

Sustainability

Working with Businesses During a Downturn

Mid-February 2009



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A service of the Corporation for National and Community Service - Special Projects and Sustainability Initiative

Dear “Working” Colleague,

The financial climate is challenging for both businesses and for those organizations that depend on their support. Now is the time for your organization to examine the ways that charities and companies can help each other. Click on the titles at the right to learn how to...

Build a Business Partnership

Become a Business Asset

Tailor Your Requests for Today’s Business Climate

Do you have questions or ideas about tapping into businesses? Contact us through Sustainability@CampaignConsultation.com for more information. You can still access previous issues of On-the-Go eTA by clicking on the back issues at the bottom of the page.

TOP ▲

Build a Business Partnership

Understanding is the bridge to strong business partnerships. Too often, businesses and nonprofits think that they are on totally opposite sides of a street. In fact, they share some of the same characteristics and are impacted by the same social and economic conditions. Both are important to the local or greater community.

The following chart may be useful in comparing profit purposed businesses with those that exist as social profit organizations:

<i>They’re Different...</i>	
Social Profit Organizations	Business
Mission driven	Profit driven

IN THIS ISSUE:

click on titles below to read full articles

[Build a Business Partnership](#)

[Become a Business Asset](#)

[Tailor Your Requests for Today’s Business Climate](#)

[Tips for Tough Times](#)

[Resources](#)

Sustainability Learning Products and Services:

[On-The-Go eTA](#)

[Online support at Sustainability@CampaignConsultation.com](#)

[The Chronicle of Philanthropy](#)

[Workshops/ Clinics](#)

[Online Courses/ Webinars](#)

[Web Wizard](#)

[The 5Cs](#)

[VISTA Viewfinder](#)

Works to decrease the need for its services	Works to grow its market for its goods or services
Seeks gifts from individuals, foundations, businesses, government sources, etc.	Sells products and services to individuals and other businesses, organizations, government, etc.
Its mission benefits the "greater good" of the community, society, or the world.	Exists for the financial benefit of its owners, shareholders, and employees.
It does not pay taxes, and uses its funds only for the mission for which it was formed.	Pays taxes on its profit and can expand its products or services as it wishes.
When a nonprofit goes out of business, its remaining assets must be given to another nonprofit.	When a for-profit organization goes out of business, its assets can be liquidated and the proceeds distributed to the owners or the shareholders.
Changing mission takes approval of Board of Directors and can be time consuming and have a receding impact on fundraising.	Can change focus rather quickly to take advantage of new markets.
Overseen by a board of directors.	Controlled by shareholders who purchase stock in the assets of the company.
Members of the board of directors vote to elect new board members. Each member only has one vote and membership does not give them an ownership right in the assets of the organization.	Shareholders of the corporation vote to choose directors of the corporation and owners of multiple shares have multiple votes.

They're similar...

Tips for Tough Times

Legacy gifts remained strong in the Depression years of the 1930's. Be sure to inform good friends who are business leaders of planned gift and bequest opportunities.

TOP ▲

- Both are generally incorporated so that assets are held and business is transacted in the name of the corporation rather than the individuals involved.
- Both are managed and run by the people who are employed by the corporation.
- Both are involved in producing a good or service for society.
- To survive, both need to generate or bring at least as much revenue as they spend on operations.
- Both need to inform their constituents of their goods and services.
- Both need to respond to needs in their markets or communities.
- Both need to engage in sound and ethical management practices to gain and maintain the support of their constituents whether they are selling a product or providing a service.

TOP ▲

Become a Business Asset

Your social profit organization does not need to feel it is always on the receiving end when it comes to



always on the receiving end when it comes to partnerships with businesses. Studies show that people in the U.S. have a more positive opinion of companies that support the causes they care about. In fact, 65% would switch to a brand associated with a good cause, price and quality being equal. When presenting your case for business support, be certain that the business knows that you can impact their bottom line.

Let businesses know about the benefits companies experience from a healthy relationship with your organization, such as:

- Enhanced corporate image and reputation that leads to customer loyalty
- Increased brand awareness and recognition of products associated with reputable social profit organizations
- Competitive advantage in recruiting and retaining employees who express pride in their employer
- Positive relationships with community consumers
- Broader media attention

Consider providing these opportunities for business supporters:

- Display sponsor logos on event banners and advertisements.
- List corporate donors in a special category on your website and in your annual report.
- Create a plaque for public recognition in a lobby.
- Host a breakfast for local business leaders to gain an understanding of your program and also provide an opportunity for networking.
- Include a silent auction at a fundraising event that will give businesses an opportunity to showcase their products and services.
- Send a donor appreciation gift to employees, such as cookies to a small local business or a framed picture of employees on a volunteer project, and boost employee morale
- Provide specialized training in your area of expertise during a lunch hour or at a company retreat
- Schedule a volunteer workday with employees wearing company t-shirts. (It can be fun to get out of the office.)
- Offer yourself as a community expert to help a new

“I cannot say whether things will get better if we change; what I can say is they must change if they are to get better.”

– G.C. (Georg Christoph) Lichtenberg,
1742-1799, German scientist and
satirists.

Tailor Your Requests for Today's Business Climate

Businesses that are as cash-strapped as social profit organizations may be less inclined to make cash gifts this year. However, many businesses are still excellent sources of support for your program or project. Evaluate your budget and where you spend money, look for ways you can cut or eliminate that cost with help from a local business.

Here are some alternate ways cash-strapped businesses can provide some support to your program:

Products

Many businesses that sell products have an overstock these days. They may be willing to provide you with what you need in order to clear space for more profitable and fresher products. In addition to office supplies, look for products your programs can use or that you pass on to your service clients.

Volunteers

Many larger companies have policies encouraging their employees to volunteer in the community and even provide paid release time for them to accomplish this. Smaller businesses see a benefit in having employees seen in the community, too. It's advertising and it's good business. It is a networking opportunity and also demonstrates that they are good corporate citizens. Don't forget to consider business leaders when seeking leadership volunteers. Their advice and their connections are valuable.

Services

Businesses that sell services do not have products for your use, but they can be excellent sources for resources that would increase your budget if you were forced to pay for them. There are hundreds of services a company can provide. Sometimes that service may not be their first line of business. Look for large corporations that have legal, design, printing, or technology departments and ask if they would be willing to help you out.

[Click here](#) for a partial list of services you can seek from a business and for some other ideas for what to ask of businesses that can improve your work and help your bottom line.

Let us know

Contact Sustainability@CampaignConsultation.com
We would be happy to answer questions or to give you more support.

Thank you for your interest in On-The-Go eTA. We encourage you to send this and other issues of [OTG eTA](#) to friends and colleagues who would benefit from the information. Also, if you're on information-overload, you may request [email removal](#). Otherwise OTG e-TA will be back soon with another edition.

TOP ▲

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For more information, contact:
CAMPAIGN CONSULTATION, Inc.
2819 Saint Paul Street, Baltimore, MD 21218.4312 USA
T. 410.243.7979 x19 F. 410.243.1024 Toll Free: 1.877.243.2253
Sustainability@CampaignConsultation.com
www.CampaignConsultation.com

Tailor Your Requests for Today's Business Climate (cont.)

Here are some additional ways for businesses to give without cash:

Services

Here is a partial list of services you can seek from local businesses:

- Design (architectural, graphics, website, etc.)
- Printing
- Editing,
- Research,
- Professional, financial, medical, legal (don't just look to law firms. Large corporations also have legal departments which may be willing to provide this service to a nonprofit.)
- Technical (computer, etc.)
- Management
- Human resources expertise,
- Transportation
- Facilities construction and maintenance (painting, organizing, plumbing, electrical, carpentry, etc.)
- Beauty & grooming services for clients
- Automotive repair & maintenance
- Skilled trade
- Other

Space

Seek out unused space for temporary or long-term use. Ask to hold an event or mount an exhibit at a local business that has appropriate space. This can benefit the business, too, by drawing potential customers to their site.

Training

Like services, companies can provide training for the work you or your volunteers may do. Ask a painting contractor if he will instruct a team of volunteers who will be sprucing up your community; or ask a professional in health care to instruct volunteers about signs of eating disorders for those working with teens.

TOP ▲

Resources

eOrganizer

eOrganizer is an interactive clearinghouse for the latest and greatest web instruments of change. This GIZMO shows you how to maximize free and inexpensive online tools and resources to mobilize people around issues and within organizations. Structured around eight categories important to community organizing, it offers descriptions and provides access to many of the most current web arenas and strategies for bringing groups together to create community change.

<http://www.campaignconsultation.com/GIZMOs/eorganizer/index.html>

The National ASK (Awareness, Skills, Knowledge) to Sustain Institute, sponsored by Corporation for National and Community Service, provided by Campaign Consultation, Inc. 1998, 2002.

The CNCS Resources Now! National Institute, sponsored by Corporation for National and Community Service, provided by Campaign Consultation, Inc. 2005-07.

TOP ▲

Learning Products and Services

Sustainability:

Sustainability@CampaignConsultation.com is designed to give information fast on building capacity. Use this online support for advice from a fundraising professional. Contact Sustainability@CampaignConsultation.com

GIZMOs:

(Giving Information for Zooming Mission Objectives) GIZMOs are resource and fund development tools for you and your volunteers. They are tangible products in packets, pocket brochures, CD-ROMs, games, etc. They feature a myriad of fundraising topics such as The Case for Support, an interactive online resource. View and use our newest GIZMOs at www.CampaignConsultation.com/gizmosplash

The Chronicle of Philanthropy:

Everyone who comes to a Resources Now! National Institute gets a free subscription to the Chronicle for a year. Participants in CNCS Campaign Consultation workshops receive the latest issue free of charge plus a \$20 discount on one year's subscription.

Workshops/Clinics:

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), through its T/TA service provider Campaign Consultation, Inc., offers a three-hour workshops and clinics for those interested.

WebWizard:

CNCS sponsors this new service that Campaign Consultation provides to assist programs and projects in maximizing their websites for program, client, volunteer and fundraising needs.

Online Courses/Webinars:

Web course delivery of topics pertinent to resource development such as — **Build Fundraising Volunteer Champions** and **Cause Related Marketing and Corporate Partnerships**.

Available through the Resource Center at <http://www.nationalservicerresources.org>

TOP ▲

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TOP ▲