

Cause-Related Marketing: Get the stats and get started.

It's not a new idea!

American Express coined and trademarked the term "cause-related marketing" (CRM) in 1983 for their campaign to raise money to restore the Statue of Liberty. They donated 1 cent every time an AMEX card was used. They spent \$4 million to market it. In 3 months they

- Raised \$1.7 million
- Increased card use by 27%
- Increased applications 45%

Supporting a specific cause and going public:

- Identifies your personality
- Demonstrates what you stand for
- Connects you with stakeholders

"97% of marketing executives believe CRM is a valid business strategy."

2010 PRWeek/Barkley PR Cause Survey

Market the output.

Be specific about how your cause benefits. More than 278 million people in the U.S. want to know what a company is doing to benefit a cause. And when a company doesn't provide the information consumers demand, 19% of Americans are most likely to choose another brand.

"When you sell a product through cause marketing or align a service through cause marketing, consumers need to understand the mission of the cause you're advancing. If they don't then you have failed."

*Kevin Martinez
Corporate Cause Marketing Expert
(Home Depot, KPMG, ESPN)*

Who loves cause marketing?

Consumers do.

80% of consumers are likely to switch brands, similar in price and quality, to one that supports a cause.

1/3 of Hispanic and African American consumers say they almost always choose brands that support causes they believe in, compared to just 1/5 of Non-Hispanic Whites.

9-in-10 moms want the opportunity to buy a product benefiting a cause.

88% of men say it's important for a brand to support a cause, 61% have purchased a brand because it supported a cause, 67% would try a brand because it supported a cause and 55% would pay more for a brand that supported a cause.

Employees do.

More than 70% of company employees want their employers and the companies they work for to do something in support of a cause.

Employees who are very involved in their company's cause program are 28% more likely to be proud of their company's values and 36% more likely to feel a strong sense of loyalty than those who are not involved.

Causes do.

As a result of nonprofit-corporate partnerships, people respond:

- 50% are more likely to donate to the nonprofit
- 49% are more likely to participate in an event for the nonprofit
- 41% are more likely to volunteer for the nonprofit

"When we're on the back of a cereal box which is read on average 8 times by multiple viewers and it has a shelf life of 3 weeks, the potential to impact behavior is huge. What brochure gets read that many times—ever?"

Non-profit Cause Marketer

Ask yourself these questions and see if you're in a win-win situation or if you have missed a cause-related marketing opportunity.

Do you openly state that your business is contributing to a non-profit cause?

Yes: Win/Win

86% of global consumers believe that business needs to place at least equal weight on societal interests as on business interests. And more than 75% of Americans say a non-profit/corporate partnership makes a cause stand out.

No: Missed Opportunity

75% of brands now engage in cause marketing (up from 58% in 2009), and 97% of marketing executives believe cause marketing is a valid business strategy.

Do you provide details of your connection to the cause and allow consumers to track your contributions?

Yes: Win/Win

90% of consumers want companies to tell them the ways they are supporting causes.

No: Loss

61% of consumers are actively seeking partnership details before supporting the cause, and only 45% think organizations disclose enough information. If a company does not offer consumers enough information about how their purchase will affect the cause, 34% will either choose another brand or walk away entirely.

Is there a cause embedded in the way you do business and are you marketing that cause openly?

Yes: Win/Win

Cause-related marketing isn't always about supporting a non-profit organization. There could be a cause embedded in the way you do business, such as being the major source of employment for an entire community or providing the resources to protect the environment where you operate your business. If your company is making this type of major contribution and you're telling the world about it, you're marketing a cause that's important to the public, to your community and to your employees.

No: Missed Opportunity

A full 91% of consumers believe that companies should choose a cause that is important to the communities where they do business and one that is consistent with their responsible business practices or the way they make and distribute their products. Find that cause that's embedded in the way you do business and share it with the public.

Are you giving your employees opportunities to contribute to a cause?

Yes: Win/Win

81% of surveyed employees say they would contribute if the company matched contributions and 75% say they would take advantage of skill-based volunteer opportunities.

No: Missed Opportunity

79% of employees who are involved in their company's cause program say they are proud of their company's values and that they feel a strong sense of loyalty to their company.

Telling Your Cause-Related Story: Some Universal Truths

Showcase the “at stake.”

This is the heavy, consequential implication of the issue your cause is facing. Whether it's saving the rainforest, feeding hungry children or putting women to work in cottage industries half a world away, you should lay out the consequences of NOT addressing the issue in a way that is universal and that resonates with consumers. Connect your audience with the people who will benefit from the help they will give by supporting your cause or buying your products. Make them care.

Ensure an ebb and flow of tension and relief.

Make sure that you interject your story with lighthearted moments as well. Although the issues at stake may be grave, there should also be moments of hope, happiness, levity and even humor. This change in perspective prevents viewers from feeling overwhelmed by the seriousness of the issues and avoids the “gloom and doom” that has proven to turn consumers away from many causes because it makes them feel too sad or overburdened. People need and respond to lighthearted moments. Releasing built-up tension can help your audience better absorb the gravity of the situation without being overwhelmed.

Provide a resolution.

Demonstrate to your audience the ultimate benefit of your cause by showcasing success stories – beautiful birds nesting in the rainforest, healthy smiling children who have been fed and are well taken care of, women who have gained autonomy with the jobs they can do in their homes. If people from your company are personally involved in the cause, show them with the recipients of your good works. Let the audience know that you're truly connected with the cause you are promoting and that their support has resulted in quantifiable results.

Sources and Further Reading

2010 Cone Cause Evolution Study (Sign-in to download PDF)

Mainstream Green, The Red Papers: Ogilvy & Mather (PDF)

Citizens Engage, Edelman goodpurpose® Study 2010 Fourth Annual Global Consumer Survey (PDF)

2010 PRWeek/Barkley PR Cause Survey (PDF)