

Marketing Dollars that Work for the Community

Bob DuBree, Advisory Board Columnist -- 8/1/2008



Bob DuBree
Advisory Board Columnist

Grassroots marketing is a way organizations can get exposure for their company by being active in their community by giving of their time, treasure and resources. This involves the conscious effort of an organization and can lead to stronger relationships within the company and the community. It is a way to gain respect and trust while helping others, which is the best reward of all.

The idea is to find ways to help your community or a special cause. That's easiest if you and members of your company are involved in local organizations such as the chamber of commerce; local NARI and NAHB chapters; Rotary; or BNI. Not only will networking in a community organization give you an opportunity to help build relationships with key members of the community, it will also offer an avenue to meaningful projects that you can feel good about sponsoring.

Here are 5 examples of small steps you can make to create some community goodwill — marketing dollars well spent!

- 1. HELP BUILD AND REVITALIZE THE COMMUNITY**
Consider reworking your marketing budget to include a category for community involvement and sponsorship activities. We recently had the opportunity to sponsor an addition and remodel of a local theater that features live music and children's shows. Our sponsorship has enabled us to reward our subcontractors and clients with theater tickets and dining opportunities, as well as other benefits.
- 2. PROMOTE THE ARTS**
Consider sponsoring a local theater, museum, dance company or art studio. It is another way to reach a market of people who appreciate beauty. As designers and remodelers, we appreciate art, and this is a good way to communicate that appreciation to the community.
- 3. HYDRATE RUNNERS AND WALKERS**
Everyone drinks water — why not drink a bottle with your logo prominently displayed on the label? Water donations are always popular for fundraising activities. Consider donating recyclable bottled water or reusable aluminum water bottles to local events such as races or festivals.
- 4. GIVE BACK TO THE KIDS**
I'm willing to bet that some of the kids you know play on little league teams, play an instrument in the marching band, run on the track team or are involved in one of the other plethora of organized activities available to them. The fields they play on, the pools they swim in, the tracks they run on and the instruments they play all require maintenance and cost the school, township and parents money. As a local organization, you have the opportunity to donate to these organized activities that keep kids active and out of trouble. Whether you donate money toward uniforms or for instruments, the schools and kids will be extremely grateful and may offer you a billboard or Web site for advertising. And if you're the parent of one of the team members, you're likely to get a lot of thanks throughout the season for your help.
- 5. DONATE TIME AND LABOR**
Nothing is as valuable as time. Donating time and labor is a meaningful way to create personal connections. And having a personal referral is so much more of a benefit than a call from a picture in an ad. What projects are going on in your community that you may be able to donate personal time or a few hours of company labor to?

Author Information

Bob DuBree, CR is the president of [Creative Contracting](#), located in North Wales, Pa. Bob and his wife Kim founded Creative Contracting and along with their entire staff are celebrating their 20 year business anniversary this year. Bob can be reached at bob@creativecontracting.biz.

Cultivating Community

In our organization we encourage community involvement and philanthropy as a way of building relationships and helping others. There is a great level of camaraderie that develops when people from an organization come together outside of work to help others. We've had the honor to volunteer through the NARI organization to help with the clean-up after 9/11, and again we volunteered when the devastation of Katrina left so many people homeless. Seeing the devastation of these catastrophes has brought a new appreciation of the many wonderful people in our country who volunteer and who gratefully accept help. It has inspired us to do what we can at the local level — whether it is sponsoring a little league team, or donating time and talent to community projects. As anyone who volunteers knows — the more you give, the more you receive. Consider giving some of your marketing dollars to a good cause — the benefits will be worth it!