious Board

There's no such thing as a difficult person, just people whose needs haven't been met. You can use this piece of wisdom to help smooth out problems in the board room. Here are some more tips for reducing power struggles and enhancing board performance:

- **Create** opportunities for board members to become better acquainted with one another.
- **Help** people understand that becoming a nonprofit board member may mean assuming a new role.
- **Explain** the effect of disruptive behavior on the group, and provide conflict resolution training.
- **Identify** the needs of each person, and do all you can to meet those needs.
- **Seek** and put to use the talents and contributions of all board members.

— from *Walking the Board Walk* (Patos Island Press, www.patosislandpress.com)

### How to Pump Up Your Fundraising

Gail Perry shares these provocative nuggets from the recent Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) International Conference in Vancouver:

**1. Stop talking about yourself.** Martin Luther King didn't say, "I have an organization!" He said "I have a dream!"

It's not about you or your organization. Nobody cares when your organization was founded. Nobody. It's all about the dream—your organization's dream of a new and improved world. That's the conversation you need to be having.

**2. Donor retention is more important than cash totals.** If you can focus on and measure only one thing in your fundraising program, it should be donor retention. You need to go all out to keep the donors you have—above all.

**3. Create a dashboard**—a consistent set of indicators—to track fundraising metrics. Check out <http://www.slideshare.net/seattledrury/beyond-cash-fundraising-management-dashboard> to see how to set up several different measures of fundraising results.

**4. Put your donors on camera.** Ask donors why they care, and film their answers. Not only will you have a powerful fundraising tool, but you'll cultivate your donors at the same time by paying attention to them, asking them to get in touch with their personal passion for the cause, and touching their hearts.

**5. Stop asking for money. Start asking for action.** Give donors something to do. It makes them happier. It involves them in the cause. It fans the flames of their passion. And it sets them up for larger, sustained giving.

For more details, see Gail Perry's online newsletter "Fired Up Fundraising" at [www.gailperry.com](http://www.gailperry.com).

### The Reality of the Workplace

Has the slow economic recovery lulled you into a false sense of security regarding your workforce? Here's the reality, according to a new study:

- The economy is poised for job growth: 54% of employers anticipate adding employees in 2012 – an increase of 17% since 2011.
- Job satisfaction and engagement are at an all-time low. Disengagement in the U.S. workforce costs \$300 billion per year in lost productivity.
- 93% of employers believe there is a talent shortage – or that there will be in the next 12-24 months.
- The ability to manage change is the most critical leadership competency.

Organizations unprepared for this reality will face serious challenges in the upcoming war for talent, especially if they've ignored their talented employees or treated them poorly. Here are steps to remain at the top of your game:

- Hang on to the talent you have. View your employees as strategic assets. Provide opportunities for growth, give them control over their work, and make sure they're able to balance their work and home lives.
- Ask older employees to mentor and develop younger ones. Organizations that do so have higher engagement and retention rates.
- Create a culture that attracts and retains the type of talent needed. Hire people who lead others well, and support them through training and development.
- Use new technologies like Hilo ([www.thehiloproject.com](http://www.thehiloproject.com)) to recruit constantly and connect with talented, motivated people through the Internet.

For more details, see "The New Reality 2012: The Talent War," available from Birkman International ([www.birkman.com](http://www.birkman.com)).