

Spring 2006

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Featured Article

["Research and Nonprofit Excellence"](#)

A feature from "The Nonprofit Quarterly" discussing formal, informal, primary and secondary research for effective organizations.

To read more, go to:

[The Nonprofit Quarterly](#)

Did you know...?

- Survey researchers held 22,000 jobs in 2004 (Source: US Dept. of Labor)
- There are 62 United Way organizations in Michigan representing 4.5% of the United Way organizations in the US

Useful Links

[Johnson Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership](#)

Part of Grand Valley State University; some of their work includes: the Community Research Institute and Nonprofit Leadership and Management

[Sample Size Calculator](#)

A great resource to determine how many you need to sample in order to have a representative sample

[Grassroots Fundraising Journal](#)

"Practical tips and tools to help you raise money for your organization."

Evaluating the Charitable Sector

Information about "The Charitable Impulse"

Recently a report was released titled "The Charitable Impulse." The report discusses opinions of the charitable sector from two valuable groups: nonprofit and United Way donors, and nonprofit leadership.

The report, "The Charitable Impulse," outlines findings from a series of focus groups as well as one-on-one interviews. The focus groups consisted of community members who were "active" in the nonprofit sector; the interviews were conducted with leaders such as CEO's, development directors, etc. The summary of findings outlines:

How do donors define the nonprofit sector?

- Are donors becoming less trustful and more negative about the sector as a whole?
- What concerns and complaints do donors have?
- How do nonprofit leaders see the challenge?



Every nonprofit organization is working towards mobilizing their community to create community changes that will improve lives. It is important to keep in mind, in each community there is a certain attitude and opinion about their local charitable sector. These views need to be "on the table" so-to-speak when the organization is working to mobilize their community and initiate the community impact process.

Donors and community members are two groups that have certain awareness and perception of your organization; and knowing this information allows for United Ways to better work towards achieving community impact. Looking to your donors to provide valuable information for the organization can be a very effective course of action. In an article by Harvey McKinnon, he states that research can help you: "understand *who* your donors are, understand their giving patterns, and understand *why* they give to your organization." (McKinnon, 1999)

[Michigan Nonprofit Association](#)

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Though this study revealed some general attitudes about the nonprofit sector, it reinforces how every United Way can benefit from having similar information available for their organization.

To read "The Charitable Impulse" click here: [Public Agenda: The Charitable Impulse](#)

Communicating Community Impact

Battle Creek United Way Impact Matters report

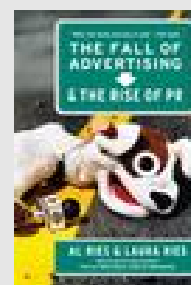
The United Way of Greater Battle Creek has recently released their Impact Matters report for July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2005. This report is a great example of how to communicate community impact to your donors and the community. The report includes results for each of their targeted needs areas, along with financial information about the United Way of Greater Battle Creek. United Way of Greater Battle Creek is distributing this report to partner agencies, community leaders, and donors as one method to provide information at non-campaign times of the year. If you are interested in seeing the report, visit www.unitedwaybattlecreek.org and click on the Impact Matters link.

Look at this book!

The Fall of Advertising and the Rise of PR

Al Ries & Laura Ries; Harper Business, 2002

Public relations are essential for United Ways in the 21st century – and authors Al Ries and Laura Ries would say far more effective than advertising. *The Fall of Advertising and the Rise of PR* follows a path as predictable as the title; a discussion of the fall of advertising, building a case for the rise of PR, and finally a dissection of the differences between the two.



While the attack on advertising is interesting, the meat of the book begins about 50 pages in when the authors state their hypothesis; "Marketing deals with perceptions. To run a successful advertising or public relations program, you have to create more than talk value. You have to deal with those nasty perceptions . . . Publicity or PR is a more effective way to deal with those perceptions."

There is a not a specific United Way example included in the book; however, throughout the book, and especially in the section about the rise of PR, there are useful ideas for anyone involved in public relations. One idea that should resonate strongly for United Ways is that advertising can

only be a reminder, it cannot be the argument. Ries & Ries go on to say that the reminder function is important, but only after you have established credibility in other ways, generally by public relations. How often has a United Way campaign fallen short because the United Way failed to adequately establish community need with donors?

Another idea for United Ways comes from an example in the book citing the AARP – the American Association of Retired People. In the process of trying to change peoples' perceptions of the AARP, Ries & Ries point out that "No publicity, no change of perception. It is as simple as that." They go on to counsel that the solution to a PR problem is invariably a single, simple focus. How many United Ways send out dozens of messages about topics like community impact agendas, targeted needs areas, partner agencies, funded programs or community initiatives and wonder why the public does not understand? The authors caution that it takes fortitude to keep your focus narrowly targeted. They say the biggest mistake you can make is to try to broaden your appeal when you should be trying to "deepen" it.

If your work involves public relations to any degree, you will find *The Fall of Advertising and the Rise of PR* an interesting and thought-provoking book – that may inspire and invigorate your efforts.

Didn't receive the CD-ROM?



A resource developed just for United Way organizations! All the information about Perspectives Consulting Group: who we are, and what we do. Find out about our services and past projects completed for United Ways!

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