



What is the one thing every organization needs to DO MORE?

On September 16, 2011, innovators and disruptors gathered in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to develop new ideas and approaches for how organizations can engage individuals to solve social problems. Participants included marketing and advertising professionals, corporate representatives, nonprofit leaders, students and university researchers.

To frame the conversation, summit organizers challenged the participants to answer two questions in the days leading up to the event. Here is the second of two questions we posed and the answers participants provided:

What is the one thing every organization needs to DO MORE?

Rachel Alexander, Boston University School of Mgmt

Prioritize people -- both customers/clients, and employees -- to continue fueling the passion for positive change.

Adam Archer, Vitruve, Inc.

Institute a hiring freeze. Proving all managers with a mandatory hiring clinic that shows the importance of hiring nothing but A players.

Sloane Berrent, Lippe Taylor

Spend the extra time building the resources guidelines that can help volunteers and ambassadors better represent a brand. Use data to better understand the value of their cause marketing partnerships.

Peter Biro, Naked Pizza - Boston

Put their own employees or volunteers first - good things will follow.

Margot Bloomstein, Appropriate, Inc.

Consider how your organization is different from all others. Focus your time, attention, creativity, and budget to merchandising that unique value proposition.

Casey Brennan, VolunteerMatch

Benchmark impact measures - so future measurement will demonstrate change.

Betsy Carlton-Gysan, BU Sustainable Cities Initiative

Remove the silos and embrace collaboration. Avoid duplicating an effort that already exists.

Becca Colbaugh, JESS3

Organizations can start to educate their targeted audiences, key stakeholders or funders about these tools and methods. They can also start staffing appropriately to handle these types of campaigns -- oftentimes, organizations lack the engagement and two-way conversation factors -- and they definitely underestimate the type of time, expertise and dedication it takes to make this very important relationship-building process successful.

Lucia Cordon, Changing Our World

Start talking about impact measurement.

Whitney Dailey, Cone

Think strategically about partnerships again and not only the big name nonprofits. Companies and nonprofits can solve important social issues together by thinking about their core challenges and unique assets. Solve a problem, innovate, or enrich a core competency through partnerships focusing on shared issues. Nonprofits have a lot to offer, from third-party expertise to credibility and in-depth issue knowledge, but companies are increasingly going it alone. Both companies and nonprofits can gain from strategic partnerships.

Sonal Dhingra, Boston University

Collaborate and communicate more within their own community and work on improving this across sectors as well

Eric Ding, Harvard Medical School / Campaign for Cancer Prevention

Develop a stronger national brand highlighting their 'killer-unique' novel strategy/product (akin to a unique 'killer-app' in tech world) to differentiate themselves from other similar organizations.

Jessica Estes, Mullen

If they're pursuing cause marketing, it's essential for companies to commit to the right causes--those that share the brand's core values--and make a commitment to building that philanthropic relationship long-term.

Stephen Franson, Bonfire Health, Inc.

Create a culture that allows, promotes and rewards healthier lifestyle choices. Healthier employees are happier - happy employees are more creative, productive and satisfied. Authentic recognition and rewards around behaviors that foster better work-life balance shape organizations into sustainable communities that create and add more value in every venture.

Continue the conversation at: <http://www.sandboxsessions.com>

Henry Frechette, 3BL Media / Justmeans

Appoint C-Suite Sustainability/CSR executives.

Luke Garro, Antler

Take an internal approach to cause marketing. Look at what they can do internally with their employees to demonstrate that responsibility starts internally with all the individuals that make up the organization.

Glenn Gaudet, GaggleAMP

Leverage the power of your issue stakeholders to share social media messages.

Susan Gilchrist, Ad Council of Rochester

For nonprofits, talk to their board about going through a strategic planning process; especially the smaller ones because they tend to think they don't need a plan because they're small. But they can benefit most from one because it's their small size that demands they work more effectively and efficiently with less.

Jennifer Gresham, Zoo New England

Encourage managers to manage responsibly.

Uwe Hook, BatesHook

We need to look carefully at the the physical and experiential structures we create in organizations to foster collaboration, co-creation, and community with our employees and customers.

Steven Howard, Emcien, Gabacus

Remember "Hello, Welcome, Please, and Thank You!" Open the doors and invite people in! We are social beings, intended to live, work, play, and support one another in community. Organizations large and small need only open the doors - be they physical, digital, virtual, enhanced mobile reality... Say "Hello!" and provide welcoming experiences and invitations for participation, for engagement, for ongoing support and contributions. Then, don't forget to say "Thank You!" followed up with "And who else do you know that might be interested in ..."

Sree Kastury, Student Boston College

Organizations can take a closer look at their processes and the stakeholders around them to try and find ways positively impact their immediate community or find external parties that might benefit from their waste products, their knowledge or their assistance with corporate citizenship.

Albert Liau, Technology Exchange Lab

Focus on delivering quality outcomes (products, experiences, information).

Continue the conversation at: <http://www.sandboxsessions.com>

Terry Lozoff, Antler

Empowering their advocates to help them spread the word.

Ted McEnroe, NECN

Make sure that your causes align comfortably with your business goals and your employee interests. Making it something you're comfortable talking about and being a part of lends itself to greater transparency.

Andrea McGrath, Connecting Capital

The one thing that organizations can do right now is connect to the communities in which they live – be they multi-national organizations or one-location, one office, one PC – and decide on one way that they will help their communities “as an organization”: volunteer at the food bank, drive people to medical appointments, help an after-school day care center – decide on ONE thing and make that commitment.

Alison Mehlsak, Cone

Self-evaluate. Organizations need to look at themselves and say "Do we practice what we preach? Are we a model for the causes we support?" Even small steps toward identifying and changing company practice can generate impact.

Michelle Morgan-Nelsen, FSG

Organizations can create cross-sector collaboration to create "Collective Impact". Collective Impact happens when a group of cross-sector actors commit to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem and agree to each be accountable to a single overarching goal. David Bornstein of The New York Times calls Collective Impact “one of the most important experiments occurring in the social sector today”.

Lily Pai, Boston University

Organizations can listen to their customers and their needs.

David Poole, Pure Branding

In year end planning, add key performance indicators to reflect value delivered to ALL stakeholders

Brian Reich, Edelman

Think differently. It's easy to look at case studies, read how-to guides, get direction from someone else. It's hard to trust your gut, confirm something you are doing isn't right and change course. The starting point though is thinking differently, asking more questions. Plus, you can do that for free, no building or hiring required. Just start by thinking a little differently and see what happens.

Stacey Resnikoff, Freelance Writer/CD

Strategic alliances - scope out like-minded partners.

Mike Robert, Booz Allen Hamilton

Innovate, innovate, innovate! Move quickly to engage with audiences.

Katelin Ryan, Ad Council of Rochester

I think in today's world, the power of collaboration is one of the most powerful things an organization can focus on. With limited resources and fewer people to do what needs to get done, working together with others that have a similar mission or goal can provide results more efficiently than tackling a challenge individually. The ability to work together with other organizations and individuals is something that anyone could start doing today, and if everyone were to embrace that, I think progress could be made at an impressive rate.

Richard Santiago, Mullen

Encourage early failure through experimentation, prototype building and cross functional pollination. Toast failure and team collaboration often. Walk in the dark, cross the street with your eyes closed. And do it now. Then be open to the lessons you learn, so we can continue to build toward greatness.

Mike Schneider, allen & gerritsen

Start giving time.

Amy Schoenberger, DeVries Public Relations

Listen more carefully to what consumers need. Pay attention to what other organizations are doing to see what has worked and what hasn't, and how the learnings of others can apply to them.

Walter Somol, Microsoft

Show ME what my actual contribution did, on a person-by-person basis.

Harry Stevens, 3BL Media / Justmeans

Create great internal cultures that promote innovation, sustainability, and civic engagement.

Annie Sullivan, Ad Council of Rochester

Right now, organizations can assess things they've "always done" to see if they are still things they should always do.

Robbie Vitrano, Naked Pizza

Eliminate redundancy with other organizations. Especially those that are more effective.

Continue the conversation at: <http://www.sandboxsessions.com>

Joe Waters, Selfishgiving.com

Conduct an inventory of your assets - anything that you could use for a potential campaign or partnership.

Kathy Whalen, Cauzoom.com

Merge these three opportunities:

1. The surge in online fundraising.
2. Consumers eager to patronize cause minded businesses.
3. The shift in technology and social media that invites small businesses to participate in cause marketing.

When you care about what your customers care about, your customers care about you.