



SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS

Kiss Your Competitors

BY BOB KNIGHT

ASK 1000 CHARITIES what their number one concern is, and you'll probably hear the same answer: the competition.

In the summer of 2005, [United Way of the Lower Mainland](#) (UWLM, Vancouver BC), the third largest United Way in Canada, was no different. And leading up to its annual direct mail campaign that fall, felt it had even more reason to be concerned.

The international Make Poverty History campaign had just been launched. There'd even been an attendant Live 8 rock concert at a Canadian venue that summer. Everywhere donors turned, there were celebrities urging them to help eradicate poverty around the world.

The immediate question in the minds of people working on UWLM's direct mail campaign was: Is the fight against global poverty going to affect our ability to raise funds for combating poverty at home?

But that was looking at the relationship between the two causes as a competitive one. When it was viewed as being a symbiotic one—where each party has the opportunity to benefit from the activities of the other—there was no reason to worry. If anything, there was reason to celebrate.

So rather than either fear or ignore the Make Poverty History campaign, UWLM decided to embrace and use it to its advantage. The strategy was spelled out in the copy placed above the salutation ("Johnson Box") of the letters:

"The wonderful thing about the symbiotic strategy we employed is that it allowed us to promote our cause while saluting theirs."

"With the recent Make Poverty History rock concerts, kind-hearted people offered their help to needy children in various parts of the world. Today, I'm asking you to also have a positive impact on some children in your very own community who need your help."

United Way's Peter Coombes says, "The wonderful thing about the symbiotic strategy we employed is that it allowed us to promote our cause while saluting theirs. And by doing that, we were able to more clearly position ourselves in donors' and prospects' minds."

NO ONE IMAGINED

Everyone involved with the campaign was feeling confident and was looking forward to the September 2nd drop date. But on August 29, Hurricane Katrina struck.

Like people all over the world, residents of B.C.'s Lower Mainland area donated generously to Katrina relief. The new question for

Continued on next page

INSIDE . . .

- CANADIAN CONGRESS . . . 2
- INNOVATING WITH LISTS . . . 3
- WHERE'S MAL? . . . 3
- ECHO! . . . 4
- DOES TESTING WORK? . . . 4
- CHARITY? . . . 5
- ONLINE SOFTWARE . . . 6
- TIPS & TIMESAVERS . . . 6
- EX-PATIENTS . . . 7
- CHARITY BADGES . . . 8

Mal Warwick's Newsletter

SUCCESSFUL DIRECT MAIL,
TELEPHONE & ONLINE
FUNDRAISING™

Number 95 ■ October 2007

Mal Warwick, *Editor*

Deborah Block, *Managing Editor*

Marianne Wyss, *Art Director*

Kieu Thi Tran, *Production Manager*

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:

Nick Allen, Donordigital

Ken Burnett, Cascaid Consulting

Harvey McKinnon, Harvey

McKinnon Associates

Jerold Panas, Panas, Linzy & Partners

Steve Thomas, Stephen Thomas

Joe White, Share Group, Inc.

PUBLISHER:

Strathmoor Press, Inc.

TO SUBSCRIBE FREE,

[CLICK HERE.](#)

Mal Warwick's Newsletter: Successful Direct Mail, Telephone & Online Fundraising™ (ISSN 1067-9316) is published 12 times per year by Strathmoor Press, Inc., 2550 Ninth Street, Suite 103, Berkeley CA 94710-2516, phone (510) 843-8888, fax (510) 843-0142, e-mail info@strathmoor.com.

Copyright © 2007 by Strathmoor Press, Inc. All rights reserved.

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is distributed with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional services. If legal or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought. (From a declaration of principles jointly adopted by a committee of the American Bar Association and a committee of publishers.)

Continued from page 1

UWLM became: Having just given to help Katrina victims, will these donors still be willing to support us?

The disturbing fact was that 37% of Canadian nonprofits had stated that the 2004 tsunami had impacted negatively on their final campaigns of that year, according to the [Association of Fundraising Professionals](#)' "State of Fundraising 2004" survey. And that tragedy struck *after* most donors had made their December contributions. Katrina hit before UWLM's campaign had even been mailed.

Because the letter's headline addressed the need for people to support local causes as well as international ones, UWLM decided to stick with the mailing schedule. As it turned out, they couldn't have made a better decision.

THE RESULTS

United Way of the Lower Mainland's direct mail campaign that fall attracted a record number of donors, both renewals and prospects. In addition, it generated record-setting average gift amounts.

Coombes adds, "If we'd sent out a typical mailing, Make Poverty History and Katrina would likely have hurt our ability to raise funds that season. But the type of message we presented really resonated with donors and prospects. So they just dug deeper into their pockets."

With the approach having worked so well, UWLM decided to test a modified version of it the following spring. It, too, outperformed previous mailings. And the situation today? Its support-international-causes-but-don't-forget-the-folks-at-home message is the centerpiece of the organiza-

tion's control mailings.

For this success, the charity owes thanks not just to its generous donors, but to its competitors. That's something that should give solace to any nonprofit concerned about the competition these days.

"If we'd sent out a typical mailing, Make Poverty History and Katrina would likely have hurt"



Bob Knight is President/Creative Director of Knight & Associates, 4045 Cummins Place, North Vancouver BC V7G 2N5, phone (888) 684-6564, Web www.symbiomarketing.com, e-mail b_knight@telus.net.



CONGRESS
November 13-15, 2007
Metro Toronto Convention Centre
North Building



Join Mal in Toronto November 13-15 at the [Canadian Fundraising Congress](#). Many consider this event to be the outstanding conference produced anywhere by a local chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals.



Innovating with lists

BY SUZIE MCGUIRE

MAKE SURE you're taking full advantage of everyone who has expressed interest in your organization. In-house lists are less expensive and sometimes more productive than outside lists.

If you have a large number of event names, you can personalize your message to those donors. Thanking them for their previous support and noting the particular event they attended is a good way to acknowledge their attachment to your organization while asking for an annual fund gift.

Another creative resource for house names is to use your online respondents and activists in your acquisition plan. I've been seeing very good conversion rates to annual fund giving from online activists who are deeply committed to the cause. For best results, customize a brief message to them acknowledging their interest in your organization as a way of introducing why you're contacting them by mail.

Also, consider modeling your severely lapsed donor lists to find segments among them that are more likely to respond to your acquisition appeals. This would help improve retention rates and give you a larger universe of productive lapsed names.

SUPPRESSION FILES

You may want to create a suppression file of people who continually send in surveys or petitions, but don't accompany the piece with a donation. It makes sense to stop mailing requests for donations to those who aren't likely to respond with gifts.

If you mail in large volume, you may want to look into using a model that identifies chronic non-responders. These are individuals who have received your acquisition piece several times and have not yet given. By removing them from the mailing, you'll be able to lower your overall mailing costs and improve overall response.

INCREASING VOLUME

Have you ever found yourself short on names after you've gone through the merge-purge process? Well, here's a creative and productive solution to post-merge quantities that fall below the pre-determined print quantity.

Use lapsed names that are already going out in the mailing and re-mail them at the time you mail your merge duplicates. The response on the lapsed file will probably be greater than the average response for outside lists. An added benefit is that you can reactivate more of these donors who are lapsing and improve your overall retention rates.

Another creative way to fill quantity if you are short on names is to remember to go back to your last merge and make sure you took full advantage of all the multi-donors in that particular mailing. If you only used 3x multis from the last mailing, you may want to pick up any unused 2x multis.

CONSOLIDATING LIST ORDERS

If you're mailing an acquisition package in, say, August, October, and November, and you're using many of the same lists in two of the periods, you can save time and money by placing a re-use order. List owners will waive shipping fees and running charges on re-use orders since they don't have to repeatedly process the list order.

Keep in mind that some smaller mailers update infrequently, so no new names may be added in this short time frame. However, mailers who use larger files that are updated on a more frequent basis may not find this tactic advantageous.



Suzie McGuire is a Consultant at Mal Warwick Associates Inc., 2550 Ninth Street, Suite 103, Berkeley CA 94710-2516, phone (510) 843-8888 ext. 250, fax (510) 843-0142, Web www.malwarwick.com, e-mail suzie@malwarwick.com.

Where's Mal?

October 2-3, 2007 –

Palm Springs CA

PBS Development Conference

Workshop: *The Copy Clinic*

Workshop: *Seven New Challenges in Direct Mail*

Site: Desert Springs Conference Hotel, Palm Desert CA

[More info](#)

October 23-26, 2007 –

Noordwijkerhout, The Netherlands

27th International Fundraising Congress

Master Class: *Everything You Need to Know About Direct Marketing (But Would Take You Years to Learn on Your Own)*

Mini-course: *How CSR Can Mean More Money for Your Organization*

Site: NH Leeuwenhorst Hotel

[More info](#)

November 11-12, 2007 –

Charleston SC

Blackbaud Conference for Nonprofits

Pre-conference Workshop: *How to Write Successful Fundraising Letters*

Workshop: *Crafting a Powerful Message to Win More Supporters for Your Cause*

Site: Charleston Area Convention Center

[More info](#)

November 13, 2007 – Toronto ON

Canadian Fundraising Congress

Site: Toronto Convention Centre, North Building

[More info](#)

November 27-30, 2007 –

Mombasa, Kenya

Resource Alliance 14th East Africa Workshop

Opening Plenary: *Emerging Big Ideas on the Global Arena*

Plenary: *Branding to Add Real Value to Your Appeal for Funds*

Mini-course: *Crafting a Message to Win More Supporters for Your Cause*

[More info](#)

Echo!

With so much focus on baby boomers and their patterns of giving or non-giving, you might want to get ready for those who follow in their footsteps. According to a survey by Visa USA and recounted in *DIRECT*, the echo-boomer generation (born from 1979-89) will account for some \$2.45 trillion in annual spending by 2015. Keep in mind, though, this caveat: Having seen the lapses in savings among too many of their elders, 70% of these practical-minded kids are already concerned with having enough money for retirement!

How well does testing work?

BY MAL WARWICK

FOR DIRECT mail fundraisers, testing is the stuff of which great success stories are built, brick by brick. Uncounted millions of dollars have been raised as a result of careful, step-by-step improvements in direct mail list selection, suggested gift levels, premium offers, packaging, postage choices, and myriad other elements.

But testing has its limits. And sometimes those limits can be downright discouraging.

One test conducted by a fast-growing West Coast environmental organization illustrates just how confusing and seemingly contradictory direct mail test results can be.

In a 149,000-piece membership acquisition mailing, the organization chose to test the impact of using a newly redesigned logotype. They selected at random two panels of 30,000 addresses each. One panel (the “control”) was mailed an acquisition package using the old logo; letters sent to the second panel (the “test”) used the new logo.

For an outsider, there was nothing very interesting in that. What made the test noteworthy was this: Following the advice of their direct mail fundraising counsel, the organization selected a *third* panel as a double-check. This third panel (a so-called “null test”) also consisted of 30,000 addresses; it was statistically indistinguishable from the control panel. All 60,000 letters in those two groups were sent *identical* letters employing the organization’s old logo.

When all three panels were mailed simultaneously, the null test panel outpulled the control panel by a larger margin than the difference between the control and the test! The

30,000 letters comprising the null test panel generated 319 gifts, more than the control, which yielded just 281—even though the packages mailed to the same group were totally identical.

But not so fast! As a statistician would tell you, the difference between those two numbers (281 and 319) is not very meaningful.

By contrast, the difference between the new logo and the old—when viewing the disparity between the test panel and the null panel (272 vs. 319 gifts)—is actually more significant. But even that difference doesn’t ring the bell of statistical certainty.

In other words, from a statistical perspective, none of the results of this test were meaningful.

But if you follow instinct and common sense rather than the precepts of statistics, you would be quickly forgiven if you wonder nevertheless why there was such a seemingly big difference between the control panel (old logo) and the null test panel (also old logo). This clearly seems to be an anomaly. What, then, might explain it?

Take your pick of the following three possible explanations:

- The lettershop or the postal service screwed up—dropping the test panels on different days or improperly packaging or processing them.

- Statistics is not the exact science it’s cracked up to be. What’s supposed to happen 95 out of 100 times actually happens less often than that.

Whatever the reason, these unpredictable results should drive home a fundamental lesson of direct mail testing: If it’s important enough to test once, test it again to be sure. Because what you see is not necessarily what you’ll get.

STILL, TESTING PAYS (SOMETIMES)

When direct mail fundraisers get together, we talk about testing. Because when you get right

Testing the Validity of Testing

Pkg	Pct	Avg Gift	# Gifts	Gross Rev
Old Logo	0.94%	\$25.05	281	\$5939
New Logo	0.91%	\$22.39	272	\$5490
Old Logo	1.06%	\$25.42	319	\$6808

Continued on page 5

Continued from page 4

down to cases, testing is all we've got to talk about. Or so it seemed, at any rate, at a fundraising forum held in New York by [Moore Response Marketing Services](#). A report on the discussion came to me from Karen Hill at Moore Response in the form of detailed notes shortly after the session, and they proved all over again that direct mail fundraisers shouldn't take anything for granted.

For example, one major mailer reported improved results from eliminating Basic/Residual-sorted names from marginal lists: These names proved to have a *lower* response rate than names that qualified for greater postal discounts. The procedure reduced the organization's mailing cost and boosted the overall response rate.

However, another mailer had the opposite experience: Basic/Residual-sorted names were *very* responsive. Eliminating them from its mailings would have caused a significant revenue loss.

Why the difference? One possible explanation identified by participants in the forum was that the first mailer worked primarily in *urban* areas, with names concentrated in relatively few ZIP codes, while the second mailer relied on more widely scattered *rural* respondents.

In other words, what works for one organization may not work for another—and blindly following another's test results may be dangerous to your fiscal health.

Other highlights from the forum:

■ One experienced mailer advised caution in the headlong rush to downsize packages now classified as "flats" under USPS rules. Despite high postage rate, flats sometimes still pay for themselves by yielding higher response (perhaps because they face less competition and stand out more in the mail). Another mailer found a second reason not to abandon flats: They yield higher-dollar donors, who have proven better lifetime givers for that organiza-

tion—suggesting that the added investment in flats will pay off in the long run.

■ A merge-purge bureau had suggested deleting names of deceased persons from a customer's file by using an updated proprietary file (presumably, a File of the Dead). But the customer re-keyed and mailed those names "just one more time"—and the results were equal to or better than those from the rest of the mailing!

■ A large charity with many local chapters tested whether donors would respond better to direct mail appeals identified as coming from a local chapter rather than from the national organization. As is typically the case in the commercial world, *there was no discernible difference*.

One participant wisely urged large mailers to track donors back to the sources of their original gifts—and to differentiate in particular between disaster-related sources and those acquired by less urgent appeals. Five years of testing showed that lists yielding higher average gifts (and lower response rates) were a better long-term investment than lists producing lower average gifts (and higher response rates). One mailer experimented with recyclable paper and inks, and found that both can make a difference in response. Unfortunately, it wasn't the response environmentalists would have wanted: Both changes *decreased* response. But another organization reported *no meaningful difference* as a result of using recyclable materials.

Twelve major direct mail fundraisers were represented at the forum, including [UNICEF](#), [National Jewish Center for Immunology](#), [Father Flanagan's Boys' Home](#), [American Red Cross](#), [CARE](#), [Smithsonian Institution](#), and [Society for the Right to Die](#).

"Five years of testing showed that lists yielding higher average gifts ... were a better long-term investment ..."



This article was excerpted from **Testing, Testing, 1, 2, 3: Raise More Money with Direct Mail Tests** by Mal Warwick (Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2003). Copyright © 2003 by Mal Warwick. To order this book [click here](#).

Charity?

Even though they have the least, poor Americans are also getting less from charity than you might imagine. **The Chronicle of Philanthropy** reports on a study by the *Indiana University Center on Philanthropy* that finds just 31% of money donated to nonprofits goes to groups that meet basic human needs, like food and shelter. Another interesting stat: Among the most affluent households, 22% of gifts go to meet the needs of the poor, compared with about 35-38% of donations by households earning less than \$200,000 a year.

Tips & Timesavers

"Typos improve response," writes Jeff Brooks in [Donor Power Blog](#). "I can't prove this, but it seems to be true."

Interesting, no? Why not test it, and let me know whether it works for you?

Thanks to Jeff Brooks for this useful bit of advice. Send your own Tips & Timesavers to mal@malwarwick.com.

Understanding online software

BY MICHAEL STEIN

NONPROFITS are finding more options for online software tools than ever before—tools that can help organizations communicate via e-mail, raise money, update their Web sites, conduct online advocacy campaigns, register people for events, and generally manage member and stakeholder information.

In addition to several large, established online software vendors, a number of smaller companies have begun offering nonprofits new and affordable tools. A characteristic of these tools is that the various modules within a software suite are able to share data seamlessly. The beneficiaries of these new choices are nonprofits themselves, who will benefit from cost savings, more vendor choices, options for more involvement in the software development process, and software tools that better fit their actual needs.

THE LANDSCAPE OF ONLINE SOFTWARE

Of the 100 or so Internet companies that serve nonprofit needs today, many have developed unique software offerings and occupy specific niches, such as walk-a-thon donation processing, online auctions, and event registration.

The largest vendors have grown rapidly in size over the past few years, due primarily to the infusion of venture capital investments and the acquisition of other companies. Companies such as [Blackbaud](#), [Convio](#), and [Kintera](#) have concentrated their sales efforts on the larger nonprofits, which deliver larger and more predictable revenues.

These companies have changed how nonprofits are using the Internet to engage their constituents. The integration of e-mail messaging, online fundraising, and online advocacy modules, among others, allows nonprofits new and more efficient ways to engage with stakeholders using the Internet. With these tools, for example, you could select the names of people who have been the most active in your online advocacy campaigns, and invite them to local house parties, with each message geographically customized.

On a parallel development track, online software companies who target small and mid-size nonprofits have been growing, as well. I'm particularly excited by the sophistication of several affordable new contenders. Some of these tools have matured to offer many of the same integrated functions as their larger brethren.

In this category, I'm thinking of vendors such as [Action Potential](#), AMP from [Radical Designs](#), [Antharia](#), [Artez Interactive](#), [CitizenSpeak](#), [CitySoft](#), [CiviCRM](#), [CivicSpace](#), [Democracy In Action](#), [eTapestry](#), [LocalVoice](#), [Orchid Suites](#), and [The Data Bank](#). Predictably, this tier of companies is beginning to challenge the larger vendors for clients as nonprofits look for cost savings or seek to work with smaller companies.

A third tier of online software vendors offer tools, often called "point solutions," which power a single part of an organization's Internet needs. These vendors provide user-friendly, affordable, and reliable means to conduct individual activities such as collecting online contributions, storing e-mail addresses, sending e-mail messages, or selling products.

In this category, I'm thinking of vendors such as [Constant Contact](#), [Goodstorm](#), [Groundspring.org](#), [Network for Good](#), [NPO Groups](#), [Topica](#), and [Typepad](#), among others. Some of these companies don't specifically target nonprofits as clients, but their products have nevertheless become favorite tools for some organizations. These vendors' tools are not primarily designed to integrate with other tools, though data can usually be imported and exported fairly easily.

CHOOSING SOFTWARE

The most frequent question I hear about these tools is how to distinguish between the middle tier and upper tier of integrated vendors.

The upper tier of large online software vendors has set the standards for performance and responsiveness in this area. These standards have been honed by servicing the needs of some of America's largest nonprofits, who not

Continued on page 7

Continued from page 6

only manage huge amounts of constituent data and sophisticated marketing campaigns, but also must respond in times of national and global crisis. The needs surfaced by 9/11, the Asian tsunami, and Hurricane Katrina have defined many current practices in stakeholder engagement, online fundraising, and e-mail communications.

The large software vendors are distinguished by their emphasis on rapid and continual product development, dedicated client account managers, and highly advanced tools for stakeholder relationship management.

Nonprofits with very large member lists (over 100,000 names) will find comfort in their experience with established online programs and leaders in the field. Their emphasis on flawless uptime performance and redundant systems will reassure organizations that regularly operate in times of crisis.

Nonprofits with complex marketing and fundraising requirements will also gravitate towards these larger vendors, which have tools to suit a variety of nonprofit needs, including event registration, walk-a-thon management, online auctions, e-mail personalization, split-list testing of e-mail messages, and conditional content tools that allow sophisticated e-mail message design and delivery.

Finally, the ability to use these tools along with integrated content management systems (CMS) allows these vendors to support nearly all nonprofit Internet needs under one roof, with the ability to move stakeholder data seamlessly among the various modules.

This fully integrated functionality comes at a cost. Prices vary widely depending on what modules you use, the size of your list, and how desirable a client you are to the vendor, but range anywhere from \$1,000 to upwards of \$10,000 a month. Setup fees start around \$5,000 and rise considerably when migrating a site from another system, starting a site from scratch, or customizing tools for specific needs.

MIDDLE-TIER TOOLS

The middle-tier software vendors offer many of these same benefits. While some of them lack the experience in managing very large member lists, their software tools can accom-

modate fairly complex needs for messaging, segmentation, and reporting. Most offer the key tools that nonprofits need for stakeholder outreach, but there are often fewer feature options than those provided by the larger vendors. Simply put, they may be a year or so behind the larger vendors in terms of tool development, but the gap is clearly closing.

This middle tier spans a broad range of price points, starting at about \$100 per month and ranging up to compete with the larger companies at \$1,000 per month or more. Setup fees tend to start in the \$1,000 range and can scale up considerably with migration or customization.

The third tier of online software vendors also plays an important role as nonprofits go shopping for one easy and affordable tool to send out action alerts without having to reinvent their whole system. There's clearly a place for single-tool vendors in the nonprofit economy that favors affordability and flexibility.

This third tier has fairly low price points, starting at about \$15 per month, and setup fees from \$0 to \$1,000. Naturally, customization and other special needs will increase both these prices.

When choosing vendors, this might mean looking for one vendor that offers a suite of integrated tools. If you're just starting out online, you might instead find a vendor that offers one tool, but that can add on other integrated tools as your needs expand through list growth and experience.

IT'S THE MISSION

The true potential of integrated online software will be revealed in real-world campaigns that are conducted by nonprofits and demonstrate tangible results, such as money raised, advocacy messages sent, and other programmatic campaign goals.



Michael Stein recently joined Mal Warwick Associates as our Online Strategist. He's the author of three books and numerous articles about the Internet. He may be reached at mstein@gmail.com. Jeff Heron, John Kenyon, Robert Weiner, and

Laura Quinn also contributed to this article. This article was originally published by Idealware, www.idealware.org.

Ex-patients

You might think they'd be the most likely to give . . . but apparently that's not the case. The online Grateful Patient Communications Survey, as reported in *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, finds less than 20% of hospitals say their efforts to obtain gifts from past patients were as successful as their other appeals. Then, again, 20% of respondents didn't even solicit contributions from former patients at all, while 40% called their fundraising attempts "not significant." Even so, William C. McGinly, CEO of the *Association for Healthcare Philanthropy*, is quoted as saying, "We are charity organizations and we should be offering patients an opportunity to support their communities through health care and the hospital."



Subscribe!

It doesn't cost a nickel to subscribe to *Mal Warwick's Newsletter: Successful Direct Mail, Telephone & Online Fundraising*. At a cost of just the few seconds it takes to enter your e-mail address below, you'll receive 12 idea-packed issues, one every month.

For a FREE subscription to this newsletter, [click here](#).

To do a friend a favor by sending a free issue of *Mal Warwick's Newsletter*, [click here](#).

“Charity badges”

BY LANCE TREBESCH AND TAYLOR ROBINSON

THIS MAY work for you! A [charity badge](#) is a small, online widget (a third party item that can be embedded in a web page) that often includes a picture, brief description of a nonprofit organization, and a link to where a viewer can make a donation. The beauty of the charity badge is that it allows users to share with one another by simply clicking on “get this badge” (wording may vary depending on badge provider), then copying and pasting the html code onto their Web sites or blogs. Much like a chain letter, the potential for spreading the badge is great, especially when used on social networking sites or blogs. Here's an example of a charity badge from [Network for Good](#).

To help you decide if a charity badge is right for your nonprofit, here are three reasons a charity badge *may not* help your organization:

1. **Limited success.** While there are some notable exceptions, such as [The Sharing Foundation's](#) astounding \$100,000 raised in only three weeks ([TechSoup](#)), the majority of charity badge fundraisers have less impressive results. According to TechSoup's article on group fundraising sites (not exclusively charity badges), [“Show Me the Numbers: Can Group Fundraising Help You?”](#), the average group fundraiser only yielded revenue of \$692.80.

2. **Limited awareness.** The concept of charity badges is still relatively new and is not yet widespread. The average group fundraising campaign has anywhere from 4-40 donors (TechSoup).

3. **Limited contact.** People are more compelled to give to a cause if they receive acknowledgments for their donations. With online gifts, there's little or no personal connection between the organization and the supporter. According to [Mashable](#), a social networking news site, a RockYou charity widget received 2,257,505 views but was only able to generate \$69 during that time period.

So, that's the bad news. Now here are five reasons why you should use charity badges, anyway:

1. **Increased awareness.** While there is potential for a highly successful fundraiser, the most likely benefit will simply be that more people are exposed to your cause and become aware of the organization.

2. **Low cost.** [ChipIn](#) and [Network for Good](#) currently do not charge to create badges. The only potential cost associated would be the labor involved with creating and promoting a badge and potential credit card fees.

3. **Outreach.** Having your badge placed in specific targeted locations can help you reach new demographic groups.

4. **Targeting.** According to [Wikipedia](#), more than 61% of all donations come from personal requests. A charity badge is often shared from one friend to another, making requests targeted to individuals who may donate. For example, if you were an environmental nonprofit, then you could place your badge on an established “environmental group” within a social networking site, and friends in the group would share the badge, giving it a much more targeted viewing.

5. **R&D.** The future of charity badges is still largely up in the air. By experimenting with badges now, your organization will gain a better understanding of how they work and how to utilize them effectively in the future.

HOW TO CREATE A BADGE

You can easily create a badge in minutes by follow the step-by-step instructions on your provider's Web site. Some of the most popular providers include [Network for Good](#), [ChipIn](#), and [CareBadges](#). For information about more general group fundraising providers, visit the [About Micro-Philanthropy](#) Web site, which has a comparison of the most popular providers.

Lance Trebesch and Taylor Robinson are with TicketPrinting.com, www.ticketprinting.com. Lance may be reached at Lance@TicketPrinting.com.

