



Winter 2006

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Featured Article

"Donor, Heal Thyself"

Stanford Social Innovation Review

Authors: Paul C. Light

To read more, go to: [Stanford Social Innovation Review](#)

<http://www.ssireview.com/>

[Click here to see related articles](#)

Did you know...?

- 15.5 million Teens volunteered last year...

(Source: Philanthropy Journal, December 2005)

- 56% of donors born after 1964 plan to give more in the future, and are currently contributing on average, \$791 annually...

(Source: AFP: "Boomers lead generation giving, but younger groups showing potential")

To read more: [click here](#)

- In a recent poll of Americans, 51% stated they had a fair amount of confidence in charitable organizations...

(Source: P. C. Light, "Donor, Heal Thyself")

Useful Links

Doing Your Homework

Getting the most out of your communication efforts

A recent article "Research Rules" by R.C. Hershey and A. Posey in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* outlines the experience of a cancer research organization that needed to find their identity and communicate their brand to the public in order to secure donors and set themselves apart from other similar organizations.

The question was: where to start? First they had to realize the reality that, as Hershey wrote; "While many [nonprofits] work toward a common good...they also compete for money and attention." Therefore, the first step is to find how best to communicate to your target audience, and the most effective way to do so is research.

Below you will find some valuable information based on our experiences with United Way clients and the article "Research Rules."

Finding #1:

"Strong communications are in the **best interests** of both organizations and the people they serve" states Hershey. It is important to know how well you are communicating your **impact**—what you do in the community, as well as your name and who you are.



Finding #2:

For the nonprofit world, **being visible** means being successful. Hershey states that organizations "have to know exactly whom they are trying to reach and how to grab their attention." Research can reveal who your current and potential donors are and how to communicate effectively and efficiently to them.

Finding #3:

Good research always **pays for itself**. By knowing your donors and how best to communicate with them, your United Way can make informed decisions regarding your

[Society for Nonprofit Organizations](#)

A great resource for any nonprofit; pass the link along to your partnering agencies!

[Independent Sector](#)

Check out the recent giving and volunteer research that has been conducted

[Marketingprofs.com](#)

Find information related to marketing and market research

[National Center for Charitable Statistics](#)

A national clearinghouse of data on the nonprofit sector

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campaign and general organizational decisions. This leads to better resource allocation and more donations coming in the door. As the article states, "...research can ultimately add to the bottom line, allowing nonprofits to get to do the work they actually do best."

Donor Case Study

Greater Kalamazoo United Way: from conception to conclusions

Challenges:

A client of Perspectives Consulting Group, Inc, The Greater Kalamazoo United Way is a Metro 1 United Way who serves Southwest Michigan. They have been working with Perspectives Consulting Group, Inc. for nine years to better understand perceptions and concerns of their donors and to collect information to help promote the United Way brand.

In 2005, the Greater Kalamazoo United Way was looking to better understand donor perception; understand what donors knew and believed about the organization; and evaluate their communication methods and donor preferences.

Solution:

Once Perspectives understood the research objectives for the Greater Kalamazoo United Way Donor Survey, Perspectives worked with the Greater Kalamazoo United Way staff to identify and prioritize issues resulting in the development of a mail survey. The survey was mailed to United Way leadership givers in March 2005.

The survey had donors respond to questions surrounding topics such as: donors' overall opinions of the Greater Kalamazoo United Way; beliefs and knowledge of the organization's targeted outcomes and mission; contributions, spending and effectiveness in the community; and communication efforts.

Once the surveys were collected, Perspectives analyzed the data, and created a report including conclusions that would become a foundation for future efforts for the Greater Kalamazoo United Way.

Results:

Based on the results of the donor survey, the Greater Kalamazoo United Way was able to use the report and evaluate aspects of their organization, and their organization as a whole.

Perspectives quantified the awareness and perception of the surveyed donors and presented the findings to the Greater Kalamazoo United Way in an approach that was useful and valuable to them. The survey resulted in seeing changes in awareness and perception for several key demographic categories.

Because donors were asked specific questions regarding their beliefs, and specifically contributions, the result was the Greater Kalamazoo United Way was able to see an increase in donors' knowledge of the impact of their donations, and an increase in the knowledge that their donations were used locally. The survey also resulted in discovering a significant increase in the donors' belief that the Greater Kalamazoo United Way was fulfilling its mission.



Based on the results of the survey, the Greater Kalamazoo United Way was able to put a priority list together and focus their communication efforts. Additionally, Perspectives was able to report how often donors would like to receive communication about the Greater Kalamazoo United Way and giving. For example, Perspectives found that the percentage of respondents who wanted information twice a year increased, and that donors would be more attentive to communication coming through the workplace, compared to other forms of communication.

The results were used by the Greater Kalamazoo United Way to help promote the United Way brand and overall improve communication, services, and awareness.

In the next issue: Look at this Book!

The Fall of Advertising and the Rise of PR

By: Al Ries & Laura Ries

Harper Business, 2002

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.



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