

Helping Nonprofits Win in the Competition for Doing Good

By Hardy Smith

Nonprofits have always understood that to achieve the goals of their stated purpose, they must compete for the people and dollars they need.

In the business of doing good, that competition is always tough and the current nationwide economic situation of course means a much higher degree of difficulty is being faced.

To help your nonprofit make sure it is doing the things it should to have a chance to compete successfully, challenge your organization with the following 9 questions then develop specific action items around the responses which will give you a strategy for winning in the competition for doing good!

- Take time to review what has made you successful in the past. Are you still executing those basic fundamentals?
- Every dollar you get represents a choice made by the contributor between your cause and some other worthy recipient. What influences a potential donor to choose, or not choose, your organization over another?
- If your organization has been around for a while, are you resting on past success and reputation while your competition has adapted to more effective marketing techniques with updated message points that attract a new generation of volunteers and donors?
- Do you have an effective and ongoing public relations and marketing outreach effort underway that keeps you visible in your marketplace?
- What message are you communicating? Is it effective for producing desired results?
- Are you just asking for money and someone's time or are you finding a way to connect by communicating benefit and an ability to meet personal needs related to volunteer involvement?

- Successful sports teams and businesses study their competition. Who else is doing the same thing you are and perhaps doing it better?
- If others are having more success than your organization, have you identified the reasons?
- While external influences are important, you must also look for those internal shortcomings that are keeping you from your fundraising and volunteer involvement goals. If you aren't getting the results you want from how things are currently being done; then what changes are needed?

In the competition for volunteer support and financial resources, at regular intervals ask yourself the questions that are vital to your success and act on the answers.

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