



Celebrate Life With Charitable & Community Efforts! Promote Teamwork, Staff Pride & Community Spirit

By: Larry H. Oskin, President, Marketing Solutions, Inc.

Whether you are a salon, day spa, medical spa, resort spa or medical center, it's time to give something back to the community that serves you best throughout the year. It's certainly a worthwhile way to reach out, knowing that you will be introduced to an entirely new circle of acquaintances and friends. Best of all, charitable work promotes teamwork, increases a sense of staff pride and it will enrich local community spirit!

MARKETING & PROMOTIONAL CALENDARS: Get out your Annual Marketing Calendars. Plan ahead. Many salons and spas create at least two fundraisers per year, while others create one every month. Target several potential needy schools and charitable groups to research for possible fundraising partnership programs. Look at the calendar, so you may plan to take advantage of select seasons and holidays. Don't wait for someone to ask you. The choice is always going to be a gift of love. The choice is always yours.

SEASONAL EVENT PLANNING: It's fine to jump on someone else's bandwagon, yet we suggest you do it ahead of the rest or do it differently! For example, start your Toy For Tots campaigns in early November rather than after Thanksgiving, asking the local organization to use your spa as the flagship to kick off their entire community-wide support so other businesses can join in. Or, start in January to help The Heart Association create a kickoff campaign at your spa that will run through a final big event during Valentine's Week.

Year-end fundraising events like Canned Food Drives, Toys For Tots and Santa's Wish Lists are always heartwarming, while most people are generous enough to give a little extra. Even the Hospitals, Homeless Shelters and the Salvation Army teams need your generous support this time of year. Think of others who can not celebrate or get out, when everyone else is celebrating the joys of that season.

LOCAL CHARITIES: Have you ever wondered how some people are ready to pitch in the same day or the next day after disaster strikes! They always get a lot of publicity, and they always raise a lot of funds. Keep yourself at the ready for any local family and community disasters. Some salons have a 'Charitable Action Plan' ready to go. In other words, if a nearby school burns down, a flood ravages the town, someone suffers a terrible family illness, a natural disaster strikes, or any other misfortunate event occurs – you have a general outline ready of what you would do for a quick and easy fundraiser to help out. Be ready to go with a checklist noting everything from potential staff meeting notes, fliers and a list of local PR contacts.

NATIONAL CHARITIES: There is a tremendous advantage to working with local offices of a nationally recognized charity. First, they have their own PR and marketing muscle that will attract extra media attention. Secondly, with enough advance planning -- they can promote it within their region. Thirdly, they can offer volunteers to assist you, hand out brochures, offer free consultations, sweep hair and greet clients. Sometimes, they can assist with extras. For example, they may be able to get a clown or magician to volunteer at a children's charitable event in your spa or salon. The larger groups have publicists, marketers and a full-time staff.

National charitable groups and organizations like the Leukemia Society, American Cancer Association, City Of Hope, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Prostate Cancer, March Of Dimes, AIDS, MADD, Animal Shelters and all of the others have toll-free numbers where you can start with a call to their national offices in order to find a local contact person. Or, try to search the Internet, Google.com or in the local Yellow Pages to get started. Interview at least two or three to see which one will be the best match to your needs, while also seeing who can promise the most pre-event support.

CHARITABLE EVENT CHECKLISTS & PARTNERSHIPS: Create a list of potential duties of things you can do, while creating another list of potential things they may be able to help you with. Sit down at a meeting with their representative to decide what you can do to support each other. You really need their clout to get more people to the event with pre-event announcements and publicity, so each event is much more successful. The worst thing you can do for any salon

fundraiser is not to get the word out. Given several extra months of pre-planning, these folks will do everything they can to help you – if you only ask.

It is never a good idea to plan any fundraiser independently, planning to just turn over a check at the end. Their organizational help in creating the pre-event hoopla will make it a much bigger success than you could ever possibly do on your own. If you don't work as teammates with any of these local or nationally organized groups, don't expect big results.

CREATIVE MESSAGE-A-THONS, FASHION SHOWS & MORE: Whether you want to offer Facial-A Thons, Cut-A-Thons, Nail-A-Thons, Massage-A-Thons or some combination of spa salon services, think of something clever and unique. Make each event a bit of fun 'edutainment' whereby you educate the local public about a disease or special interest group's cause. You may want to consider an exciting educational event and skincare workshop series, where all of the registration fees to the charity of your choice.

Some salons and spas prefer fashion show extravaganzas with a runway, stage lights, music, costumes, choreographed dancers, school cheerleaders and dance teams ... as well as a local celebrity performing as the Master of Ceremonies. Advance ticket sales, catered food, silent auctions and door prizes make these into huge, yet worthwhile undertakings. These usually take at least 6 to 12 or more months to plan, but can provide a major magnet for local publicity.

Some salons and spas have their staff creatively dress up in fun costumes for holidays like Valentine's Day, Halloween, Super Sunday, Christmas and July Fourth, while asking each client to vote for their favorites by dropping in a \$1 to \$5 donation into a series of boxes by the front desk. The staff member with the most donations – WINS! You can internally create a pre-announced prize for that winning person, yet it usually isn't even necessary. It's just plain fun.

COMMUNITY DONATIONS: Whenever any local organization, women's club, school club or charitable group comes in asking for a donation, use your spa and salon service gift certificates rather than to offer free retail products. You need the recipients to try experiencing your services first, so you will have the opportunity of converting these new people into regular clients.

Retail product gift certificates are fine, yet they will usually not win over any new clients. It's cheaper to give away 2 to 5 different gift certificates for these requests, than to run a newspaper ad. Plus, almost every one that comes in will be a new first-time client. Make these gift certificates valid for no more than 6 to 12 months. Three months would be too short a time frame, as it generally takes each club at least one or two months to organize themselves, before the program. Look for the unusual fundraisers that may give you some extra exposure, like Silent Auctions, Radio and TV Auctions. Make the investment in marketing your spa in the future through increased donations, rather than increased advertising.

LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BANDS & ATHLETIC DEPARTMENTS: Today most schools need your help to raise funds. Local and state governments do not fund everything. Band and choral programs must raise their own money for music, uniforms, clinicians and travel costs. Call the local school's Band or Choral Director to see if you can meet. Sometimes, they will play you back a little by inviting all of your clients to their free annual and holiday concerts. Sometimes, they may even come by to sing or play music for an hour or two. From trumpeters to high school cheerleaders doing cheers right in front of your business, it will create a lot of extra excitement.

PROMOTE THE PROMOTIONS: You will need to create a well-planned series of fliers, newsletters, email reminders, website announcements, posters, point-of-purchase materials, outdoor, banners and staff incentives to make this a 110% successful effort. No promotion, fundraiser, sale or event works – unless you and your staff work, to promote each promotion!

PRESS & MEDIA RELATIONS: Promote your special events with press releases, public service announcements and photographs before the event. This is extremely important. Post event publicity is much more difficult to get and it is not as worthwhile. Your cover letter can offer several feature story angles and photo opportunities for their reporters. Send invitational notes to the local beauty editors, news editors, TV news anchors and Radio personalities, with a professionally written and typed cover letter noting how you can help them create some exciting local stories.

PARTNER WITH A COSMETOLOGY SCHOOL: It's a great idea to involve local cosmetology and esthetic schools. Their students can help you promote the event and to help during each event. To find a NACCAS accredited school near you, check out their website at www.NACCAS.org.

TEAMWORK: Get your staff involved from the get-go at staff meetings. Allow them to plan and create these fundraiser events. We suggest you create promotional teams, whereby two or three people are in charge of each event, while still reporting to you. It will be their responsibility to help with the legwork, while also getting the rest of your team excited. As team leaders, they will also participate better for others knowing they will want support when it is their turn to be in charge.

EXTRA TEAMWORK: Work with your product manufacturers and beauty supply distributor's sales consultants for any extra promotional materials and product samples that can be offered as a surprise within your donation packages.

WINNING WAYS: You will always win, when everyone else wins first. It has often been said that `No one cares how much you know – until they know – how much, you really care -- about them!' Celebrate life with your staff, family and community throughout the year, by giving back something to the community that serves you best.

The rewards for your ongoing charitable efforts will be immeasurable!

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