

Customer Intimacy & Pro-Bono Work

By Moshe Engelberg, Ph.D., M.P.H.

We believe good corporate citizenship is important, as do our clients, which is why ResearchWorks recently awarded \$50,000 in pro-bono marketing and strategic communications services to Casa De Amparo, a organization treating and preventing child abuse and neglect in San Diego County.

We also believe in customer intimacy, and we like to practice what we preach. Here are three ways that customer intimacy can enhance pro-bono work:

Tip #1: Choose the right partner for the right reasons.

We decided to make a pro-bono donation to a good cause that would be a “feel-good” activity for both our staff and our clients. Our goal was to select a cause and project based on input from our staff and clients. We asked and listened to our customers and staff on the “who” and “why” we’d donate our services. Then they voted on a winner. We could have skipped the nomination/voting process altogether, but we felt strongly about giving our staff and clients a strong voice in the decision (since they know us so well!).

Tip #2: Get intimate.

The most successful pro-bono partnerships are based on trust and a solid understanding of the strengths and oppor-

tunities of both parties. We invested a lot of time getting to know the good people at Casa de Amparo. They shared their history, successes, challenges, vision, and the kind of help they felt they needed most. After several meetings and a number of phone calls/emails, we developed a relationship and were able to create a short list of goals for the project. This initial exploratory period is essential, even if it seems to be taking longer than intended. It allows for a greater connection for staff to really feel good about the work their doing.

Tip #3: Capitalize on the good.

In order for staff and clients to experience the feel-good benefits of pro-bono work, you have to talk about it and show the good that’s being done. Celebrate the work, write about it, share it. You may end up wanting to turn it into something more than a pro-bono gig, perhaps into a cause marketing partnership or leverage it for your own marketing benefit. Keeping true to customer intimacy, you ought to vet the idea with your customers to see what value they ascribe to a bigger partnership. If customer intimacy guides your pro-bono work, everyone is bound to get a good “bang for the buck.”

Happy giving!



Dr. Moshe Engelberg founded ResearchWorks in 1991 and still leads the firm today. ResearchWorks is a marketing, strategy, and research agency focused on organizations in the business of health. Dr. Engelberg leads sophisticated and innovative applied research and consulting projects ranging from branding & identity building (Medicare, CDC, March of Dimes), product R&D (Welch Allyn, Philips), vision & strategic planning (CDC, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation), and consumer testing.

Dr. Engelberg earned his Ph.D. in Communication from Stanford University. In addition to his consulting practice, he has taught Marketing, Health Communication, and MBA courses at USD, SDSU, and UCSD.

moshe@researchworks.com
858.487.8200

12396 World Trade Drive, Suite 313 • San Diego, CA 92128