

Frenemy Tactics



Winning the nonprofit
marketing wars

by Drew Train

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CREATING BRANDS WITH
HIGHER PURPOSE

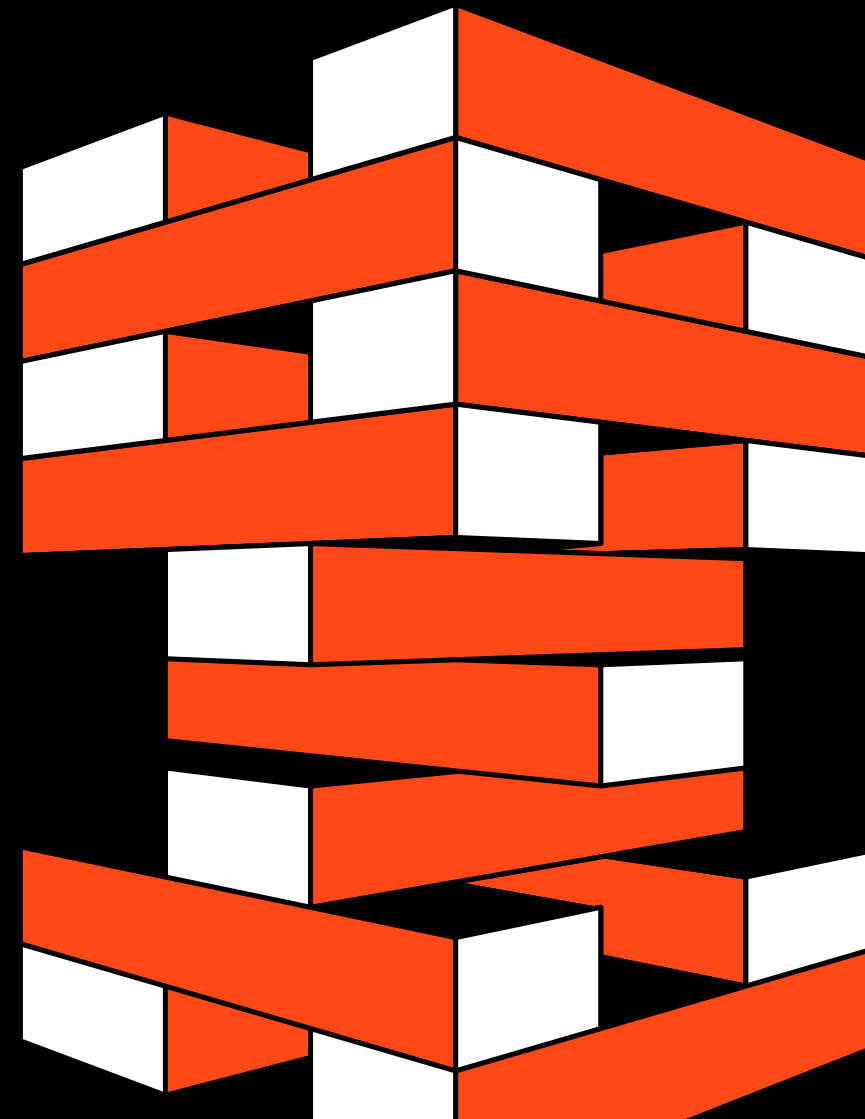
2018



SITUATION REPORT

Nonprofits are in a marketing war (see Cola Wars) with one another as they fight for the attention, affinity, actions and cold hard cash of Americans in a radically different consumer landscape. And you, the marketing department, are in the cockpit. Sure, you may collaborate with lots of organizations in your space to serve your constituents; that's great for the program teams, the constituents and the world. But you work in marketing, and I have to ask: Are those other groups really your friends? No. But, enemies isn't exactly fair either. So, they're frenemies. And they are a force to be reckoned with.

And it's not just your frenemies. You and your colleagues in the marketing department are under attack from all sides. Most likely, your department is poorly equipped, underfunded and disempowered. The organization as a whole probably lacks institutional knowledge of, and experience with, how marketing works financially, operationally and in delivering on the mission. And let's face it, you probably don't have all the right people on your team. Beyond that, the high profile success of Charity: Water, the Ice Bucket Challenge, and Bernie's \$27 Army has convinced board members that you should be able to simply Kickstarter your way to \$5 million in online fundraising by having your unpaid summer intern create "viral campaigns," because millennials "do social media all day." It isn't pretty.



[Here, you will find a practical guide to winning the battles you fight on a daily basis: getting funding, setting expectations, building a team, making the case for technology, working across the organization, understanding digital media, and making the argument for marketing to your stakeholders.](#)



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Winning Hearts & Minds



Framing and winning the internal argument for resources, respect and reasonable expectations is key to victory. These articles should help you set the conditions for success.

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DEFINING SUCCESS

To get them to properly value marketing, you need to introduce your stakeholders to the concept of Total Organizational Value across 4 categories of KPI: Business, Brand, Operations and Mission.





1. Business

Dollars, Donors, Average Gift Value, ROI and more. These are the bottom-line financial metrics essential to your survival. If you aren't reporting on these now, you need to build the infrastructure to do so. If you are already reporting these things out, good. Having access to this data is key to making the case for the value of marketing. But here's the rub, your board will immediately want you to attribute dollars raised to specific marketing activity and prove a specific ROI. It doesn't always work that way. Nike can charge \$300 for its shoes because it used marketing and product to build a powerful brand. They may be able to track which ads lead to shoe sales, but most of the time they can't tell you which ads make someone willing to pay their premium price. And here's the secret, if

they didn't have brand ads that make someone willing to pay the premium, the ads that sell shoes wouldn't work. Same dynamics hold true for you. If your brand has no value, the measurable digital media will never measure up to your expectations because nobody cares enough to click. Marketing isn't a capital investment, it's an operating cost (more on this later).

2. Brand

This category breaks into two buckets: Consumer and Employer. Consumer brand metrics are things like Aided Awareness, Unaided Awareness, NPS, Sentiment, Engagement, Media performance, etc. This is what you use to optimize your communications, plan your media and convince your stakeholders you're doing it right. You have to have command of this data, and know how to use it to your advantage. Use the data to tell a story, don't just report it out. You aren't an impartial journalist reporting the facts. You need to be an advocate for yourself and your team and the discipline of marketing in your organization. Weaponize the data and deploy it to make the argument for more resources. And remember, HR is

your ally. From an employer perspective, the metrics of a strong employer brand are reduction in turnover, ease of recruitment, employee engagement and reduction in recruiting costs. Effective branding to the external world makes people feel good about where they work. Colleagues being able to tell their friends and family that they work at a place they know and respect, and that is changing the world, is a powerful social incentive and status symbol that makes recruiting and retention easier. That's a mission-critical KPI that marketing and branding contribute to; take the credit for your role in it.



3. Operations

Inspired teams are more productive. A properly deployed brand will increase morale, resulting in more effective teams, more engagement, less downtime, overall improved productivity and a bigger impact for your constituents. Again, use your existing HR productivity metrics, and do some pre- and post-analysis to value the change.

4. Mission

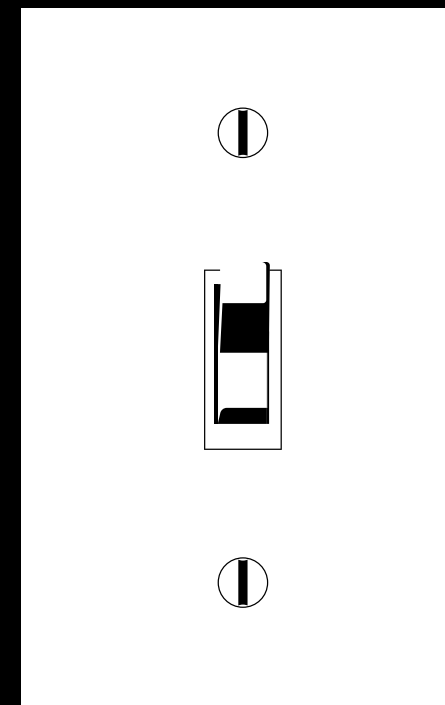
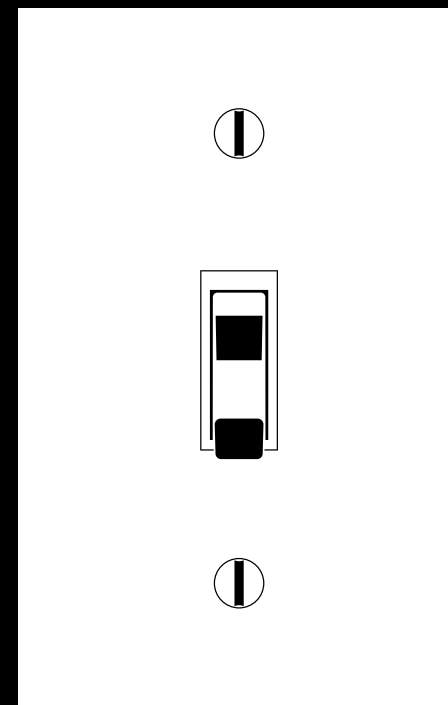
This is the one they almost always miss. Most nonprofits have education, advocacy or awareness-raising for their issue as part of their remit. And, beyond that, all nonprofits have to make people care about their issue in order to get them to donate at some point. Therefore all nonprofits have some need to

educate the public to drive the initial demand for your organization to exist. Marketing is how you do this. If you find your executive team or board consoling themselves with cliches like “our issue isn’t sexy,” then you have a mission marketing problem. Making your issue sexy is the most valuable thing you can do to improve the long-term trajectory of your organization, and marketing is how it’s done.

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MARKETING AS MISSION

It's marketing's job to create demand. It's development's job to create supply. Here's the difference: When the world cares about your issue and protests in the streets screaming for someone to do more of what you do (provide access to abortion, fight climate change, etc.), that's demand. When development fundraises from wealthy donors and institutions to secure capital to provide your service, that's creating supply.





In the business world, the demand function is the marketing department. The supply function is called Investor Relations. If you're spending all your money in fundraising, all you're doing is creating supply. The problem: Demand drives the market. If you spend all your time creating supply, you may find yourself with nobody demanding your service, and at that point, you're toast.

The equivalent for a company would be spending all their time and effort running around Wall Street and Silicon Valley raising capital, and spending none of that capital trying to attract customers. Probably wouldn't be a very successful business for very long. And, they probably couldn't keep raising capital over time. Nonprofits must create demand for their service.

This means spending money to educate the public on the problem, the solutions and the reason why fixing this problem must be a top priority. You know why we have a climate crisis. None of the environmental organizations have been able to build a critical mass of demand for the solution. They have all raised a ton of money to design solutions. We know what to do to fight climate change. But we don't have the collective will as a society to do it. We simply don't have enough demand to produce the requisite supply to solve the problem.

Same thing for homelessness. We know that supplying supportive housing is the answer, but nobody has created enough demand in the market for people to insist this housing actually gets built.

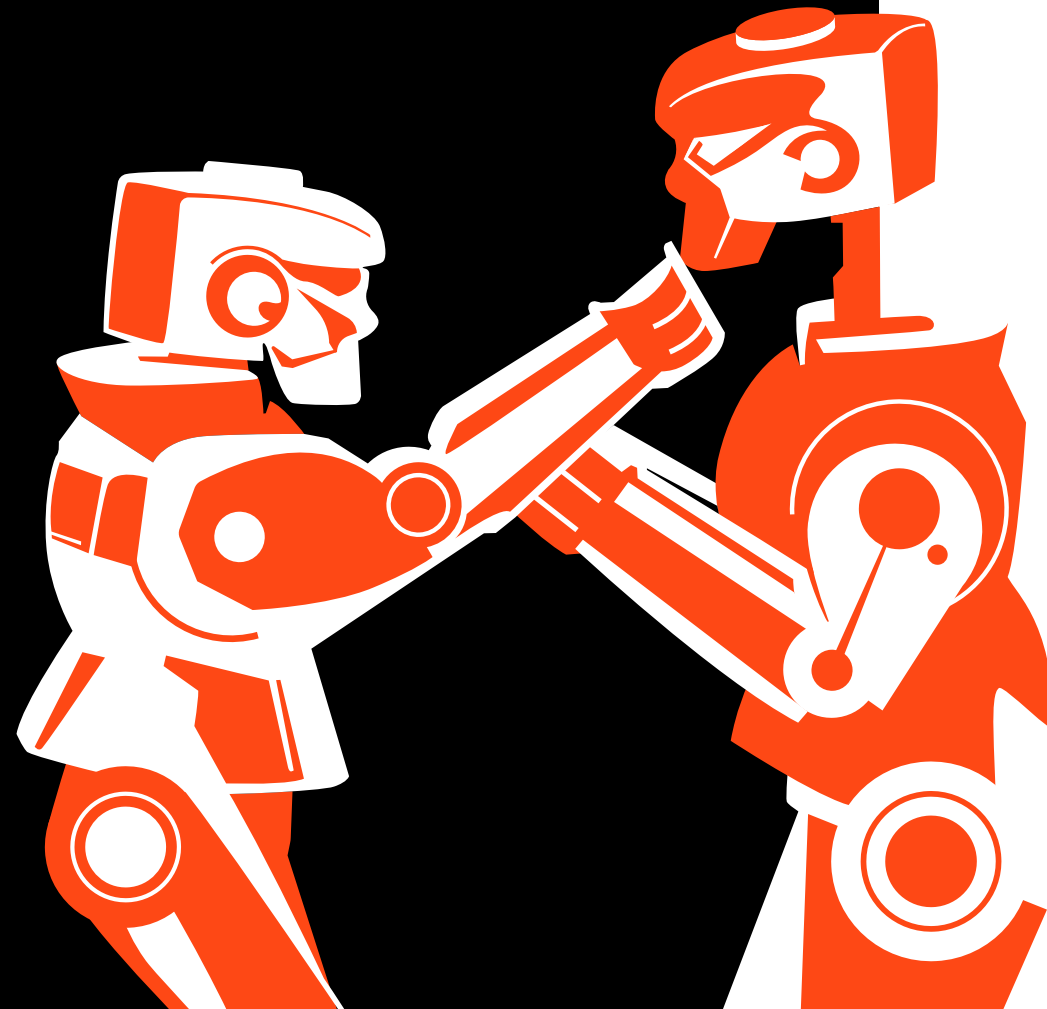
It's also silly to think of marketing as a capital investment that has to have a financial payoff right away. Companies don't think of it that way. Driving demand is a cost of doing business. That means it should be a line item in the annual operating budget, not a CapEx project. Here's why: Marketing takes time to get right, and once it is right, it takes time to build. The payoffs go up over time, and the costs go down or stay flat. But, as a marketing person, if you don't know you're going to have a marketing budget each year, it creates perverse incentives and decision-making. If you only have the budget for a year or two on a CapEx line, you don't invest in the long-term things that will build your brand for a generation. Instead, you try to hit the home run, so you can tell the board how great marketing is and hope they make it an operations line

item. This strategy is a long shot. First, if you haven't been marketing consistently, it's hard to hit a home run on your first swing. Second, even if you do catch lightning in a bottle, it's not necessarily repeatable. Whereas, if you get the organization to commit to marketing year-over-year, you can create cumulative impacts over time, and drive lasting value for the organization.

You have to convince your board and leadership that marketing is fundamental to the mission. Driving public demand for your organization's solution is absolutely essential to the long-term health and survival of your brand, and neglecting it because it may not have an immediate short-term payoff is just not responsible.

KNOW THE ENEMY

Not your frenemies, but your real enemies. A weak legacy framing. Consumer apathy about your issue. Special interests actively fighting you. Lack of awareness of your organization. And the incomprehensible amount of media noise generated by President Trump. These are all different enemies. They each need to be attacked differently, and yes, you have to fight them all at once.





Framing is one of the hardest things to change with entrenched issues, and the conservative frames define many key issues. Think about it: Gun control vs. gun rights favors the NRA. Right to Work vs. Mandatory Union Dues favors ownership. Pro-Life versus Pro-Choice hurts Planned Parenthood. Framing your issue in a way that tips the argument and linguistics toward you is where winning starts. It requires careful language choices, disciplined talking points, a compelling argument, and a constant presence in paid and earned media. To learn more, read “Don’t Think of an Elephant” by George Lakoff.

Apathy is a tough one, but you get no sympathy here. Some issues aren’t top of mind in day-to-day life, but good marketing has sold rocks as pets. Literally, peo-

ple bought rocks. You have one job – make your issue matter to people. You have to make people care by showing them what’s in it for them. And remember, you don’t need everyone in the world to care. Identify who has a stake in the outcome, and tell them why it matters to them personally. Many people don’t care about rising sea levels in the abstract, but if you tell them their retirement dream-house in Florida may be underwater before they buy it, you can get their attention.

Special Interest Groups are the clearest opponents on the battlefield. You can spot them by their enormous budgets, vague names (trade groups like Americans for a Better World), and ridiculous arguments (clean coal is no more real than Santa Claus). They

play by a different set of rules, they don’t have to worry about their brands, and confusion or doubt is usually good enough for them to declare victory. Due to media fragmentation, this is a hard battle to fight. Their argument usually only works in their community’s respective tribal media bubble. To break it, you need to beat them at their own game. You also have to overcome the fact that your brand name is likely to trigger them to dismiss you. To get around this, you have to fight an asymmetric war.

Consider forming a trade association to publish content debunking their argument, using messengers from their own tribe, and publish it within their tribal media bubble (not yours).

If your organization is the “best kept secret in _____,” you’re failing.

If your organization is the “best kept secret in _____,” you’re failing. It shouldn’t be a badge of honor that your organization has survived being a secret. It’s a sign that your marketing department, strategy, and resources need to be re-evaluated from the ground

up. Moreover, it’s a sign that the leaders who allowed this to become the situation might need to be replaced across the organization. It’s one thing for a campaign to miss the mark, but if you’ve been at it for 35

years and nobody knows you, it’s time for the board to take a hard look at the leadership. Once that’s done, awareness is a function of three things – reach, frequency, and message. Raising awareness levels is



about making investments in reaching a sizable audience through media, connecting with them often, and having something interesting to say – these are the very basics of media and advertising.

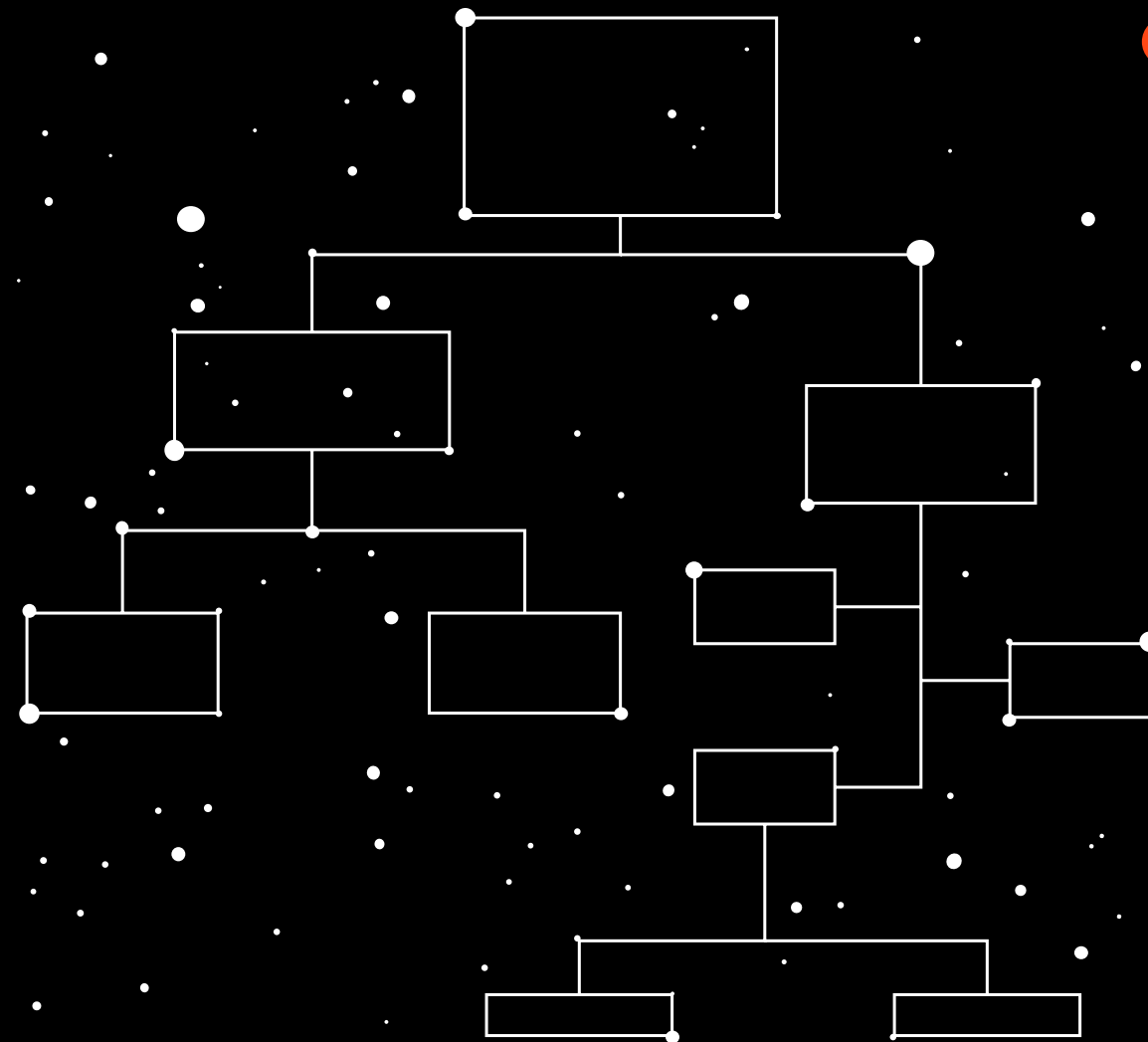
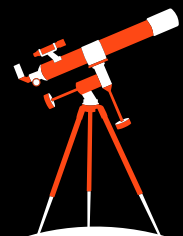
And then there is the President. Regardless of your political positions, President Trump has a unique ability to dominate news, culture and conversation to a degree nobody has seen before. And, his policies make it near impossible for even the most nonpartisan groups not to take sides. Here's the thing you have to keep in mind. Neutrality in the face of injustice is complicity. It is not partisan to speak against separating mothers and toddlers. It is not partisan to speak against the overt hate and racism exposed in Charlottesville. It is not partisan to fight for the pres-

ervation of the environment (everyone breathes the same air). You can't ride this out on the sidelines. The only way to be relevant today, and have credibility tomorrow, is to engage now.

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THE CHAIN OF COMMAND

At the end of the day, it comes down to people. Who are the people making the decisions? Are they properly experienced and trained? Do they have the guts to make the tough calls? Do they have the persuasive ability to bring others around to their vision?





There are a few cultural components of the nonprofit world that make it harder to build brands. But, creating a clear chain of command, with the right types of leaders, can go a long way toward pushing the ball forward. Here's how to build an effective chain of command for a nonprofit:

Start at the Top – CMO.

This should be someone from a brand-building background (marketing or advertising), not a communications person. Comms is a type of marketing where you communicate about brands (usually to the trades or press), not develop the original thinking behind the brand. In the business world, comms is a function of marketing. If your head of marketing is a “comms person,” you’re going to wind up with long-winded,

descriptive creative output that doesn't connect emotionally. Marketing and brand people are the ones who will deliver the compelling, consumer-facing strategic position and creative outputs that ingrain brands into the culture and consumers' hearts. And here's a hint, if either a comms person or a brand person comes to you with a resume full of work for organizations you've never heard of, throw it away.

Empower Decisions Not Committees.

Consensus kills great marketing. Take a room of 10 people and the only flavor ice cream everyone likes is vanilla, but it's probably nobody's favorite because it's a little plain. If you have 10 people weigh in on creative ideas, you will similarly wind up selecting the most vanilla concept. Vanilla marketing doesn't break

through. The other problem with consensus-driven marketing is that it allows people to skirt accountability. If 10 people approve something as a consensus, who takes responsibility when it fails? Hint: Nobody. Everyone gives themselves an “A” for effort and decides marketing just doesn't work. Bullshit. It works fine; you just did it wrong. You need to put one person in charge. Force them to own the decision. Reward them if it works. Replace them if it fails. This is how you build a culture of accountability, and it's a lesson that could probably apply to your colleagues in other departments too.

Marketing Is an Expertise.

You need to make sure your organization knows that watching a lot of commercials doesn't make some-

one a marketing expert. And, not everyone should get to participate in the creative process. The legal team doesn't take advice from marketing on how to defend a case. The finance team doesn't take marketing's advice on how to structure credit packages. The program team doesn't change its methodology when marketing makes a new suggestion. Why then should the CFO, or program team, get to weigh in on the ads? Marketing is a trade, and a skill that takes years of professional experience to hone. Making the creative and media process subject to the untrained opinions of the rest of the team is a recipe for disaster at worst, and vanilla ice cream at best. It also undermines the credibility and expertise of your actual marketing department, and will make it hard to attract and keep top talent.



Take Risks.

The job of leaders is not to avoid and mitigate all the risk out of an organization. The job of a leader is to know when and how to step up and take a risk. Rarely is that more clear than in marketing. It would have been a lot safer for Nike to pick a tagline like “Empowering Athletes Through World-Class Shoes.” Or for Apple to say, “World’s Best Computer for You.” Or for Coca-Cola to say “Great Tasting Refreshment.” Instead, they took the risk to skip describing their business, and decided instead to define their brand. So we have “Just Do It,” and “Think Different,” and “Open Happiness” – and three of the most successful brands on the planet.

It Takes Two to Tango.

If you as the CMO of a nonprofit can’t get along and work hand in hand with the development/fundraising team, one of you needs to go. An organization can’t be successful in developing a brand and meeting the revenue goals if these two teams can’t work together.

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Rules Of Engagement

Recruiting your army, choosing the mission, understanding the terrain, defining the incentives and efficiently deploying the weapons at your disposal is critical for winning the battle and the war. This section should give you a framework for to how set the rules of engagement that will help you win.

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KNOW THE BATTLEFIELD (WHERE AND WHEN TO FIGHT)

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Email, Events, AR, VR ... the list goes on and on, and it's growing. You can't be everywhere at once. One of the key lessons of the Art of War is that defending everything is defending nothing. You have limited resources, so you can't fight everyone, everywhere, all the time. Deciding where and when to engage is the critical choice for you.





Be great at something, not OK at lots of things. Focusing on one or two key social platforms is perfectly fine, if you do them well. Learn their ins and outs, learn the behavior of your users, and create specifically for that channel. Becoming great at something will show your board you can deliver when you're empowered. It will show your audience you get them. And it will build confidence in your staff. Chasing the latest fad burns everyone out. Remember, you probably can't tweet your way to the answer no matter how good your board chair's nephew is at Twitter.

Be great at something, not OK
at lots of things.

Invest in what lasts – your database. Email is still king. Digital and social media feed your email list, email feeds your bank account. Build and develop a best-in-class email and segmentation platform before you spend money advertising to build your community. First, you furnish the house, then you have the housewarming. I can't tell you how many brands run big campaigns and have no plans or capacity to handle the new opportunities.

Seize the Moment. When news or culture presents you with a moment, take it. The organizations that moved when Trump was first elected – Planned Parenthood, ACLU, Meals on Wheels and others – were able to leverage the emergence of an enemy and capitalize on it. RAICES was able to step up when the family separations began. You have to have the

courage and capacity to step up when your moment arrives. That means getting your shit together now. Make sure your brand identity is sharp. Make sure your website is up-to-date. Make sure you have an operational plan for rapid response. Make sure you have the marketing muscle memory to implement it. Preparation and readiness are key to any army's success, yours included.



THE COALITION OF THE WILLING

Nobody wants to go to war alone. But, how do you put together a coalition of donors, corporate partners, thought leaders, social media influencers, and political leaders? Answer: very delicately.





Seriously, it's hard to align the incentives in such a way that everyone benefits by getting involved and staying involved until the end. And, even if you do form the coalition, how do you ensure that you get the lion's share of the outputs. Here are 3 guiding principles in coalition-building:

Mutual value exchange. Everyone involved has to give something (time, talent, resources), and everyone needs to get something in return (connections, exposure, education, resources). You need to ask yourself, what's in it for them, and make sure you have a great answer before you approach someone. And make sure it's something they want. For other nonprofits, it usually means respect, a seat at the table, and the chance to make new connections to funding. For cor-

porations, it's usually about how they can build their brand reputation among employees, investors and, importantly, their target consumers. Think about it from their point of view, and create value for them, before you ask them for something.

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The importance of being the convener cannot be overstated. If you aren't the category leader, there is no shorter route to becoming the leader than by convening the rest of the industry and driving it forward. Put yourself at the head of the table. It gives you the power to control the agenda and influence the intra-group dynamics, and it makes you look like the leader simply because you're leading the meeting.

We have all had the experience of trying to do the corporate partner mating dance. It's horrible. No two companies are the same. It takes forever. Budgets are controlled by different people, and budget cycles often operate 6-12 months ahead (when you need a partner now). And it almost always comes down to either a personal connection to the cause from the CEO, or someone knows someone in power within

the organization. Unfortunately, there is no secret sauce. Just keep at it, and know what to expect. Expect you will need a compelling value proposition for them. Expect it will take 2x as long as you think. Expect to hear "no" 3 times from the company, before they say "yes." And, expect that if you convert 1 out of 5, you are doing great.

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DIRECTIONALITY

If you're running the marketing for a big organization that does a lot of different things, you have to understand directionality. If a person doesn't know you already, you will never sell them on the entire portfolio. There are no people in the audience who are excited about tackling all the issues.





People normally care about a small handful of issues, and want to get involved in organizations that are best in class in each. If you position yourself as a jack-of-all-trades, you're a master of none. It's not believable to a stranger that you could be best in class in 3 classes.

So, if you're in one of these organizations, and need to attract new people to the organization, you need to pick a single thing to talk about. Preferably a single thing that has a community that already exists, or is culturally relevant at a given time. Run a campaign around that topic, showcase your results in that area, convene a roundtable of experts and other nonprofits, and recruit new people who are committed to that issue. Once they're in the door, build their trust by delivering on this one topic. Then, wait a week (or a year).

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Then, start to cross-sell them on the next thing. It's like your bank. First it's the checking account. Then the credit card. Then the mortgage. Then investments. It's a process that plays out over time. They could never sell you all that stuff at once, and you would be pissed if they tried. You can't either. Don't try.

You have to start small, and then grow the relationship. That way it feels good for both sides. If you start big and get smaller and smaller with your relationship, both sides feel like the best is over, and it's all downhill.

And yes, I know that this approach will make all the other people who work in the other departments feel a little "less-than" when the campaign is about something other than their work. I can already hear them

typing emails to the CEO complaining about your decision. Too bad. Tell them to grow up. It's time to put on their professional pants. This isn't Little League where everyone gets into the game and gets an at-bat. It's not about making everyone feel equally good; it's about achieving a marketing objective. The people who work in Apple's marketing group managing headphone sales don't get to whine and be jealous when the new TV commercial is about the iPad. You have to put the marketing money behind the things that will sell.



WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR DIGITAL

Ask not what digital can do for you, ask what you can do for digital. Most brands begin the digital strategy process by asking themselves what role they need digital to play for their brand and go from there. The problem is, digital needs to do the same things for everyone – drive awareness, enable e-commerce/fundraising, build community, drive advocacy, increase loyalty and facilitate research/operations.





Unsurprisingly, starting from the same place as everyone else makes it that much harder to stand out. It's a self-centered viewpoint – what's in it for you? We have experience with this in our offline lives, and it's always easy to spot the person who is only in it to advance their own agenda. It's just as easy for consumers to spot the brand doing that in the digital space. And, yes, I am aware of how ironic this must sound coming from a paid consultant. There's a better way to approach digital – think like an entrepreneur. Look for gaps in the market that align with the value you create. What do people need? What valuable things can our brand contribute to the digital world?

This has some powerful implications for content and engagement. Try not to make content that focuses on you and what you have done. It's selfish, and it's hard for people to see how it applies to them. Instead, make content that is relevant to the audience and has implications beyond the specific program you're referencing. Make sure your content adds value, and moves the conversation forward. Describing what you have done in the past isn't going to cut it.

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As for your engagement, think about what utilities you can provide. Is there no central library for research on your issue? The brand that builds the aggregator for this research will do better digitally than the brand that keeps publishing more reports. Add value to the digital ecosystem if you want to thrive in it.

WEAPONS OF MASS COMMUNICATION (DATA, SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AND TECHNOLOGY)

Developing your marketing arsenal can be hard. There are myriad technologies, apps, systems, databases, widgets, platforms and other tools that promise the world. You probably have some tools left over from the '90s. While I am not going to be endorsing any tools, hopefully this will help you think about how and when to invest in new ones.





First, spend the time to learn your tools well. They may be cumbersome. The UI/UX might suck. But, many of the tools out there are quite powerful. You're a professional. If you don't have the cash for a top-of-the-line system, you owe it to your employer to persevere through the inconvenience and maximize the tool you do have. Sit with the vendor, take the training class, watch the webinar and learn the system. And it's not just the big systems like your CRM. Learn how to use PowerPoint well. Excel is a very powerful tool if you know the full functionality of it. Use what's at your disposal.

Second, when the time comes to buy a new tool, don't cheap out. You and I both know you're not going to get a second chance. Don't buy the cheap solution, hoping one day you will get the money for the good one. Either be more persuasive and hustle up the cash, or wait. If you buy the cheap system and it doesn't really work, you lose your credibility and the opportunity to get the right tool.

Third, make sure your systems play nicely with each other. So many organizations have development databases that don't talk to the email platforms. Don't be one of these organizations. Data is only valuable if you can use it. Make sure you integrate your operation.

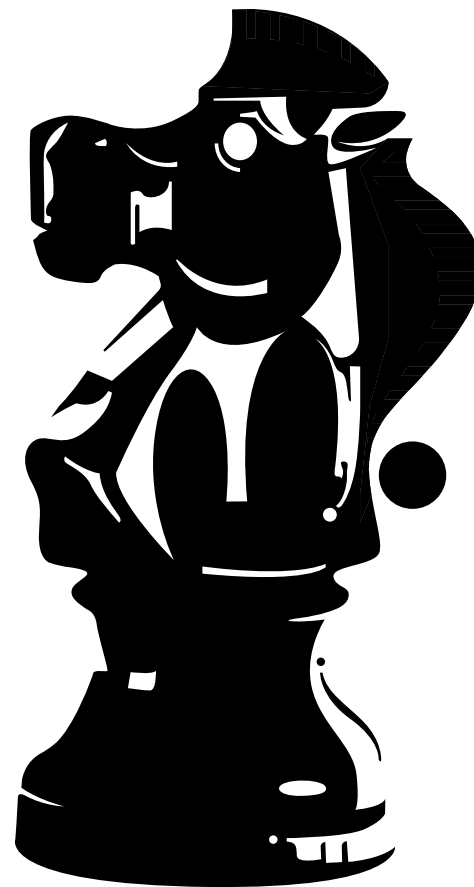
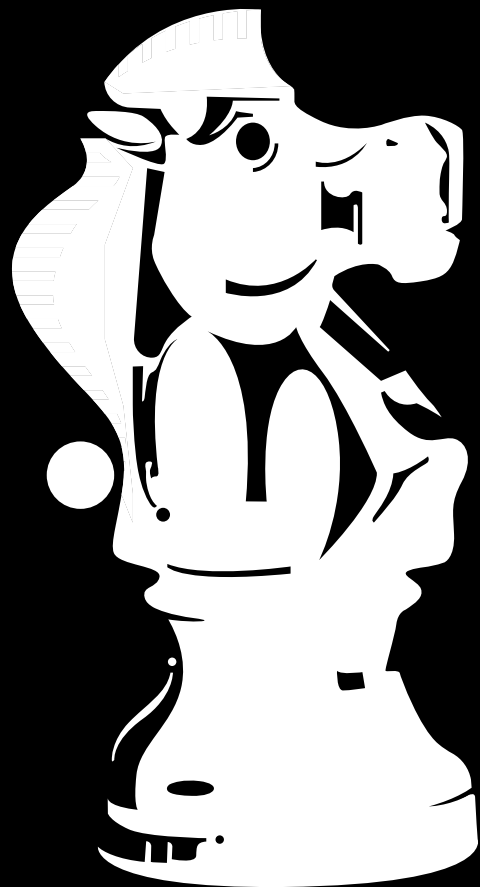
You and I both know you're not going to get a second chance. Don't buy the cheap solution, hoping one day you will get the money for the good one. Either be more persuasive and hustle up the cash, or wait.

Finally, my rule for digital technology is that flexibility is a must-have. Things change, and new platforms come online so fast that you need to maintain your flexibility. To me, that's flexible contracting terms or investing in software that allows you to customize and adapt and add over time. Either way, you need to maintain your ability to adapt to changing battlefield situations. And remember, you don't always need the biggest, baddest weapons to win the war.

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Going To Battle



Now that you're ready enter the marketing fray, you have to consider the actual communications and brand building work. This section talks about framing the argument for your brand, how to think about positioning, and understanding media's evolution over time – the implications for today's marketers.

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THE PERSONIFICATION OF BRANDS

At their core, brands are meant to convey the qualities of the maker. Originally, this began with basic imagery. A stamp. A crest. A mark. Some form of type and graphic printed on some form of package, paper or sign. Done right, it can say a lot. But it's not exactly human.





Tech allowed us to be more human.

As media evolved, brands were able to take on more of the human characteristics of their creators. The first big step was radio. Suddenly there was a real human voice put to a product. Its casting, its tone, its inflection and nuance and emotion all spoke volumes about the brand. So, of course, did the script and music. In addition to having a voice, adland could now tell stories about brands with the most effective form of human communications, song, or — more specifically — a jingle. This new channel allowed brands to take on whole new levels of humanity.

Of course, the next wave of personification for brands enabled by media was television. Sight, sound and motion collided to change America, and the world,

like few things before it. Madison Avenue was forever altered: More than ever before, brands became a part of culture, and used the new medium to make more emotional connections with consumers. While TV is the most human of the traditional media, it is still a one-way message-delivery vehicle.

Today, it's a two-way street.

The digital revolution finally enabled and created the expectation of engagement. Conversation. Dialogue with a brand. The internet, and of course social media, gave brands an ability to be interactive and responsive. The internet created transparency. More than ever, brands faced the uncomfortable human experience of having shoppers actually look at how they behaved, and demand change when deemed warranted. The horror!

The latest evolution in the personification of brands is the development of a brand conscience, a sense of morality. People know right from wrong, even the people who run brands. The time has come for brands to demonstrate a commitment to morality by commit-

ting to a social purpose. While past evolutions were accompanied by a new channel for communications, this one is focused on something more sophisticated: a new set of behaviors.

For brands to continue to be part of culture and commerce, they must do more than create wealth for their shareholders, they must create shared value for all of their stakeholders.

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FIND THE RIGHT FRAME

Framing your narrative the right way is essential to success. The frame dictates the language, the role of each stakeholder, the terms of engagement, and the measures of success. The key is to proactively frame the narrative, and that process starts by defining yourself, defining the problem and defining what's at stake.





Define yourself.

It may sound simple, but you have to define yourself on your terms, internally and externally. You do this with a clear, concise and compelling value proposition based on your brand's purpose. And you must communicate it publicly, repeatedly and continuously. Otherwise, your competition will define you on their terms; or worse, you won't have any definition at all.

Define the problem you're solving.

The problem can take different forms: a competitive brand, the media, the other candidate, apathy, or a specific social problem like poverty or hunger. Regardless of what it is, you must define it for your stakeholders and for those you seek to recruit, on terms that allow you to own the narrative. Framing the problem on your terms from the start is key to winning the argument in the long run.

Define the stakes.

It has to matter to break through. People have never had more to consider. Climate change is destroying the earth. War and strife have created 60 million refugees. Our politics are utterly dysfunctional. Kids are being hunted in schools. And they have 190 unopened emails to get to. You have to make your framing so compelling to your audience that it rises above the din to capture their attention, and inspire a change in behavior.

COMMON VALUE PROPOSITION

Once you have identified the frame and defined the situation, you need to translate that into something practical, a value proposition.



Difference between selling and contributing

The traditional value proposition was the USP — Unique Selling Proposition. The USP builds a brand by driving differentiation based on some sort of product feature or benefit, and measuring the strategy and creative work on whether it enhanced that differentiation. Features. Benefits. RTBs. Many a marketer made a living on the USP, GBP or Key Differentiators. But all this differentiation drove the audience further apart, and at a macro-level, it contributed to a pervasive tribalism that is a major source of social strife around the world.

Enter the common value proposition

A purpose-driven brand must fundamentally be about the common values that bring your brand community together. Identify the common values that you, your suppliers, your partners, your staff, your shareholders and your customers can unite around; and use that foundation as the heart of your business plan, your brand purpose and your creative brief(s).

Common Value Proposition:
An idea that inspires and unites
the top 1% and bottom 1% on
common, equal ground.

The war that never ends

This war is never going to end. Marketing is something that has to be done every day, forever. After all, we don't disband the army after the battle. The gains you make in a campaign must be defended, and built upon, in time for the next one. The opportunities that you create need to be brought to fruition, and when they are, they will create new ones to be acted on. And, you always need to be recruiting the next generation of social justice warriors.



Drew Train

**PRESIDENT & CO-FOUNDER,
OBERLAND**

After racking up more than a dozen national and global awards for cause marketing and driving social change through traditional, digital, social and mobile campaigns, Drew Train set up shop as Co-Founder/President of OBERLAND, along with his business partner, Bill Oberlander, Co-Founder/Executive Creative Director. Before launching OBERLAND, Drew started the social good practice at J. Walter Thompson New York, called JWT Ethos. In that role, Drew worked with corporate, nonprofit and public sector brands who play a role in driving change on the big-picture issues society faces. By leading an integrated team at OBERLAND, Drew leverages the potential of advertising to create

positive, lasting change.

Drew was instrumental in helping grow Services for the UnderServed into one of the most influential and impactful nonprofits in New York City. And as National Campaign Co-Chair, he molded the #IWillListen Campaign for National Alliance on Mental Illness in NYC (NAMI NYC) into a powerful call-to-action to eliminate the stigma of mental illness. Prior to opening JWT Ethos and OBERLAND, Drew learned his craft through extensive work on global corporate brands like HSBC, Verizon, UPS, Puma, Lufthansa and Tiffany & Co. in the U.S. and Shanghai. Drew is 37 and lives in New York with his wife and





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