



CHARITY VIEWS

A Newsletter for Vehicle Donation

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GREETINGS

What Changes, What Stays the Same

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The introduction of the internet turned traditional marketing on its head. In many ways, the industry is still figuring out what works and what doesn't. What's new is constantly changing, and it can be hard to stay on top of it all.

So, for this issue of Charity Views, we're going to pare it back. First, we're going to look at the simplest form of internet marketing: what you could put on your organization's website to encourage online vehicle donations. By looking at our top-performing charities and the trends present on each of their web pages, you'll find that even just small tweaks to a website's usability can have a big impact on potential donors.

Next, we're going to circle back around to examine word-of-mouth advertising. Sound outdated to you? Surprisingly, word-of-mouth is still a strong contender in donor acquisition, and in this time and landscape of influencer marketing and recommendation networks, it would be a mistake to ignore this metric.

Marketing channels go in and out of trends, but here's what stays the same: in the end, you're just talking to people. A conversation is a conversation, whether it's through the internet or face-to-face. That human connection is what drives interaction and engagement for your charitable organization, and we hope that this issue of Charity Views gives you some ideas for how to form those relationships.



One Car One Difference[®] is IAA's national program designed to raise public awareness about the benefits of donating a vehicle. By handling the vehicle donation process from start to finish, IAA turns donated vehicles into dollars for charities nationwide.

Word of Mouth: Trust, but Verify

It's a common situation. It's lunchtime on Wednesday; your coworkers are hankering for a break away from their desks and want to eat lunch at somewhere new. "Let's check Yelp," someone says. Or maybe, "Tony said that new Mediterranean place was really good."

In a world that seems to be constantly chattering, insight from your peers seems worth its weight in gold. Who provides better service? Which is cheaper? What's a good recommendation? While traditional advertising has its own merits, we've come to discover that in 2015, IAA's partnered charities attributed word of mouth to 16.3% of their vehicle donations. While vehicle donation programs don't necessarily have to worry about the merits of their chicken souvlaki, a simple conversation about the benefits of vehicle donation can go a long way.

The question is: How do you start that conversation?

Inwards

First, let's think about your charity's staunchest supporters. Take a look around—the most dedicated people to a charity's cause are often its own employees.

While much effort is put into external promotion, it's always important to keep employees in the loop. Prepping internal communications can be as simple as reiterating your charity's specific mission and that vehicle donation is a viable way to support. Keep this information fresh and timely, especially around periods of high vehicle donation volume near the end of the year when holiday gatherings could especially encourage organic word-of-mouth interactions.

For employees who interact with donors directly, internal communications may be especially helpful as they navigate public relationships. Having talking points on hand is a way for employees to communicate with key messages in mind, further solidifying your charity's brand and potential for someone to recall your vehicle donation program.



A charity's employees are the ones that see firsthand how much a vehicle donation can help, and starting with this audience is a surefire way to foster engagement within and beyond your organization.

Outwards

There are few things that are more beneficial to a charity than having a presence in the community.

Reach out to community leaders along with local celebrities, sponsors and advocates to help spread the word of your mission. Influencer marketing can have a big impact on the visibility of your charity, as you're tapping into an already established network of trust.

For more information about Influencer Marketing, see Charity Views, Volume 13.

The big elephant in the room when it comes to word-of-mouth marketing is the use of social media. Now, to leverage word-of-mouth on social media takes more than just tweeting to your followers. Creating community engagement and meaningful content should be top of mind, and this is where those relationships with the pillars of your community come in.

Interaction with those individuals emphasize the human connections that your brand creates, which inspires word-of-mouth advertising nearly three times more than brands that don't readily market emotional aspects, as the Keller Fay Group reports. From there, it's up to your audience. In today's highly digital world, a shared Facebook post is as valuable as a verbal recommendation.

Word-of-mouth marketing flies under the radar, but remains consistent in its value. With the prevalence of the internet and social media websites, word-of-mouth doesn't always, ironically, come from someone's mouth. Whether it's verbal or digital, transparent communication is key to building meaningful relationships to foster vehicle donation for your organization.



FEATURE

Optimizing Online Donation

It's safe to say that you can do a lot of things online. Order groceries, pay your bills, read this newsletter. Many people enjoy the ease and convenience of doing things through the internet, and as it turns out, vehicle donation is one of those things.

For our top performing charities, online donations make up **nearly half** of all their vehicle donations. That's nothing to sneeze at. We took a look at their websites, taking special care to keep an eye out for trends in usability that could help you optimize your own charity's online vehicle donation process. Here's what we found:

01. Distinct CTA

[Non-profit 101 says that a call to action should always be readily available](#), and our top-performing charities certainly take that into account. Many of their websites include multiple eye-catching donation buttons, and are distinct enough in design that they don't get lost within the content on a page.

02. Clear Options

Let's take the Donate button a bit further. Most people already know that monetary donations to charities are possible, but they might not be aware of the impact of vehicle donations. Our top-performing charities bypass this problem by making clear that there are more options: some have a separate Donate a Vehicle button, while others link to an entire page of alternative ways to support the charity.

03. Step By Step

Most people going into a vehicle donation process may not be sure of the steps that need be taken. Having it all laid out puts a potential donor at ease for how painless the process is going to be – one last nudge toward submitting their information.

Sometimes, the most obvious answer is the correct one. These simple tips are constants across many top-performing charity websites, and learning from them could very much help your own organization maximize your online vehicle donation potential.



Partner with Your Community



Partnering with local media outlets is a great way to get the word out about your vehicle donation program. Many of them will happily work with you at no charge because it's for a good cause.

Radio Stations

Call around to local radio stations and ask if they can run short spots about your program. Provide them with brief 10 or 15-second reads that they can use on air.

Local Newspapers

Contact local print media about ad space or any openings in upcoming issues. Give them a few images or a short info blurb that make it easy for them to place in their publication.

Outdoor Advertising

Ask local billboard companies about posting a vehicle donation message on unused inventory. They will be more inclined to agree if you offer to feature their standard "advertise on this billboard" message as well!



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