

Mosaik Pieces is Mosaik Strategies' Newsletter, sent to subscribers six times annually. If you would like to continue to receive the *Mosaik Pieces* newsletter, please send an email to info@mosaikstrategies.com and type "subscribe" in the subject line.

Corporate Relations

Value in The Ask

How difficult do you find it to "make the ask?" Most people find that the most difficult part of development. It's also what keeps many people out of development. An ineffective "ask" can also make the most competent person ineffective in their role. Unfortunately, one of the reasons many people find this difficult is because they see making "the ask" as begging for a handout. In fundraising, you often have to approach individual donors for contributions. In corporate relations, when you are negotiating with companies about sponsor and partner relationships, you are NOT looking for donations. You are offering them a valuable opportunity. It's impossible to walk into a meeting with a corporate prospect and have a good outcome if you are not aware of the value the company could be getting from the relationship with your organization.

Many development professionals looking for funding from companies see corporate support as donations, not as a value-driven relationship. That is unfortunate as it makes them less effective. It's true that there are companies out there that give because it's the right thing to do, but for the most part, company representatives need to see the value to the success and the profitability of their company if they are to agree to support your organization. Before approaching a company, ask yourself a few questions the help determine the value you offer before you talk with company representative. Below are a few ideas:

- What market does your organization reach and what companies would be interested in that market?
- In what field are your staff members and/or association members experts? What companies would be interested in reaching a pool of experts in that field?
- What region does your organization reach and what companies are interested in that region, either because their employees live and work there or because they need to reach the market there?
- What is the reach of your organization? Define this value in numbers of people reached via your website, your newsletter(s), your network of members, etc.

Considering these questions might help you better define what value you offer corporate prospects. It's important to make sure the approach you use is targeted and not simply "throwing spaghetti on the wall."

Strategic Diversity

Reaching New Markets

Our society is growing more diverse every year. The U.S. Census Bureau projects that, by the year 2050, minorities will comprise nearly 50 percent of the U.S. population. And aside from racial and cultural groups, special interest groups such as the disabled community or the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender (GLBT) community are continuing to gain influence. In this evolving population, businesses cannot afford to ignore diverse markets as they plan their strategies. Marketing to the population as a whole is becoming difficult if not unfeasible, with so many different, smaller markets growing in influence. Companies that continue to rely on old patterns of marketing will soon find themselves outdistanced by those who are proactive in reaching out to the new groups that are flourishing around them.

Diversity presents unique challenges to companies looking to reach into new markets. Differences in perception, in expectations, in values and beliefs will be encountered no matter what group you reach out to;

language barriers and social or religious differences may be added challenges. A commitment to learning and understanding as much as possible about the group you're targeting is essential for success. It's important to identify which groups in particular you want to reach out to: an intention to reach "diverse" markets in general, without group-specific planning and research, is guaranteed to fail. But by targeting a specific group, and working to build trust, understanding, and two-way communication between your business and the group's members, you will both increase your profitability and enrich your community.

Community Relations

Integrating Business and Giving

More and more, companies are viewing philanthropy not as a separate activity, disconnected from their business plans, but as an integrated part of their business strategy. Where once a company would contribute to a wide range of organizations, unrelated to the nature of the business itself, now companies are becoming more strategic in choosing organizations that relate to their core interests. For example, Fannie Mae supports affordable homeownership and housing opportunities through its foundation. Scotts Miracle-Gro supports community gardening programs. Microsoft supports education and technology training in underserved communities worldwide. In all of these cases the company's philanthropy directly supports its core business and helps build its market. Ultimately this development increases profitability.

This strategic approach to giving has a number of advantages. Beyond the image of responsible citizenship that philanthropy helps create, you are demonstrating interest and concern toward a particular area which is likely to be important to both your customers and your employees. This increases visibility in your market and retention in your company. By choosing areas that are relevant to your business interests, you can also promote recruitment, both by increasing the pool of qualified people available (as with companies that support education), and by gaining a name for contributions in an area that is of interest to your potential candidates.

Philanthropy and community support can yield many benefits to your company, aside from the knowledge of doing good and the benefit to the community as a whole. It's worthwhile to consider what organizations and charities might align with your company's interests.

Announcements

Did you see the latest? The September/October edition of *Advancing Philanthropy* featured an article by Mikel Smith Koon entitled "Where's My Line Item?" For more information on *Advancing Philanthropy* or the Association of Fundraising Professionals, go to

We've launched! Look for your new website at www.mosaikstrategies.com

Until next time, here's to greater profitability!



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