

Marketing to Cultural Creatives: 5 Important Strategies

By Paul H. Ray, CEO, Integral Partnerships LLC

1. Learn the Language of the Cultural Creatives

- *Stories*: no bullet points, no long, drawn-out abstract arguments
- *Personal experiences*, plus hard evidence
- *Customer's viewpoint*, not producer's, not retailer's, not expert's
- Read it out loud: Is it like *spoken language* among friends?
- Speak directly to their *values*
- Connect to their *larger concerns*

2. Be seen as a Virtuous Company, with Virtuous Products and Services

- Be Transparent — Show who you are:
Your people, sources, practices, relationships to customers
- What makes your products and services good for health and the environment?
- Increasing Trust Increases Sales:
Work to increase trust with better information across the board
- Virtuous = Ecologically Sustainable, Honest, Good Value for Money, Women-friendly

3. Do Relationship Marketing:

Keeping Customers/Constituents Costs 1/4 of What Getting New Ones Costs

- Transparency serves the relationship
- Adopt their good causes: do affinity marketing
- Move toward Guerrilla Marketing, Word of Mouth, Creating “Buzz”
See Emmanuel Rosen, *The Anatomy of Buzz*
- Women (CC) customers want relationships more than sexy features

DO LESS General Media Ads or PR

- Their articles sow confusion with your best customers
- They don't do anything for relationship
- Ads are seen as intrusive, unwanted
- Save \$\$\$ — Be a cheapskate

DO MORE Lifestyle Targeted Media Ads/PR

- Your best customers read eagerly
- You can add to relationships there
- Ads are cheaper

4. Educate with good information:

- It's never just the "product", or even "product+service"
 - It's product+service+knowledge (knowledge is better than mere information)
- Do anything that feels like personal recommendations from friends
- Do anything for product experience, or a simulation of product experience
- Easy, cheap information really means *online*
- Show how to make purchase/lifestyle decisions, plus ability to drill down easily

5. What Could be the Next Big Criterion for Success with Cultural Creatives?**The Companies Have Transparency, and a "No B.S." Media Strategy:**

- Simple honesty
- Full disclosure
- Cut away advertising floss
- Show they do "fair dealing"
- Show who and where it all comes from
- Transparent production process
- Show that disposal process is full cycle
- The Natural Step
- The Triple Bottom Line
- A virtuous process counts just as much as a virtuous product
- Get a reputation for virtue

Nonprofits' Media Strategies:

Use the big context, hope, tipping point

- Carefully distinguish messages for constituents vs. general audience
- Beyond “crisis” and “disaster” without hope
- Drop canned fundraiser lines
- Altruistic, hopeful, alternative futures, “what’s possible, what’s missing”
- Crisis justifies change, beyond donations

Use the big context, hope, tipping point

Use rhetoric with a long term perspective:

- The Great Turning (Joanna Macy)
- The Tipping Point (sudden, discontinuous change)
- We’re Between Eras (old-dying vs. new-aborning)
- We’re in a long term process of change: No single short term victory will secure our future.
- Report victories and celebrate successes in long term context, often.

More big context rhetoric:

- The last (but dangerous) days of the Bigs: media, oil, coal, nuclear, multi-nationals, finance, military, technology, government
- Illegitimacy of Mega-Corporations
- Illegitimacy of Big Wars
- Illegitimacy of Bush administration on everything
- Planetary=legitimate, Global=illegitimate

The Big Rhetorical Point

- Concern that our children and grandchildren will inherit a much worse world than we grew up in. “We’re doing it for them.”
- Do a thousand variations on this theme: 80% of the total population believe this, and ALL of the Cultural Creatives believe it.
- Direct linkage to personal situations gets more money, volunteering, word of mouth

Choice of Media

- Do print, internet before broadcast
- Don’t do TV ads -- Except local cable
- Do PR, always better than ads: cheaper, more credible
- Articles are better, more credible
- Try local talk radio
- Be a reporter’s source
- Do coalition-based hot issue advertorials
- Work for ‘buzz’ and word of mouth
- Internet news and commentary

- Sell your information services and products in print, on internet

How to poison the well.

Your common constituency across all progressive movements and nonprofits is the Cultural Creatives, and they are a great well of monetary contributions, volunteer time, creative invention, practical work, moral support, votes and purchases. We're all children of Modernism: unthinkingly repeating 20th century standard political and bureaucratic behaviors, which poison that well, and fail, and turn off Cultural Creatives.

- Direct mail fundraising through conventional direct marketers poisons the well. It's built on an inappropriate model of selling stuff through the mail in one-time contacts. Fund raising, however, asks for money, and then gives nothing back in response but more requests for money. It fails to build relationships, and creates an "extinction response" as rat psychologists put it. People are preconsciously conditioned to stop giving because they see no direct result. The cost of direct mail keeps rising, and the benefits keep dropping.
- Solution: Cultural Creatives want relationships with you, a chance to create with you, to see real people and volunteer. Most direct mail soliciting doesn't give that. Their idealism feels wounded after a while, and they start giving up on you. Serve their needs and avoid poisoning the well: Ask for relationship first, by involving them, giving good information, and then ask for time and money in a strategy of progressive commitment and deepening.
- Nonprofits who treat volunteers only as free labour and fail to build community with them are also poisoning the well.
- When new social movements copy the negative campaigns and scorched earth tactics of the far right they foolishly help poison their own well by increasing cynicism and distrust in politics. This cuts into their own unique base in citizen politics, and gives more power to big money in politics.
- Centralized, hierarchial nonprofit organizations often diminish volunteer involvement and creativity. A core group of activists stays in control, but deadens everything.
- Tight ideological positions of movement groups turn off constituents, reduce cooperation and alliances with related groups, and lock groups into corners.
- The alternative to poisoning the well is to take advantage of the good features of the emerging culture:
 - build community and relationships within and between groups,
 - work for more volunteer involvement,
 - build organizational capacities, keeping "flat" organizations,
 - balance work with play,
 - offer positive programmatic alternatives,
 - "give the organization away" to active and creative volunteers,
 - share information with allies, and

- make the “big tent” to take advantage of the Cultural Creatives constituency.

The Best Issues Link the Personal to Planetary or Universal Themes

If you can relate issues more closely to people's personal situations then they'll send more money, volunteer more, and pass your interpretation on as positive word of mouth. The best example of this shows principles we can all learn from:

Why the next big movement is likely to be Environmental Health: 12 Principles

1. Everyone knows someone with a related ailment.
Principle 1: Personal and direct knowledge of a Bad is more emotionally powerful and has more convincing details than impersonal 'processed' knowledge on the same topic. So they'll get more information, and are more likely to act on it. If this is a widespread phenomenon, it's ideal.
2. It applies to them personally and to their own family, especially their children.
Principle 2: The closer it is to home, the more salient and emotionally involving it is, and the more likely people are to be aroused to action.
3. It links the personal and planetary levels of concern with no mental effort.
Principle 3: The less the mental effort, the easier it is to get large numbers to see the full problem, and the easier it is to get them to act.
4. The diagnosis of what the problem is flows directly from the personal level to corporate villains and to the planetary big picture.
Principle 4: It's often hard to carry less educated people with you from seeing their personal diagnoses, over to the big distant villains or to see the big picture beyond their personal situation. There needs to be an easy causal leap, an easy way to picture it, or tell a story about it, before it gets agreement and action.
5. It's a hot button to large numbers of people who aren't Cultural Creatives, even the most selfish and un-altruistic.
Principle 5: Cultural Creatives may be the active core group, and opinion leaders, but big mass actions often need to draw from, or at least neutralize, a wider group. Broader hot buttons are better.
6. People can easily get mad and be goaded into action. And after protest, there are often positive steps they can take.
Principle 6: The most effective motivation for involvement in a movement is always anger and pain, with a desire to stop bads. Second in effectiveness is anticipated rewards and pleasure from creating good things, including helping people. Guilt-tripping, sorrow or fear all depress action and are completely counter-productive. Self-interest will boomerang on you, because of betrayals or profit-taking. Hatred leads to counter-productive violence that often gets out of control.
7. It's always easier to understand toxins and diseases than things like global warming.
Principle 7: New social movements succeed because people accept their causal explanations and their evidence. But if a topic is technical, complex, needs new concepts, it's much harder. Familiar topics or analogies are always easier to carry

from understanding to emotion to commitment. Next best are good analogies and pictures that will hold up over time.

8. Most new social movements can reframe most of their issues and bad consequences into links with the environmental health movement, e.g. global warming and spread of disease.

Principle 8: This makes it easier to get allies.

9. There will be a potential overlap with health related fundraising.

Principle 9: Always look for synergies in fundraising. It's best if other groups have a good fundraising constituency, and are good at it.

10. People will pay for information about it.

Principle 10: Sell valuable services and information to the public and your constituents. It gets money and credibility.

11. It's another big reframing like most others of the past, that will turn hundreds of isolated perceptions and facts into a big, angry Aha!

Principle 11: Big reframings are very powerful, but rare. So if you can find a new one, you must use it!

12. It links to familiar opponents and issues of many new social movements, but hits harder, and at a more personal level.

Principle 12: The best tactics and strategies combine several principles, to get several benefits at once.

Exercise: Find principles in the above list that you've not used, but if you did, it might strengthen your organization or your whole movement.

Basic Maxim for Integral Organizations

"As above, so below..."

(especially for developing leadership for change in your company)

"...As without, so within"

(especially for your company's transparency to Cultural Creatives)

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