

## Cause Marketing Defined for Local Nonprofits

At the May meeting of the Philanthropy Council, local nonprofit leaders were treated to a short course on how to work more effectively with the business community.

Parker Pike, President of the Catalyst Marketing and the co-founder of the AMA Cause Marketing Conference, taught attendees about “The Marriage of Non Profits and the Business Community”.

“Let me teach you a new term, ROCI,” Pike explained. “This means return on community investment. When companies give money, no matter who, they want results.”

Combined with relevant handouts, this short course focused on how to build meaningful partnerships with businesses in our community. By focusing your partnership agreements on what is “in it” for them, you will build a case for your organization that will set it apart.

Pike emphasized that businesses receive thousands of requests each year and that by researching what “clicks” with your potential partner, you will have greater success. This process involves three significant steps.

Step One – build your plan first. Understand your touch points, who you reach and how. Quantify your results as much as possible – number of visitors to your Web site, number of guests at the event, other opportunities.

Step Two – Team up to increase your value. What media partners do you have good relationships with? You should try to build your value to three times more than your financial request. Pike provided excellent tools to help with these valuations.

Step Three – Go to market. You should carefully research companies that are a good fit for your social assets. Only go forward with a plan that is practical and appropriate.

As with any “ask,” relationships will be critical. The second half of the meeting focused on a successful partnership between Neighborhood Healthcare and Starbucks. Connie Burke, Director of Philanthropy with Neighborhood Healthcare, shared her strategy for approaching Starbucks with a marketing opportunity. Suzy Wolford, District Manager of Starbucks Coffee Company, agreed that the proposal fit Starbucks goals and objectives of “giving back to the community and environment in which we live and do business.”

The approach was to host a raffle in each Escondido and Rancho Bernardo Starbucks location. Tickets were \$1 and nine winners will be chosen. The

winning prize is a Starbucks gift basket. Starbucks receives marketing equity as well as a connection to a vital community asset. Neighborhood Healthcare received recognition at nine stores in their area of influence creating new awareness of their programs and services.

Connie called this a “hybrid” cause-related marketing opportunity that proves what can happen when non-profits get creative in developing partnerships instead of “sponsorships” with the business community.