

How to market nonprofit organization

The Purpose of study

Abstract

The nonprofit organizations are required to follow adequate marketing techniques in order to present their vision clearly amongst their community. By adopting marketing strategies, these nonprofit organizations can become prominent within the community of their customers and competitors. The present study is aimed to focus on providing details of those marketing strategies that can be utilized by nonprofit organizations as an effective marketing tool. The study will discuss two types of marketing strategies including the online marketing strategies and the strategies based upon developing local community relations. A detailed analysis of both strategies has been utilized in reaching a conclusion where either one or a combination of both strategies needs to be adopted to market a nonprofit organization effectively.

Introduction

The nonprofit organizations need marketing strategies to become prominent within their own community set up. They enjoy various benefits when they clearly share their vision within their own community. Some of the benefits that marketing can bring to these nonprofit organizations as reported by Hartnett & Matan (2011) are:

- Gaining credibility and building loyalty
- Highlighting the organizational purpose amongst competitors
- Developing the reputation as leaders within the non profit community
- Enhancing membership and the number of volunteers

- Greater opportunities to strengthen the present donor relations and developing new relations

It is true that marketing a nonprofit organization is not an easy task as the marketing budgets of a nonprofit organization are usually very limited. However, the adoption of certain marketing strategies involves a minor change in the overall budget and can lead towards the attainment of remarkable outcomes. These marketing strategies may include social media, increasing neighboring communication and utilizing more local resources. In an effort to provide a variety of suitable marketing techniques to the nonprofit organizations, it is important to first examine different aspects of a marketing strategy. Williamson (2009) has proposed certain questions to assist a nonprofit organization to adopt a suitable marketing approach. These questions include checking what sort of audience, including individuals or organizations, are to be targeted through this strategy?. What type of a message can influence the target audience and what is most effective way to convey the organizational message to the target audience? The answers to these questions can give a direction to a nonprofit organization towards the adoption of a successful marketing technique.

Many studies have been conducted to evaluate the marketing needs of nonprofit organizations. It has been reported that creating awareness, earning revenues, developing a strong image within the community and attracting new and retaining the existing customers are the marketing priorities of most of the nonprofit organizations (The AMA and Lipman Hearne, 2008).The most effective strategies adopted by nonprofit organizations may vary as per organization's individual need; for e.g, new organizations may view creating awareness as their priority and the old ones would prefer earning revenues only. Therefore, the most effective strategy adopted by each organization may differ .While developing awareness, a good marketing strategy would perhaps be focusing on

public, community and customer relations as this will enhance awareness and visibility of an organization within the community.

Developing strong public relations represents a unique feature of marketing followed by nonprofit organizations. This marketing technique is considered to be very powerful as far as nonprofit organizational marketing is concerned. According to the findings as stated by The AMA and Lipman Hearne (2008), “Major donors, foundation leaders, policy makers, governmental officials and other ‘influencer’ audiences demand more personal marketing as well as ‘consumer-direct’ approaches”. The reason given to follow this approach is that the audience of nonprofit organizations is more interested in seeking the actual performance of an organization rather than just taking note of general messages.

Measuring the effectiveness of a marketing program is also very important but the nonprofit organizations hardly implement it. They can track the participation, can monitor the revenue levels, can take notice of the increase or decrease in membership but do not evaluate the impact that advertising and other social media tools are creating for the organization. It has been reported under the study presented by The AMA and Lipman Hearne(2008), that very few survey participants had been monitoring the web activities or the public responses on social media. The regular monitoring of such responses is necessary to follow the impact of an organizational image within the community.

Problem Statement

Keeping the above in mind, the problem statement of this study is “the adoption of suitable marketing techniques can help market a nonprofit organization effectively”.

Literature Review

Developing a successful marketing strategy for a nonprofit organization involves a detailed approach. It demands a lot of effort from the management and it poses many considerations and evaluations on the part of an organization. These strategies can be divided into two categories. One is the online marketing strategies and the others are based upon developing local community relations. Some of the most successful online marketing strategies to be followed by a nonprofit organization can be listed as under:

- **Creating a website:** Having a website is the most cost effective tool that any nonprofit organization may follow. A website shows the online presence of an organization. So it is important that the website must be designed in such a way that it targets the required audience and captures the interest of the viewers. It should convey organization's message and must present adequate information that can motivate a new customer or a donor. Creating and maintaining an attractive website is the first step to initiate the organization's online marketing success.
- **Using social media:** While deciding for an appropriate social medium for a nonprofit organization, it is always suggested to follow what other nonprofit organizations are doing (Dayton, n.d.). Developing a defined strategy for the use of social media and writing it down to make each member of the organization understand it, is very important. Identifying the people responsible to give the organization's feedback is also a must. The social media strategy needs to aim at keeping the community engaged in the organization's actions and events. It is a cost effective marketing tool to reach out to maximum target audience.
- **Sending out consistent emails to subscribers:** Using direct emails to access participants is a popular marketing strategy to involve community. According to the NUCB Global Nonprofit Management Team (2013) "Mass mailing is still a valid means of marketing". This strategy allows an organization to reach more participants than any other marketing

technique and can be successfully utilized for the promotion of specific events, parties or festivals arranged by the organization. This is a cost effective tool as it involves no money as compared to the use of fliers and brochures but the organization must avoid overwhelming their customers and should send a maximum of one or two emails in a month.

- Promoting easy to donate process via facebook or Twitter: Providing complete details of donation process via face book or Twitter can help an organization generate more revenues and target new donors. The donation procedure must follow easy and quick steps. When a donation is received online, then the automated system must generate a thank you email to the donor assuring a confirmation receipt for the donation received.
- Using face book to direct traffic to the website: An attractive facebook page can attract a lot of visitors towards an organization's website at a minimal cost. Since people share pages through likes and interest with their friends, it can help to capture more audience than expected otherwise. According to study presented by the NUCB Global Nonprofit Management Team (2013), it has been reported that the participant of the survey indicated that they had worked more on the face book page to keep it updated to attract more online community.

All the above mentioned methods suggest cost effective online marketing techniques for the nonprofit organizations. However, studies have also reported that some organizations still find online marketing difficult, due to lack of financial and human resources (NUCB Global Nonprofit Management Team,2013).In order to ensure an effective implemetaion of the online marketing strategies, a non profit organization is required to dedicate full time staff to monitor and provide timely feedback to the online queries.

Besides online marketing techniques, strategies that are based upon strengthening local community relations can also be followed by the nonprofit organizations. Some of these might involve a little more budget of a nonprofit organization but can still be trusted as a reliable option. These marketing strategies are described as.

- Sending a letter to the editor in local newspaper to update the local community about the organization's activities: This strategy, though not as effective as other strategies due to the use of internet, can still attract some of the elderly local population towards the message of the organization. It can help to convey information about an organizational presence in the vicinity and can also communicate its message to the local population. This strategy is a cost effective marketing tool for a nonprofit organization.
- Support or sponsor: This marketing strategy may be a bit expensive for the nonprofit organizations but it gives the message of being involved in a community. The nonprofit organizations may sponsor billboards, local publications and can also become a part of activities like fund raising, elections etc. These strategies are quite effective in terms of creating awareness within the community.
- Reaching out to the community: The nonprofit organizations are required to engage the community members for their effective functioning. Without being involved with the community, these organizations can never receive support, target audience, create brand awareness or generate revenues. Their resources and planning is all derived from the
- **Objective**

The objectives of this study are:

- To develop an awareness about the organization within community through the use of marketing strategies
- To spread the organization's message effectively via marketing techniques

- Increase membership of the organization
- Generate more revenues by attracting more donors for the organization

Focus of study

The study is based on exploring varied options for nonprofit organizations considering their budgetary constraints and other limitations. It will review marketing strategies both online and the ones used to build public relations. The analysis of both techniques will eventually guide as to what strategy will be best suited for the nonprofit organizations.

Research Design

The present study is a descriptive and exploratory research that aims to provide marketing options to nonprofit organizations in an attempt to promote and strengthen their organizational image within the community. These options if successfully utilized, can provide the status of being a market leader to any nonprofit organization.

Research Methodology

The study will involve collecting data from the nonprofit organizations by using interview and questionnaire method in order to find out which strategy can benefit them the best. The sample of the research will include the statistical techniques in order to reach concrete findings based upon the information obtained.

Findings and Analysis

The results of the study will reveal the facts about the best suited techniques that the nonprofit organizations can follow in order to promote their image within their community. It will provide

an in-depth knowledge about those cost of the research will help formulate concrete conclusions for the research.

Conclusion

On the basis of the findings and the analysis of the present study, conclusions will be developed and evaluated toneral who plan to establish a well defined marketing strategy for their organization in future.

Recommendations

The study will provide general recommendations based upon the marketing strategies studied throughout the research. These recommendations will suggest what strategies are most suitable and most cost effective for nonprofit organizations. It will also give specific recommendations for the future studies to be conducted on the same topic and will provide new direction to the future evaluations.

References

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