



ARE YOU GUILTY OF MAKING ANY OF THE TOP MARKETING MISTAKES MANY NONPROFITS MAKE?

By Susan Burnash

Marketing and community outreach is critical to the organizational health and success of every nonprofit. Unfortunately, many nonprofits discount, or forgo, formal marketing best practices because they believe they don't have the formal training or finances needed to engage. The irony is that marketing and community outreach can be learned and easily put into practice if you have the desire for your nonprofit to succeed. Below you will find some of the top marketing mistakes many nonprofits make. All are easy to do and easy to correct!

Mistake #1: Not Developing a Marketing Plan

A nonprofit looking to fund its mission, without first creating a Marketing Plan, is much like a marathon runner with no defined route or finish line. Why? Because a Marketing Plan is your roadmap for increasing awareness, recruiting support and ultimately delivering on the mission your organization was created to serve. It contains valuable information about 1) your organizational goals, 2) your current Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities, 3) the target audience you want to reach, 3) your objectives for reaching out to them, 4) your strategies and tactics to do so and, 5) your methods for evaluating the success of your efforts. If you don't have an actionable plan that includes all this information you may simply be running in place or worse, headed to a destination that does not include long term sustainability.

If your organization does not have a formal Marketing Plan, or you have never written one yourself, it's not too late to start. There are numerous books and resources available both online and off. Just be sure though that you are focused on a writing a nonprofit Marketing Plan vs. a for profit Marketing Plan. Although they do contain many similarities in structure and methodology, they are very different in the ultimate goal for creating one. For a "for profit", the goal of a Marketing Plan is to create opportunities for sales. For a nonprofit, the goal is to build community awareness, engagement and support. Every step and every process contained in writing your organization's Marketing Plan should be focused on these objectives. By keeping the finish line in sight you can develop the most effective and efficient road map to get there!

If you are in Atlanta, why not sign up for Purple Duck University's 8 hour interactive workshop "*How To Write a Nonprofit Marketing Plan.*" You'll spend valuable time outlining your plan in a way that you can complete when you leave. For more info, visit www.purpleduckuniversity.com.

Mistake #2: Not Planning a Marketing Budget

Operating without a defined marketing budget is as dangerous as operating without a written Marketing Plan. Why? Because if you leave your marketing projects and execution to hit or miss funding, the odds are good you'll do minimal marketing with minimal results.

Having a defined marketing budget is as critical as having a defined program budget. After all, what good are your programs and services, if people don't know about them? If they don't know about your programs and services, how are they going to be able to utilize them, or support your organization? And, if you can't get people to engage with or financially support your mission, how are you going to stay in business? You can see the dilemma of not taking your marketing and community outreach seriously enough to plan a marketing budget around it.

The first real benefit of creating a definitive marketing budget, whether you currently have the money or not, is that you will set into motion the desire and need to raise the money to keep your organization front and center in your supporters' minds. You will also set actionable goals and accountability for executing on your Marketing Plan. And, you will illustrate to potential and existing supporters that reaching out to inform your community about your cause and the resources you provide is as important as the programs and services you have created.



Mistake #3: Not Defining all Your Target Markets (Audiences)

I hear it often when I'm teaching a Marketing Plan workshop, "Everyone should be interested in the work my nonprofit does!" And, that may be true. But, if you don't break down your audiences to identify who they are, what they are passionate about and where they live, work and play, how are you going to find a way to reach them effectively? If you can't reach them effectively, how are they going to be able to support your organization and cause? This is why defining your target audience is one of the first things you do in creating your nonprofit's Marketing Plan.

No matter what services your nonprofit provides, it is a given that you probably want to reach a multitude of target audiences. For most organizations, these target audiences can be broken down into four specific groups: 1) donors, 2) clients, 3) staff, and 4) the media. And, within each of these groups there are many sub groups and potentially many different target audiences. For example, when it comes to your core group of "staff," your subgroups could be volunteers, board members, consultants, etc. Drill down further into your subgroup of volunteers and you might find you are looking specifically at young professionals, or seniors, or families, or young mothers. And guess what? Each of these individual groups most likely will need to be marketed or communicated to with different key messaging and possibly through a different communications channel. If you are hoping to reach seniors, you may find that your local paper may be the best way to reach them. But, if you are looking at young professionals, social media may have the strongest benefits for high impact reach and engagement.

As you spend the time identifying all your target audiences be sure to tap into the many great studies and resources online that can help you truly understand their lifestyles and mindsets. When you take the time to really get to know your organization's varied target audiences, you'll discover the "right" strategies, tactics and marketing tools for reaching them most effectively.

Mistake #4: Not Having a Clear, Current Mission Statement

In many ways, this mistake should really be #1 in the top marketing mistakes nonprofits make. However, most nonprofits are so invested in the mission statement they wrote when they formed their organization, they often disregard the importance of whether it really measures up. The bottom line is that your mission statement is the foundation on which your organization should stand. It should also be the guiding light for everything you do around marketing and community outreach. And yes, fundraising, too! If your Mission Statement doesn't clearly say 1) why you exist, 2) what your organization is doing, and 3) what you expect to happen as a result of the work you do and/or the services you provide, you can't possibly market your organization, or ask for support, successfully.

Sadly, in all of my years working with nonprofits, I can't tell you how many times I've read or heard Mission Statements and couldn't for the life of me tell you what the organization does, even after hearing them repeatedly. How is that possible? Perhaps it is because many Mission Statements are written by people who are so close to the organization that they use "insider" language, or broad sweeping messaging, that only they can full understand. Or, maybe they were written so long ago that the organization no longer does what it was first created to do. I've seen nonprofits who no longer serve the same communities, offer the same services or even exist in the same locations, and yet their mission statement remains the same as the day they opened their doors.

Your Mission Statement must truly represent your nonprofit in who you are, what you do and what you hope to achieve. If it doesn't, you need to rewrite it! If you don't, I can tell you from experience, you are missing out on one of the strongest marketing tools you have.



Mistake #5: Not Developing Clear and Consistent Messaging

Your nonprofit's messaging is the language you use to tell your story and move your target audience to take action. To do that, it must be consistent, concise and cohesive. It must also be written, and spoken, in a language your audience understands and relates to. Starting with your website, like an octopus with far reaching tentacles, your nonprofit's messaging lives in places that reach beyond your geography or perceived sphere of influence. From your Social Media applications, to your online videos, to your electronic communications and print collateral, your messaging leaves a lasting impression. Yet, many nonprofits never take the time to truly identify their key messaging or document it with clear parameters about how it is to be used. In the business world, messaging is an integral part of your brand. In the nonprofit world, it should be the same.

To ensure that your nonprofit's messaging has the power it needs to capitalize on its unlimited reach, it needs to be brainstormed, written down, tested and used consistently. When I work with clients on developing their core messaging, one of the things we do is create a "source document" that includes all relevant messaging to be utilized for marketing, community outreach and fundraising. This source document becomes the go to place for the primary messaging and content to be utilized in everything they do. The good news is that by creating one central source document, no matter what you are producing, your messaging will remain consistent, concise and cohesive. The result is a stronger brand. It is important to note, however, that just like your Marketing Plan, your source document needs to be reviewed on an annual basis and updated if necessary. If edits or updates occur, you must also make sure you revise all your communication tools to properly reflect the new messaging. You would be surprised how many websites, brochures and other communication tools continue to host old messaging and content. This can be not only confusing but a real turn off to the people who might potentially support your organization and the work you do!

Mistake #6: Believing Your Nonprofit Will Market Itself

Too often nonprofit professionals think that supporters and donors will somehow "naturally" find them. If you build it they will come, right? Wrong! The reality is there are thousands of nonprofits vying for funding and exposure. That means with more competition for donor dollars and other types of organizational support, there is a more critical need to get yourself out there in a way that is memorable. Marketing and community outreach not only helps your target audience find you, it allows them to engage in a deep and meaningful way with your organization and cause. That is the primary goal of all marketing and community outreach efforts.

So, how do you market your nonprofit most effectively to increase awareness and support? That is a complicated question with an equally complicated answer. But, it can be done even with limited resources, time and money. First, you have to start with your Marketing Plan (funny, how we keep coming back to that!). This will help you to define your organizational goals, target audience, strategies and tactics. Second, you need to build your organizational outreach platform. This includes all your communication tools including your website, your electronic communications (e-mail), your social media applications, your YouTube channel, and even your physical location if you have one. (If you can't manage all of these, start with your website and your email communications.) Third, you need to start with one or two marketing strategies outlined in your plan and execute on them. That means following the strategy you outlined and implementing all the tactics you identified to deliver on it. Each strategy is like a puzzle with many individual pieces. When they are all put together you can "see" a clear image of what should happen as a result of your efforts.

Most importantly, your marketing and community outreach efforts must be consistent and follow best practices. As much as you might hate to think about it, your nonprofit is always one step away from being forgotten by your target audience, especially when another nonprofit is keeping themselves front and center. Stay focused on your marketing and community outreach and you will find that your nonprofit is no longer making the top marketing mistakes many nonprofits continue to make!



“HOW TO WRITE YOUR NONPROFIT’S MARKETING PLAN”

(8 hour/2 part workshop)

In this hands-on workshop, you will learn the key elements contained in a nonprofit Marketing Plan while embarking on an interactive journey to create one for your organization. You will work both individually and as part of a team to answer the questions a strong marketing plan must address. You will leave with a Marketing Plan outline, a new sense of confidence, and the excitement of having created a virtual roadmap to effectively reach your nonprofit’s target audience.

Topics Covered in Part 1: (4 Hours)

- Marketing Plan Fundamentals
- What’s included in your Executive Summary
- Creating or recreating your Mission Statement
- Developing your SWOT Analysis
- Writing your Goal Statement

Topics Covered in Part 2: (4 Hours)

- Understanding your Target Market
- Defining your marketing Objectives
- Developing the right marketing Strategies
- Creating effective Tactics for execution
- Measuring and reporting on results

Dates: Part 1 - Saturday, 7/27/2013 (10 am - 2 pm)

Part 2 - Saturday, 8/3/2013 (10 am - 2 pm)

Price: \$150 (or included in Nonprofit BootCamp, details below)

Register: Securely online [click here](#), call 678.925.3582, or email pdmuniversity@purpleduckmarketing.com

Location: The Ringer Center of Excellence

1526 E Forrest Ave., Suite 102

East Point, GA 30344 ([map and directions](#))

Workshop Presenter: Susan Burnash, Purple Duck Marketing



Susan is a Communications Specialist with Purple Duck Marketing, a full-service Marketing, Public Relations and Video Production company with offices in Seattle and Atlanta. For the last 15 years, she has been a passionate advocate for Nonprofits. Serving as a Communications Specialist, Marketing Coach, and Speaker, she is committed to empowering them with the knowledge and tools they need to survive, thrive, and grow. Susan has served as the inaugural member of *the Foundation Center of Atlanta’s* “Expert in Residence Program. She has taught classes for *the Georgia Center for Nonprofits*, *The Foundation Center (Atlanta)* *The Community Foundation of NCW*, *Association of Fundraising Professional (Seattle)*, *Kirkland Chamber of Commerce* and through classes offered through Purple Duck Marketing and Purple Duck University.



NONPROFIT BOOTCAMP 2013 WORKSHOPS AND SCHEDULE (ATLANTA, GA)

HOW TO WRITE YOUR NONPROFIT'S MARKETING PLAN (8 hours/2 parts)

In this workshop you will learn the key elements contained in a Nonprofit Marketing Plan while creating one for your organization. You will work both individually and as part of a team to answer the questions a strong marketing plan must address. You will leave with a marketing plan outline, a new sense of confidence, and the excitement of having created a virtual roadmap to effectively reach your Nonprofit's target audience and marketing goals. **Dates:** Saturday, 7/27/2013 (Part 1) and 8/3/2013 (Part 2) (10 am - 2 pm) **Price:** \$150

HOW TO MAKE THE ASK AND WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU GET THE MONEY (6 hours/2 parts)

In this workshop you will take a comprehensive look at each critical phase of making "the ask." You will learn the fundamentals of fundraising and development, best practices for support requests and good stewardship. Through interactive exercises and role playing, you will also learn how to reach out to potential donors, how to interact with them and how to turn one-time contributions into multiple year funding opportunities. **Dates:** Saturday, 8/10/2013 (Part 1) and 8/17/2013 (Part 2) (10 am - 1 pm) **Price:** \$150

HOW TO LAUNCH YOUR ORGANIZATION TO THE PUBLIC AND MEDIA (4 hours)

Many nonprofits are so busy getting to the business of running a nonprofit they often forget to officially launch it to the public and media. But, garnering attention and support early in the game can be the difference between struggling and thriving. In this workshop you will follow a detailed plan on how to promote your organization to attract and engage the attention and support needed to run a successful nonprofit. **Date:** Saturday, 8/24/2013 (10 am - 2 pm) **Price:** \$75

HOW TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE WEBSITE THAT PEOPLE WILL WANT TO VISIT (4 hours)

From the home page to the site map, your Web site must contain well written content that is engaging, informative and clear, navigation that is easy to use, and all the necessary tools to create a lasting relationship with your visitor. In this workshop we will discuss the fundamentals of great Web site design and content. We will review all the key Web site elements a nonprofit must have. And we will also conduct a Web site audit on several nonprofit Web sites to determine when a Web site should be redesigned or simply refreshed for greater engagement. **Date:** Saturday, 9/14/2013 (10 am - 2 pm) **Price:** \$75

HOW TO CREATE A SPECIAL EVENT FOR FUNDRAISING AND AWARENESS (4 hours)

Ask any nonprofit that has hosted a successful special event to tell you their secret and the answer will always be "Good Planning!" That means, every minute detail and task must be identified and incorporated into an event plan. With expert instruction, and the use of our own event planning template, you will learn how to define your special event's goals, logistics, budget, timelines, and volunteer /staffing needs. You will also learn how to create and attract financial, and in-kind, sponsorship opportunities to increase support and participation in your event. **Date:** Saturday, 9/21/2013 (10 am - 2 pm) **Price:** \$75

HOW TO MARKET YOUR SPECIAL EVENTS FOR MAXIMUM SUCCESS (4 hours)

The reasons for holding a special event are many. But, without the right kind of marketing and public relations they can often fall short on attendance, media interest and real results. Marketing your special event successfully is a result of an integrated approach to reach your target audiences. In this workshop you will learn how to create your event "story" to garner interest and participation while connecting with your target audience through electronic, internet, print and personal communications. **Date:** Saturday, 9/28/2013 (10 am - 2pm) **Price:** \$75



HOW TO DEFINE AND RECRUIT THE VOLUNTEERS YOUR ORGANIZATION NEEDS (4 hours)

For volunteers to truly contribute to your organization's success, you must be meeting not only your organizational needs but, their individual needs and passions as well. How do you determine your volunteer needs, recruit the right match for both of you, and keep them engaged and committed when they have so many choices as to where to give their time? This workshop will help answer these questions and provide you with an action plan for recruiting and retaining long term volunteers committed to your mission and work. **Date:** Saturday, 10/12/2013 (10 am - 2 pm) **Price:** \$75

HOW TO CREATE COMPELLING VIDEOS FOR FUNDRAISING AND AWARENESS (4 hours)

Video provides one of the most compelling and effective marketing, fundraising and outreach tools available to nonprofits today. And, it can be shared across the globe reaching supporters you might not otherwise reach. In this workshop you will learn how to: determine your organization's best video stories to tell; write a video script; define a creative look and feel; produce videos cost-effectively; and promote your videos to existing and potential supporters. **Date:** Saturday, 11/2/2013 (10 am - 2 pm) **Price:** \$75

ABOUT NONPROFIT BOOTCAMP

Geared for both the "startup" and existing nonprofit ready to expand its reach, Nonprofit BootCamp is designed to provide nonprofit leaders, staff, board members and supporters with the fundamental knowledge and tools needed to create a long term sustainable organization. Our BootCamp includes 8 interactive workshops that take place on Saturdays over a 4 month period. All workshops provide instruction on proven concepts and best practices to help nonprofits increase awareness, garner support and build long term sustainability. Each includes both group and individual in-class exercises, and role playing where appropriate. We also provide our students with customizable templates to use both in class and within their own organization to provide solid foundations and plans for all of their marketing and fundraising activities.

Atlanta workshops are held at The Ringer Center of Excellence's Training Center located at 1526 E Forrest Ave., Suite 102 in East Point, GA 30344. The location is centrally located and easily accessible from I85, I75 and I285. There is plenty of FREE Parking available! For more information about The Ringer Center, visit www.ringercenter.net.

GET YOUR ORGANIZATION IN SHAPE AND SAVE MONEY TOO WITH OUR AFFORDABLE PRICING!

Nonprofit BootCamp: \$650 (*all 8 workshops*). This is a \$100 savings from the price of individual workshops.

Nonprofit "Mini" BootCamp: \$325 (*first 3 workshops*). This is a \$50 savings from price of individual workshops.

Individual Workshops: \$75 for a 4 hour workshop (1 part) or \$150 for a 2 part workshop.

Please note: When you purchase a BootCamp or "Mini" BootCamp series you are purchasing a single seat in each applicable workshop. It is your choice as to whom you send to each class. If you have a conflict with any of the scheduled dates in our current BootCamp, we ask that you contact us 3 days in advance so we can provide you with a seat credit for that workshop to be used in a future BootCamp series. This will allow a space for others that may be on our waiting lists.

For questions or more information on Purple Duck University and our interactive workshops visit www.purpleduckuniversity.com or call (678)925-3582.

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