Essay on Dutchess County SPCA Advertising Innovation on a Virtually Non-Existent Budget

Abstract

For the non-profit organization that is non-government funded and self-supported through donations alone, the need for marketing innovation is great. Such is the case here, with the Dutchess County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (the DCSPCA), in Hyde Park, New York. The DCSPCA needs to market their efforts to protect animals (to rescue, temporarily house, successfully adopt out, advocate for, and enforce laws protecting animals). But the organization also needs to campaign to raise funds to do all of the above. This paper proposes innovation strategy using aggressive inbound, new media marketing implementing web 2.0 technologies— social media sites Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube; relevant blogs; and chat rooms and bulletin boards—and including call-to-action (CTA) marketing. Such innovation by its very nature is intended to effectively support discussions advocating animal welfare; to provide a versatile mix of communicative venues for dispensing and spreading information about the DCSPCS mission, efforts, activities, and events; and to stimulate/generate interest, encourage participation, and impel action on the part of potential adopters and other animal advocates.

Chapter One: Introduction

To use inbound, new media marketing implementing web 2.0 technologies— social media sites Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, chat rooms, and bulletin boards—is to take an innovative approach to marketing. Especially for the non-profit organization that is non-government funded and self-supported through donations, the need for marketing innovation is great. Such is the case here, with the Dutchess County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (the DCSPCA), in Hyde Park, New York.

Problem Statement

The DCSPCA is a self-supporting non-profit organization that with no state or federal funding depends strictly on donations from community members. With a triple mission to a) "…rescue, shelter, and secure permanent homes for adoptable companion animals; b) advocate for the highest standards of animal care; and c) enforce animal cruelty laws throughout Dutchess County" (2014, "Mission," para. 1), the DCSPCA has a daunting challenge: to advertise with virtually no budget to inform potential adopters and at the same time to launch a no-cost campaign to raise funds to do so. In other words, what the organization needs is a fund-raising campaign to raise the initial funds needed for marketing and a marketing campaign to raise awareness, protect animals, and find good homes for animals currently living at the DCSPCA.

Innovation Design

The rationale for proposing such innovative strategy is manifold. Web 2.0 technology is comprised of media and devices that are today considered to form the platform for optimal learning, doing, and reflecting in educational/informational contexts; and that are deemed instrumental in informing, branding, advertising, reporting, selling, and customer valuation in value creation and maintenance contexts. Inbound marketing promotes products and/or services within an established web 2.0 technology (such as social media technologies like Facebook and Twitter), where the population of pet owners, pet seekers, and animal lovers already exist and where marketing efforts can easily draw the people in closer to the offerings. The DCSPCA does have a button for Facebook and a button for Twitter on its home page. However, what is here proposed is more aggressive implementation of these tools, as just having backward/ forward links to/from social media sites is not all that effective: that is, what is required by the web 2.0 technologies and what is required of the hosts/owners of the sites linking to them is consistency, continuity, and contiguity of action in general and interactivity in particular. The mechanisms are virtually free, but the agency and agent must put some effort (time) into achieving ongoing effectiveness. The DCSPCA does engage on a fairly frequent basis with both of these web 2.0 technologies, so the emphasis of this paper is to step up the current practices, add additional web 2.0 sources such as a blog, a (free-costing) chat mechanism, and, especially, a CTA device that will step up interactivity—the core need of the DCSPCA.

So in addition, or if the time investment is another issue for the administrators at DCSPCA, as a function of inbound marketing, call to action marketing (CTA marketing) will provide marketing techniques using web

advertising such as clickable banners and clickable links that will require the web user to click—and subsequently follow the steps called for. Several such non-profit organizational strategies exist as examples. These include, for instance, freerice.com, for feeding children and needful adults, and freekibble.com, for feeding dogs. In the former, every correctly answered word definition question yields 10 grains of rice for the World Food Programme; in the latter, ever individual click on a "Bow-wow Trivia" question answer yields 10 pieces of doggie kibble donated to various animal shelters across the US. So, for example, with this CTA strategy implemented for the DCSPCA, with a freetheanimals.com or .org, a web surfer doing a search and/or arriving at a social media site would click on the ad/image/link, would be taken, on a separate page or window, through the conversion funnel to the activity he/she is being asked to do (the quiz that earns points toward funds for the shelter and the animals)…, at no cost to the user or the DCSPCA (Jeffrey, 2010). However, with this part of the innovation strategy, the DCSPCA still needs to generate the funds for the points system that will donate X dollars or Y amounts of food.

Aggressive, inbound, new media marketing using CTA as a strategy aligns with Bryson and Altston's (2004, in Bryson, 2004) guide for strategic planning as together, inbound, media marketing using web 2.0 technologies and implementing CTA marketing accomplishes the goals set by the DCSPCA's mission statement:

- First, inbound, media marketing, using web 2.0 technologies more aggressively by implementing a specific call-to-action marketing strategy, by the very nature of the tools/strategies used will support discussions advocating animal welfare, creating the buzz needed to get web 2.0 users involved.
- Second, such innovation would provide a versatile mix of communicative venues for dispensing and spreading information about the DCSPCS mission, efforts, activities, and events.
- And third, the specific innovative CTA marketing strategy here is designed to stimulate/generate interest, encourage participation, and impel action on the part of potential adopters and other animal advocates.

The Innovation Plan (Strategy)

Again, there is no budget to speak of for the DCSPCA to work with and no reengineering or new hiring, etc. will be feasible. However, it is necessary to conduct an analysis, work with the organization's key stakeholders/administrative agents, and facilitate the design, planning, and implementation of the proposed addition of a call-to-action device. To accomplish the above, this action researcher will follow these steps/stages:

Methodology

In an effort to demonstrate feasibility of this innovation design, two questions will need to be answered. These are as follows:

What are the most effective (evidenced) ways to implement web 2.0 new media marketing strategies in a non-profit, self-supported organization like DCSPCA?

What is the proven (best practices) history of doing the above in existing, reputedly successful non-profit, self-supported organizations?

Literature Review

Answering the aforementioned research questions will therefore require that this researcher begin with a review of the literature. Such a review will provide the evidence needed and will serve models for the DCSPCA to emulate at the same time. The literature review will be linked with the examination of the organizational mandates, mission, vision, and etc. of the DCSPCA and analyzed.

Analysis

Analysis will comprise a codification of the collected data—both the sets of (online) interview responses given by volunteering stakeholders at the organization (the president, Ron Lane; the Board of Directors, Donna Angiolillo, Debbi Calabrese, Marco Caviglia, Jack Fein, Michael Fleischer, Jerry Greenberg, DeForest Howland, Wayne Mabey, Carol Menken, Kim Redl-Lawrence, and Sharman Riedinger) and literature evidence, where applicable. This form of analysis is useful and reliable as the codes will be computer calculated, to derive quantitative results from otherwise qualitative content (Gorden, 1992).

The research efforts, the results, and the proposed implementation of some new, free, new media mechanism that draws and engages "customers" are all intended to align with the vision of the DCSPCA, which is for "…a community in which there are caring, compassionate, respectful relationships between humans and animals, and [for] all adoptable animals [to] have loving homes" (DCSPCA, 2014, "About Us," para. 2).

References

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