

Skilled Volunteering Case Study

Pivoting Nonprofit Marketing Strategies for the Continuing COVID-19 Crisis

As COVID-19 unfolds, many nonprofits find themselves facing an urgent need to revamp their digital marketing strategies to navigate the unprecedented situation.

In June 2020, Common Impact and Verizon partnered with three nonprofits to help them do just that, providing each with targeted marketing support via a virtual skills-based volunteering day of service.



Overview

Digital Marketing Consulting Empowers Nonprofits to Respond to & Withstand COVID-19

The Story

Six months into the pandemic, nonprofits are still experiencing significant disruptions to their operations. Many are seeking new approaches to communicate evolving programming and services to their clients or to demonstrate their value to donors whose support they need more than ever before.

A team of 18 employees from Verizon's Consumer Marketing Group stepped up to help by participating in three day of service events to help nonprofits revamp their digital marketing strategies in response to the ongoing public health crisis.

Common Impact designed these short yet powerful skills-based volunteering collaborations so the nonprofits could receive customized support on their specific communications needs. The events had immediate results for the nonprofit leaders, who were equipped with marketing framing, tactics, and recommendations to help them stay connected with their constituents and continue to provide vital services to their communities.

\$22,500

Total Social Return on
Investment



Marketing Collateral & Strategy Assessment

Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology
Boston, MA



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

The Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology (BFIT) sought to increase the number of enrollments for its Electrical Engineering and Opticianry Programs and increase awareness of new online classes. Verizon partnered with BFIT to devise tactics to meet these objectives, as well as to provide specific feedback on existing marketing collateral and recommendations for ongoing initiatives.

Taking into account key challenges like reaching prospective students remotely and conveying the value of BFIT's courses during such a turbulent period, the Verizon volunteer team delivered a marketing strategy that included core messaging, recommended initiatives and tactics for each level of the marketing funnel, and specific feedback on existing collateral to make it more emotionally appealing to BFIT's target audience of Gen Z students.

The volunteers even created a 30-60-90 day plan to enable BFIT to stay on track with implementation and measure their progress on their objectives.

"I was really impressed with how well and quickly [the Verizon skills-based volunteers] understood our organization's value prop and our challenges.

They identified opportunities we had not thought of, including ideas for how to encourage alums and industry partners to create testimonial videos for our social channels.

They asked great questions and presented concrete ideas and a realistic timeframe to do the work."

Marie Gendron, Marketing Coordinator, Ben Franklin Institute of Technology

\$7,500

**Social Return
on Investment**

Donor Marketing Strategy Development

Change is Simple
Beverly, MA



CHANGE IS SIMPLE®
SCIENCE OF SUSTAINABILITY

Like many nonprofits, Change is Simple was forced to transform its fundraising practices in response to COVID-19. The sustainability organization partnered with Verizon for support in developing a new digital brand strategy focused on donor engagement.

The Verizon volunteer team first conducted a marketing collateral assessment and provided advice on how to differentiate content by audience and channel to support consistent brand messaging and maximize awareness. The marketing experts made recommendations for Change is Simple to root its messaging in emotional storytelling about its program impact and societal value, rather than prioritizing data to drive donations.

To prepare Change is Simple to make these strategy shifts, the Verizon team shared examples of other nonprofits that have leveraged these tactics successfully, as well as customized content ideas, social media best practices by platform, and a KPI dashboard. They even put forward a concept for an online event to engage existing followers, acquire new ones, and facilitate specific actions such as liking and sharing Change is Simple's social media content.

“The Verizon team was engaged and interested, and the knowledge they provided will be invaluable as we take our marketing, branding and fundraising to the next level.

We really appreciate how the outside perspective helped us to see Change is Simple with fresh eyes, and provided ideas and tools to successfully share this mission and message more strategically and more widely.

We are energized to get to work and put these ideas to good use.”

*Amy Holland Crafton,
Director of Marketing and
Outreach, Change is Simple*

\$7,500

**Social Return
on Investment**

Digital Fundraising Strategy Development

Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement
New York, NY



In Spring 2020, COVID-19 forced many nonprofits to cancel major fundraising events, including Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement (HCCI), which could no longer hold its annual gala in April. HCCI partnered with Verizon to develop a philanthropy-focused digital marketing strategy that would deepen the housing and social services organization's digital footprint and help make up for the lost fundraising opportunity.

Verizon's marketing experts set out to inspire donors, focusing their marketing strategy on email, social media, crowdfunding, and structuring considerations, including a website redesign and the development of a B2B model for digital marketing and fundraising.

The volunteer team provided a 30-60-90-day plan with overarching goals and tactics that could be implemented to drive engagement and assess results. Within this plan were content creation best practices by platform and audience, guidance on how to leverage social media platforms for fundraising, and instructions for utilizing crowdfunding platforms like AmazonSmile and Facebook. HCCI was ultimately equipped with a detailed, measurable strategy to revitalize its digital presence and lay the foundation for continued fundraising success.

“Conducting this session virtually was different than face-to-face, but I really feel that we were able to focus on the ask and provide a good 30/60/90 roadmap so HCCI can be successful.”

Joan Pagliocco, Leader,
Brand Creative Strategy,
Verizon



\$7,500
Social Return
on Investment

The Corporate Impact

Verizon Employees Expand their Marketing, Leadership, and Soft Skills

“I enjoyed being able to tap into previous skills and knowledge that I haven't really been able to use in my current role again. I used to work in the nonprofit space so it was great to be able to experience that again.”

*Arthi Manivasakam,
Marketing Manager,
Verizon*

“It was interesting to use my marketing skills in an entirely new industry, higher education / nonprofit. I plan on looking for additional volunteer opportunities at similar schools.”

*Lisa Routel, Marketing
Strategy Manager,
Verizon*

Through these skilled volunteering projects, the Verizon employees - or “V Teamers” as they're known internally - gained exposure to nonprofit work settings and new challenges that pushed them to be creative in how they applied their expertise.

100% of respondents said the day of service was a valuable professional development opportunity and many reported that the experience made them more likely to participate in another Verizon day of service, support organizations focused on a similar or different social cause, or pursue nonprofit board service.

Employee skill development

Problem Solving & Navigating Ambiguity

Collaboration & Teamwork

Creative Thinking & Innovation

Client Focus & Empathetic Approach

Leadership & Strategic Thinking

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