

Budget and Staff Constraints Got You Down?

NON-PROFITS ARE CHALLENGED to increase response rates, focus on long-term donor value and find creative new ways to cut through the mailbox clutter.

Unfortunately, budget constraints often don't allow for an adequate in-house staff. So, what's a non-profit to do? The answer...tap into the talents you have on your own vendor-partner team!

We typically advise clients to bring together their partners on a quarterly basis for planning meetings. But beyond the usual "who's done what" agenda, earmark time for some free rolling brainstorming. Your list broker may have some great creative ideas, your service bureau may have new list ideas and your creative services group may have insight about file segmentation techniques. Your vendor partners often have knowledge well beyond their area of expertise. Many of the individuals have 15+ years of direct mail experience and have been exposed to all facets of the business. This insight adds a dimension to the untapped "big picture."

However, it's up to you to provide the forum. Only non-profit leadership can build the team spirit by creating an atmosphere free of competition and egos. Done right, ideas will surface and as one idea leads to another, you may be surprised at the end of the day how many new ideas have formed and more surprised by who provided what.

For instance, for a large health mailer with back-to-back mailings, we were faced with mailing the same individuals within a few month time frame despite suppressing prior orders. The list team hatched an idea to give the "second use" individuals a new package from the original with reminder message added to the copy, and a winner was born.

Most non-profits probably have talent they are not fully leveraging. So when you select a vendor, think about how they can come together and fit on the overall team. Approach hiring a partner the same way you do when hiring an internal member of your staff. If you do, you'll have the formula for a winning team!