PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | PARTNERSHIP

Charitable Joint Ventures: Build Enthusiastic Evangelists for Your Business with Social Media

At the end of the day, you've also made a difference. What a powerful way to build your business!

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Social media. It seems like every day we hear more about how important it is for building your business. As a network marketer, the most powerful part of social media is its ability to help you generate new leads, and connect with the right people.

Social media can also give your business a level of visibility that was nearly impossible before.

> **Some of this is achieved through providing value. But it's also about sharing the RIGHT messages. Messages people relate to. That say to them, "This is someone I can trust with my business."**

And one type of message that works particularly well in social media is a charitable one. People love to spread messages to their friends that help others. It plays into our innate need to leave a mark on the world, and make a difference. By strategically aligning yourself with organizations that matter to the people you want to reach, you can tap into a group of highly vocal evangelists who are eager to spread your message, and tell others about your business.

So how is this accomplished? How do you:

- Find out which charitable organizations are important to your target market?
- Make connections with those organizations?
- Create joint ventures with those organizations that benefit both them and your own business?

Well social media can help you with many of these tasks.

The very first step in this plan is listening. After you have connected with people who are in your target market online, pay attention to their conversations.

What do they talk about? Are they tweeting links to charities? Have they posted badges for charitable organizations on their blogs or social networking profiles? What causes have they joined?

And then, when you engage them in conversation, ask what's important to them. Who are they passionate about helping? Which organizations do they feel are the best at this? It's important to talk to many folks in your target market, so that you get a wide spectrum of charitable organizations, and you can begin to define trends. Begin to post about these issues and organizations yourself, and see what type of response you get from others in your target market. What causes the most engagement?

Once you've been able to make a list of the three top issues, identify the top organizations that work for these issues. You want to achieve the maximum amount of visibility possible for your business, so start with the largest

organizations that have the most potential to give you visibility.

Find out if those organizations already have a social media presence. This can be incredibly beneficial to your campaign, because then the organization may understand the benefits of an online campaign, and be well positioned to help to spread the message about your campaign virally.

Now comes the important part…crafting your pitch. *It's important to define ways that you can help the organization raise necessary funds and awareness, which will result both in sales and visibility for your business.* It could be as simple as a fundraiser or fundraising event. Or perhaps you want to create something more complex, such as an auction where you invite other network marketers to donate goods that are auctioned off to the highest bidder during a live virtual event while online influencers tweet about the auction.

You'll need to do some background research on the organization to begin to identify the type of campaign that will be most appealing to the group, their comfort level with technology, and who the decision makers are. Fortunately, the internet makes it quite easy to get all the information that you need. And be open to the organization's ideas as well. They have a lot of experience that can be extremely beneficial as you create a campaign that will spread virally to the maximum number of people through social media channels.

Once a campaign has been approved by the organization, and you begin to put it into place, then it's time to mobilize your evangelists. Send private messages to influential people within your network, and ask them to share your campaign with their networks. Provide pre-written text so all they need to do is cut and paste. Ask the charitable organization to do the same. This is where it's helpful to work with an organization that already has some social media savvy.

It can also be helpful to create a web page or blog that can serve as an online home base for the campaign. From there, people can track progress towards the financial goal you've set, you can provide periodic updates on the campaign, and you can post video messages that people passionate about the cause can share with their friends leading up to and during the campaign. You can also include a Chip In widget that allows people to donate directly to the cause.

By co-branding campaigns to both your business, and the charitable organization, you can provide your target market with messages about you that they are excited to share.

This provides greater exposure for your business, along with the ability to reach your individual goals. It also tells your target market that you're the kind of person that they want to do business with, since you help others with your business.

And at the end of the day, you've also made a difference. What a powerful way to build your business!

Jennifer Fong is a speaker, consultant, and trainer, who teaches direct selling companies and individual direct sellers how to use social media effectively as a business building tool. A former direct sales company CEO, Jennifer built her company from the ground up, and understands what it takes to build, lead, and train a team, as well as the 3 major principles of any direct sales party plan business: book, sell, and recruit.

A champion of social networking and social media marketing in the direct sales industry, Jennifer is passionate about teaching direct sellers how to use social media tools to enhance their businesses, while remaining true to the basics of a party plan business.

She provides consulting services to direct sales companies, helping them skip the learning curve and achieve immediate success through a comprehensive social media strategy.

She also coaches and trains individual direct sellers, and other business owners, on how to put the principles of social media to work in a profitable way, maximizing the return on their social media investment.