

# MEANINGFUL MARKETING

THE NEW HEART OF CORPORATE/NONPROFIT  
PARTNERSHIPS

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# ABOUT IEG CONSULTING

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IEG Consulting partners with charitable, cause-related and other nonprofit organizations, creating custom growth strategies to dramatically increase revenue from corporate sponsors.

For nearly 30 years, we have helped properties realize the value of their assets and strategically expand new sponsorship opportunities. Our clients can confidently optimize the value of their relationships with corporate funders through the long-term strategies, insights and guidance they receive.

IEG's cause-related consulting clients include: American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Assn., American Heart Assn., City of Hope, Make-A-Wish Foundation, March of Dimes, National Geographic Society, Special Olympics, Susan G. Komen for the Cure, United Way, UNICEF and WWF.

IEG also has consulted with leading properties in other sectors, including American Bar Assn.; Association of Fundraising Professionals; Cirque du Soleil; Essence Music Festival; The Kennedy Center; NBA; NCAA; NFL; the Orange, Rose and Sugar Bowls; and U.S. Olympic Committee.

Our work with prominent sponsors—Aon, AT&T, Diageo, Dr Pepper, Exxon, GE Healthcare, JPMorgan Chase, P&G, Subway, Verizon Wireless, Visa, and more—provides an insider's view and independent, real-world perspective on what sponsors seek to evolve their sponsorship investments. Our sponsorship valuation methodology is endorsed by nearly 200 leading sponsors worldwide and is truly unique in the industry.

Part of WPP and GroupM, IEG is connected to specialty sibling communications companies in media, digital and activation.

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# MEANINGFUL MARKETING

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**IN THE NEARLY 30 YEARS SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF CAUSE MARKETING MARKED A MAJOR ADVANCE IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOR-PROFIT BUSINESSES AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS, CHANGE HAS CONTINUED IN SMALLER INCREMENTS.**

But those new directions have now coalesced into the first major change point in three decades—a shift to what IEG Consulting has named Meaningful Marketing.

Mirroring the advent of cause marketing, this development has been led by corporate partners and requires nonprofits to fundamentally shift their approach to working with businesses if they wish to secure significant support.

Charitable and cause-related organizations that embraced the post-philanthropic world created by cause marketing have thrived by developing new skills, new roles and new market offerings.

In the same way, tremendous opportunities await those who can adapt to today's new landscape and meet its demands. As always, institutional change will not come easily, but the rewards will be worth it.

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# WHAT MEANINGFUL MARKETING MEANS

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CORPORATIONS' NEW VIEW OF THE ROLE OF NONPROFIT PARTNERSHIPS IS NOT SO MUCH A TRANSFORMATION OF PREVIOUS PRACTICES, BUT THE CONFLUENCE OF NUMEROUS FACTORS AND THE RECOGNITION THAT THE WHOLE IN THIS CASE IS INDEED GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS.

To achieve all the objectives associated with aligning with nonprofits—and to do so in the most efficient and effective way—corporate partners are seeking to integrate their efforts behind a singular and truly meaningful idea that can achieve economies of scale and generate significant impact.

Equipped with that big idea, they then need to identify the cause or causes that can deliver the brand value and marketing assets needed to live up to the idea's promise, spread its message and achieve the desired results.



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# **CORPORATE PARTNER POV: THE CASE FOR MEANINGFUL MARKETING**

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**IEG CONSULTING'S INTERVIEWS WITH CORPORATE EXECUTIVES AND FRONT-LINE MANAGERS AT COMPANIES THAT HAVE SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENTS IN NONPROFIT PARTNERSHIPS HAVE IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING FACTORS THAT DEMONSTRATE THE POWERFUL RATIONALE FOR MEANINGFUL MARKETING.**

- Corporations have fewer dollars to allocate to nonprofit partnerships and they want to ensure those dollars are used to maximum effect for both themselves and their partners
- Companies want business units that have traditionally had discrete relationships with nonprofits to instead work together holistically
- Brands need to create identifiable cause platforms that target audiences will readily understand and remember
- Relationships with nonprofits must be able to be leveraged through multiple channels, media and markets
- Cause partnerships need to be internalized throughout the company and become effective employee motivation and retention tools
- Current nonprofit partnerships are too narrowly focused and miss out on the opportunity for bigger impact and returns

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# MEANINGFUL MARKETING IN ACTION

## COCA-COLA

### LIVE POSITIVELY

The Live Positively platform serves as a common thread that the beverage giant weaves through many consumer-facing initiatives, from its partnerships with nonprofits such as the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, National Park Foundation and American Cancer Society to its involvement in the Olympic Games, education funding and local community programs, as well as its efforts to promote recycling, water conservation and climate protection.



## UNDER ARMOUR

### UA FREEDOM

The performance apparel manufacturer has established UA Freedom as the over-arching identity for the company's multifaceted support of military and public safety service members.

Carrying the tag line "Believe in Heroes," the program has a dedicated Web site through which consumers can purchase exclusive products tied to a \$1 million donation to the Wounded Warrior Project, as well as purchase backpacks to be given to injured service members. The site also allows military and first-responder heroes to share their stories.

Under Armour leverages its extensive pro and college sports ties to promote UA Freedom and offers volunteer opportunities to employees with WWP and other nonprofit partners, including the Pat Tillman Foundation and the Navy Seal Foundation.



## KOHL'S

### KOHL'S CARES

Although discount and department store retailers are bastions of traditional philanthropy and community relations efforts, the Kohl's chain goes beyond the norm with its Kohl's Cares platform.

Concentrating in the areas of children's health and education, environmental solutions, and women's health, the program's extensions include cause marketing merchandise sales, fundraising gift cards, sponsorship of the U.S. Youth Soccer organization, a partnership with the TED-Ed program for teachers, and an Associates in Action volunteer project.

Partners include the nonprofit ACT education organization, American Cancer Society, Susan G. Komen for the Cure and more than 160 hospitals nationwide.



## GENERAL MILLS

### SAVE LIDS TO SAVE LIVES

What started as a donation-with-purchase program for Yoplait yogurt has become a brand in itself and has expanded to include more than 20 of the company's product lines, including Betty Crocker, Cheerios, Green Giant, Nature Valley and Pillsbury. In addition to the increased product participation, the program has expanded to include sponsorship of the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure series and a Facebook community that enables additional ways for consumers to participate in the fight against breast cancer.



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# BRIDGING THE GAP

MEANINGFUL MARKETING REQUIRES CORPORATIONS TO MAKE THE COMMITMENT OF TIME, ENERGY AND RESOURCES NEEDED TO DELIVER SCALE.

CONVERSELY, IT REQUIRES NONPROFITS TO COMMIT TO WORKING WITH BUSINESSES IN WAYS THAT, FOR MANY ORGANIZATIONS, ARE FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT FROM THEIR CURRENT APPROACHES TO SUCH RELATIONSHIPS.

## MAKING THE STRATEGIC SHIFT

To become an organization poised to take advantage of the shift to Meaningful Marketing, a nonprofit must reposition itself in the partnership marketplace. To meet the new demands of companies and brands, it must answer questions in two critical areas:

### FOCUSING ON BRAND

- Does the organization's brand have high equity?
- Can it easily convey its brand strength and value to prospective partners?
- Are its various units (programs, chapters, etc.) unified under a single, strong brand or do they have separate identities not easily recognized as part of the whole?

Every nonprofit must recognize its brand as a strategic asset that defines the organization for all stakeholders and directly impacts the value of its corporate partnerships. The brand should be at the core of the organization, with everyone involved committed to understanding, articulating and managing it.

Understanding the brand and being able to communicate its positioning and impact is an important step in transitioning the relationship between nonprofit and corporation from one-dimensional and transactional to the more dynamic and profitable model of a partnership in which each party delivers value to the other and has a stake in the other's success.

Meaningful Marketing requires partnerships with nonprofits that understand the meaning and worth of

their brands and practice all of the elements of good brand management—conducting and responding to research into audience and stakeholder attitudes, developing strategic marketing campaigns that differentiate the organization, etc.

Corporate marketers seek partner brands that have the ability to raise their own brands by association, as well as foster loyalty and turn stakeholders into ambassadors.

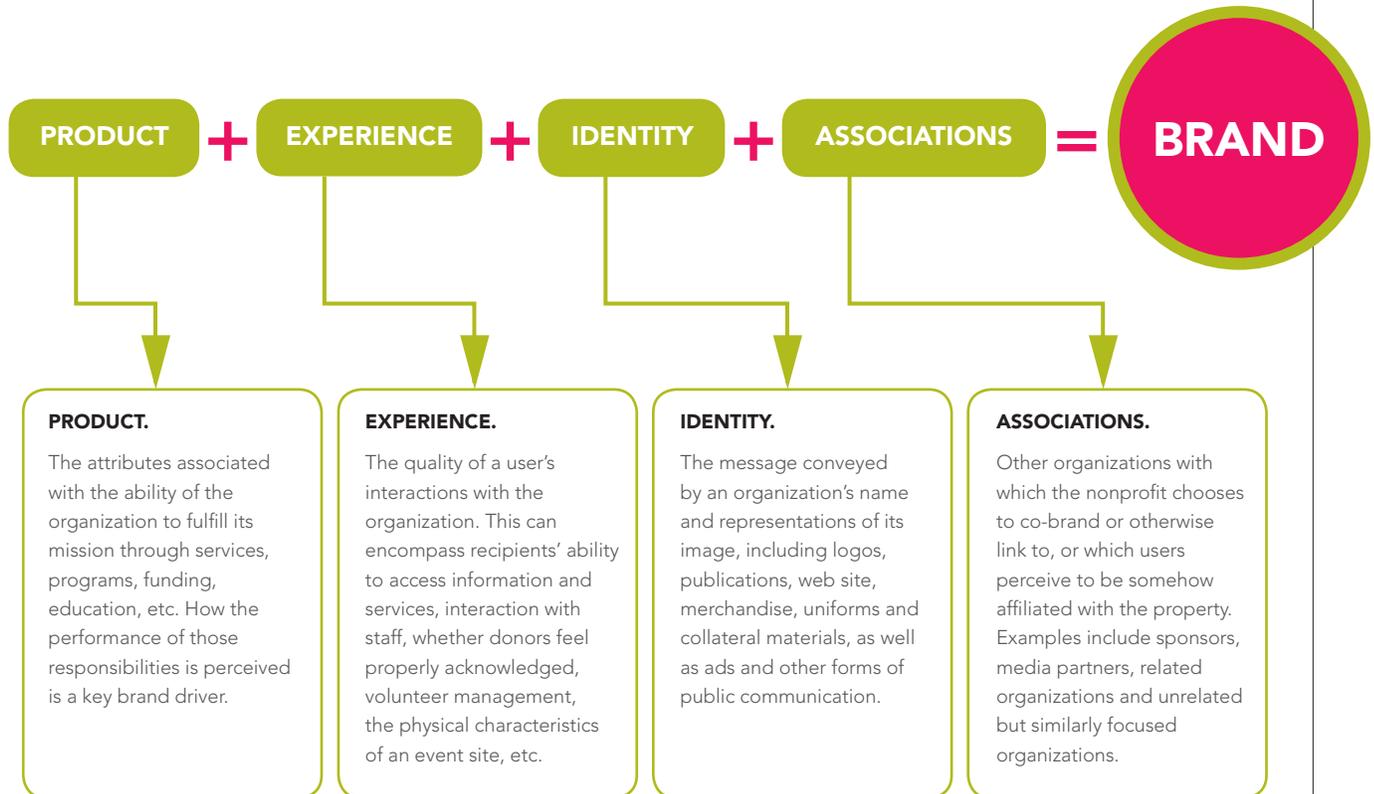
Among the practices that brand-centered organizations must be committed to:

- Communicating brand meaning and value to everyone who represents the organization. This acknowledges that every deed, even seemingly inconsequential actions or decisions, either builds or takes away from the brand.
- Going beyond merely understanding the target audiences’ impressions of the brand and using that information to make improvements that will strengthen the bond with consumers.
- Developing relevant extensions, as well as marketing and communications programs that will expand reach and impact.

### DEFINING THE NONPROFIT BRAND

While individual elements that comprise a nonprofit brand will vary depending on the nature of the organization, IEG Consulting created the

following model identifying the major elements that comprise a brand. Each of the four drivers has the ability to greatly enhance or significantly devalue the brand.



# RE:

**RE: EDUCATE**

**RE: THINK**

**RE: PRIORITIZE**

**RE: ALIGN**

**RE: INVENT**

**RE: ENGINEER**

**RE: STRUCTURE**

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**REAP | REWARDS | RESULTS**

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## **ACTING AS ONE**

- Does the organization's structure impede partners who want a holistic approach?
- Is there staff buy-in that what is best for the organization is the ultimate goal?
- Does the organization have a core corporate partnership strategy and is it effectively communicated internally and externally?

The factor most likely to prevent a nonprofit from taking advantage of Meaningful Marketing is a structure that does not align with partners seeking access to multiple assets and demanding flexibility to keep their programs fresh through new benefits.

Organizations that have individual programs approaching corporate partners on their own, as well as siloed departments with independent revenue goals and a "protect our turf" mentality are anathema to today's corporate partners. Meaningful Marketing practitioners view their nonprofit partners as a single organization with multiple extensions they can tap.

Nonprofits must be responsive to that approach. In many cases that means rethinking divisions of responsibility between units of the organization, be they departments, programs or chapters.

While the building of cross-departmental and cross-functional bridges typically involves multiple considerations, the most crucial are:

- Eliminating competition and encouraging cooperation between units responsible for securing revenue. Departmental goals cannot override the greater good. Incentives must be provided to align separate areas behind a single goal, along with communication plans, training and joint operating committees to keep all relevant staff working to the same end.
- Rebuilding the partnership solicitation process behind a single point of contact and approaching potential partners with solutions that fit their programs and objectives, rather than leading with how they can help support the organization's needs.
- Enlisting support from the top. Moving an organization to think in new ways requires buy-in from leadership. Shifting responsibilities, altering structures, adjusting goals and incenting staff to change established behaviors are impossible to accomplish without executive understanding, approval and assistance.

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# NEW MEANING

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**MEANINGFUL MARKETING IS A TREND JUST STARTING TO HIT ITS STRIDE, WITH MANY MORE CORPORATIONS POISED TO ADOPT IT AS THEIR CENTRAL APPROACH TO PARTNERING WITH NONPROFITS.**

This doesn't foretell the end of relationships that are only philanthropic, or only involve a cause-marketing or event platform. Rather it marks an opportunity for nonprofits to establish more significant, long-term and sustainable partnerships at much higher levels of commitment.

Meaningful Marketing represents the chance for nonprofits that are positioned and structured appropriately to realize the full potential of their corporate relationships and take a major step forward.

## CONTACT



**STACEY GOLDBERG**

Senior Director  
Client Leadership  
Consulting Group  
312.725.5106  
[stacey.goldberg@sponsorship.com](mailto:stacey.goldberg@sponsorship.com)



**TIMOTHY TLUSTY**

Senior Vice President  
Client Solutions  
Consulting Group  
312.725.5122  
[timothy.tlusty@sponsorship.com](mailto:timothy.tlusty@sponsorship.com)



350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET, SUITE 1200  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60654-2105  
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED