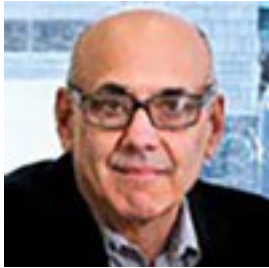


WHOLIVES CORPORATE



Don't Let These 3 Myths Stop You From Launching a Cause-Marketing Campaign



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September 9, 2014 3 min read

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If the ALS ice bucket challenge proves anything, it's that people have a strong desire to be part of something that makes a difference.

With [90-percent of consumers](#) saying they would switch to a brand that supports a cause they care about, cause marketing is no longer optional. Your charitable efforts can be more effective, more gratifying and more financially rewarding once you strike these myths from your thinking.

1. Your charitable mission must be relevant to your brand mission. Sure, when it works, it works. Take TOMS. Customer buys shoes, TOMS gives shoes. But on the flip side, there are brands like John

Varvatos that focus on giving back, even without an overt philanthropic mission. The fashion designer's annual benefit for Stuart House, a Los Angeles-based non-profit serving sexually abused children, closes down Melrose Avenue for blocks, attracts celebrity guests and raises significant amounts of money.

The mission of Stuart House has no obvious fit with the Varvatos brand but John authentically cares about it. Authenticity has an appeal all its own. By leveraging that, along with his brand and network of celebrity friends, he stays true to his rock and roll ethos while raising significant funds and awareness for a cause dear to his heart.

2. Philanthropy and profit are mutually exclusive. While some companies think of cause marketing as a side project, it's amazing what can happen when you align your charitable efforts with one of the most profitable aspects of your company.

Look at the Ralph Lauren Pink Pony campaign. For every purchase of pink pony merchandise, 25 percent goes to the Pink Pony Fund of the Ralph Lauren Foundation to support cancer care and prevention. People love the pink ponies. The line is beneficial to the fight against cancer and profitable. For many customers, a pink pony purchase represents a foray into charitable giving they wouldn't otherwise have made, not to mention a wearable badge for the cause. The higher the sales, the greater the awareness. It's a win for everyone.

3. Celebrities are only in it for themselves. It's true, consumers can spot a shill from a mile away, but they can also sense true passion. If you've ever heard Russell Simmons talk about making the arts accessible to disadvantaged kids through his RUSH Foundation or asked Ted Danson about his conservation work with Oceana, you know that passion can be contagious.

Finding a celebrity with an authentic interest in your cause will go a long way to amplify your message. In a world of split-second attention

spans, if you can stay nimble enough to leverage your celebrity partnerships in a way that rides the wave of current events, pop culture or social media “chatter,” you can make both branding and fundraising magic.

The bottom line is, when you create a philanthropic mission for your company and make it central to your brand mission, your cause isn't the only one that will benefit. From greater customer loyalty to increased revenue, doing good is just good business.