

Six Uncommonly Creative Responses to a Rebounding Economy

By Craig DePole, Senior Vice President

IF YOU'RE like most organizations, the past year took a toll on your membership and development programs. Maybe you were able to squeak out the revenue but file size and average gifts took a hit, or maybe it was your bottom line that bottomed out.

Either way, business as usual is not going to cut it in 2010.

The following are six uncommonly creative ways to help your direct response fundraising program rebound from the recession and get healthy this year.

1. Fight for your budget. Cutting expenses may have been necessary during the recession, but now you need to increase the investment in your fundraising programs. The best time to do that is during the annual budget planning for your organization. Do your homework so you can make the case and show the payoff.

- Analyze your results over multiple years.
- Be able to show the trends, and highlight the pockets of opportunity.
- Calculate your ROI (return on investment) and show your bosses when the payoff will occur.

Whether it is higher volume in acquisition, new package testing, expanding lapsed reactivation, or doubling your online and social media efforts, you'll want to show how you plan to bring back the donors that fell off the file. Remember, the donors you gain in 2010 will be the revenue you'll count on in 2011 and beyond.

2. Integrate your fundraising, and then integrate it more. Donors expect to have the same experience whether in the mail or online.

- Make sure every mail and phone campaign has an online counterpart or landing page.
- Test messaging online and then use it in your mail and phone campaigns. and vice versa.

- Offer donors ways to do more than just click the donate button or write a check, such as surveying, voting, petition signing, or anything that allows them to show you their passion and interest.

3. Ruthlessly analyze results. Metrics are down and files are shrinking, but don't just accept the recession as the excuse. Take this opportunity to dig deeper into your file and look for behavior trends among donor segments.

- Identify the messages or package elements that worked, and didn't work.
- Pay special attention to the pockets of donors that responded and figure out what else they have in common
- Use behavioral analysis, demographic overlays, and appends to better inform your targeting.

The information you learn can have an immediate impact on future results through more predictable returns and more profitable campaigns.

4. Test! What are you waiting for? It's time to reenergize your program by testing breakthrough creative and out-of-the-box offers. The best way to ignite these ideas is to invest in a creative audit.

- Look outside your current creative team for a fresh perspective.
- Develop a testing plan.
- Think BIG. (A breakthrough won't happen testing the color of the BRE.)
- Be open to uncommonly creative ideas.

For the price of a creative audit, you'll uncover a list of ideas and improvements that will often more than pay for the audit in a just few months.

5. Create "Ambassadors." Statistics show that the number one influencer of purchases are recommendations from family and friends, whether online or in person. So make sure your donor's experience with your organization is comment-worthy. Develop your own "Ambassadors"—people who will tell their friends, neighbors, and anyone else they are "linked" to about your organization. Go beyond the expected and see what happens.

6. Don't go it alone. The best ideas and brilliant breakthroughs are almost always the result of collaboration. Find the right agency partner who will work with you to develop the strategy, creative, and results you need right now.

The team of senior strategists at Newport Creative can help you make the right decisions today.

We have the depth of experience, the cutting-edge skills and the uncommonly

creative thinking to put your integrated fundraising program on the road to better health in 2010. Get started on a better fundraising program today.



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