

# Not-for-Profit Industry

## 5 Reasons Small Nonprofits Run Away From Marketing

If the words branding, marketing, or publicity make you want to run and hide, you are not alone. Every single day, nonprofit leaders struggle with how to get more recognition for their organizations—they run away from marketing their organization.

Marketing is simply the set of activities nonprofits use for creating, communicating, delivering, and amplifying their missions. It is crucial to ensure your most important stakeholders know who you are and are excited to support you.

If you find yourself running away from marketing your organization, here are five reasons why you might be doing so.

### 1. MARKETING TAKES MONEY AND YOU DON'T HAVE THE BIG BUCKS

Okay, so you are not a mammoth-sized nonprofit with a multi-million dollar budget. There are plenty of organizations with a lot of funds to support their missions that still struggle with donor retention, growing their membership, and attracting the right stakeholders for their cause. So that is not it.

It is not just about the money you have to spend. It is about the strategy behind the investment. Having a clear idea of what story you want to share, how you want that story to be shared and who is a part of that story are critical components to a sound marketing strategy. How to get your story out there—that is more important than how much money you have to do it.



### 2. MARKETING IS A CURSE WORD SO NO ONE USES IT

Say the word marketing to a group of nonprofit professionals who don't work in marketing and you might get everything from a furrowed brow to a blank stare. To the uninitiated, marketing might make your stomach hurt. Something about the word marketing conjures up an episode of *Mad Men* and slick salespeople peddling cheap wares. For a nonprofit organization looking to impact its community and do great work, it can be uncomfortable to think about how your organization is positioned, perceived, and promoted.

### 3. WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH, MARKETING GETS THE BOOT

Maybe your organization decided to invest in marketing and even hired a marketing and communications professional on your team. But, when your funding mix changed and you needed to cut expenses, marketing was the first to go. It might seem like a great idea in the short term, but in the long run your organization will have to work harder to reassert your position and platform. You don't want to be a "best kept secret."

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### 4. YOU DON'T HAVE THE SYSTEMS IN PLACE TO SUPPORT MARKETING

The good news: there are a lot of great tools to help you market your organization so that you have the supporters you want (and need) to grow.

The bad news: there are a lot of great tools to help you market your organization. Why is this bad? Because it can be overwhelming to know which tools will work well for your marketing goals, and if you have selected a few things without a strategy, they will be abandoned before you have had a change to use them. However, tools make it easier to implement your marketing efforts, and having the right tools in place is the difference between marketing done well and no marketing at all.

### 5. YOU THINK IF YOU BUILD IT "THEY" WILL COME

Your mission is great. It is important. It is needed. But if no one knows anything about your organization, why it exists, and where they fit in your organizational story, it doesn't matter how amazing your programs are. It is not enough to have a great mission and important programs. Your stakeholders need to know that you exist and why you exist. You need the right eyes on your organization. Storytelling and marketing these transformational stories will elevate your mission.

### Contact Us

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

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