

Not-for-Profit Industry

Creating a Brand Awareness Campaign for Your Nonprofit

If you have heard the term “brand awareness” thrown around before but you are not exactly sure what it means, we get it. Brand awareness can seem like a vague marketing concept that for-profit businesses use to drum up interest in their products or services. Nonprofits, however, can benefit from brand awareness campaigns, too.

How? By giving you a picture of how familiar your audience is with your organization. Measuring brand awareness is not as clear-cut as measuring other metrics of success, which is why running brand awareness campaigns can be tricky.

Creating and tracking a successful brand awareness campaign can be done, however, and it is worth doing. Successful brand awareness campaigns can offer more awareness of your nonprofit, build trust with your audience, and make it easier for you to attract donors, partners, and more.

Before you get started trying to launch into a brand awareness campaign, though, you will need to know your audience.

APPEAL TO A SPECIFIC AUDIENCE

In order to generate brand awareness for your nonprofit, you have to know who your audience is and whom specifically you want to target. It sounds counterintuitive; shouldn't you be targeting as many people in your audience as possible? It is easier, however, to choose a specific audience that will share your content and spread the word about your brand, instead of trying to appeal to all of your different donor personas. When you choose an audience that is passionate and vocal about your cause, it will be that much easier to spread brand awareness.



Need some examples of nonprofits that tailor their campaigns to their audience? Look at [Stand Up to Cancer](#), a nonprofit that raises funds for cancer research. They have a simple yet vibrant brand aesthetic that appeals to all ages, but especially young people. They encourage people to create “tribute placards” so people can share the name of someone they stand up for on social media. People with cancer and those whose lives have been affected by cancer can get involved and spread the word online.

Likewise, [Movember's](#) aesthetic and awareness campaigns appeal to young men and trendy young adults. The men's health nonprofit makes getting involved fun: grow a mustache on your own to raise funds, host mustache growing competitions at work or in the community, donate, or join a fitness challenge. Movember's campaigns are easy to join, and they are conversation starters for those who are not in the know. But they start with a very specific audience, and the word spreads from there!

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GIVE PEOPLE SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT

Branding is about more than your nonprofit's logos or colors. It is really the story you tell about why you do what you do. To tell that story, create shareable and memorable content that relates to your organization's cause. Why did you start your nonprofit? What impact has it made on individuals? How exactly will a donation or volunteer's work make a difference?

For example, reading nonprofit Little Free Library shared a photo of a letter that was left in one of their neighborhood libraries. This anonymous library patron had survived a stroke and their short letter explained how walking to the free library every morning made a difference in their life. This [simple photo](#) on Little Free Library's Instagram page received more engagement and thousands more likes than the organization's other content.

Great brand awareness campaigns get people talking, even if the subject matter is hard to talk about. [Sandy Hook Promise](#), a nonprofit dedicated to preventing gun violence and promoting gun safety, recently released what looked like a typical back-to-school commercial where students are excited about their new clothes and school supplies. About halfway through this cheerful ad, students use their new gadgets and accessories to save themselves and their classmates during a school shooting. It is emotionally charged and hard to watch, but it makes a huge impact on Sandy Hook Promise's audience: parents, school staff, community leaders, and people affected by gun violence.

Whatever kind of story you decide to create, make it shareable across different channels: blog posts, email newsletters, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or your website. It will draw attention to your nonprofit's name and brand, making it more likely that people remember you when they consider donating.

DECIDE HOW YOU WILL MEASURE SUCCESS

Now that you know which audience to address and what stories to tell, you will need to decide how you will measure your brand awareness campaign's success.

Metrics such as site traffic, direct traffic, and social media engagement can give you an idea of your campaign's performance. Google Analytics is a helpful tool that can tell you what kind of traffic and how much traffic your website is receiving. If you are seeing an uptick in direct traffic, that means people are seeking out your nonprofit itself by typing in your website URL. Your brand awareness campaign is pushing people to visit your site. If you are seeing a lot of visitors that arrived via organic search, that means people found your website after using a search engine. Google Analytics gives you a lot of data in general to dig around in, but those two metrics are especially helpful for brand awareness campaigns.

Cole, Newton & Duran's Not-for-Profit Practice

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Cole, Newton & Duran's team of professionals are involved in every stage of our client's engagement to ensure they are receiving high quality, responsive service.

Clients enjoy working with experts who help achieve their objectives. Clients receive industry knowledge and solutions they need to not only reach, but to exceed their strategic goals.

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Social media presence and engagement are also useful tools for measuring success. It is an easier surface-level metric you can use to get a snapshot of your campaign success. Did you gain a lot of followers after a recently published Instagram post? Are your videos on YouTube being viewed and shared more often? Are your Facebook posts seeing a lot of comments and reactions? Your brand visibility is growing. You can track your growth to advise and adjust your strategy, or to set new campaign goals as needed.

BRAND AWARENESS IS A POWERFUL MARKETING TOOL FOR NONPROFITS

A successful brand awareness campaign can boost your nonprofit's visibility, attract the attention of the media, build audience trust, and increase the perceived value of your organization. Tailor personal, impactful stories to a specific segment of your audience and make them shareable. With the right tracking tools, you will see people talking about your nonprofit in no time.

The preceding is an article by Latasha Doyle. Latasha Doyle (@latashadoyle) is a content writer who focuses on helping charities, as well as nonprofit software and services, find the right words. She can be found on the Internet at www.latashadoylewrites.com.

Contact Us

If you would like to discuss how Cole, Newton & Duran's not-for-profit team can help your organization with its tax, accounting, or consulting needs, please feel free to give me a call.

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