

Five New Year's resolutions for building awareness of your organisation and your cause

Remember what you believe and tell everyone

At the heart of a strong brand are strong beliefs. Too many organisations were founded on strong beliefs and then they cover them up and let them grow mouldy. So take the time in 2010 to make those implicit beliefs explicit. Beliefs are important because they are also what inspire people. People join a cause because they share a desire to do something and they believe your organisation can make the difference.

Pump out those key messages

Right, those beliefs are agreed. Now you have to agree those key messages. A key message may be as simple as 'The climate change talks in Copenhagen are the best chance we have to stop CO2 emissions'. The difference between a belief and a key message is that a key message is often SMARTer. In other words a bit more Specific or Measurable or Achievable, and so on. So a belief might be that everybody should be entitled to the best treatment for cancer. A key message derived from that might be that everybody should get a check-up for cancer every year.

Be bold

The meek may inherit the earth but they don't tend to get the awareness first. Too many charities want the awareness but don't want to do the things that will help generate it. If you want media coverage in local papers, say things that get noticed. 'Local council miss opportunity to.....' is much more likely to get coverage than 'Local charity holds fete.....' Controversy and clarity are always going to be better attention grabbers than predictability and dullness.

Get a punchy strapline

A good punchline is like free advertising. It tells people more about you. It is a constant reminder of what your organisation is all about. A strapline can work in different ways. For organisations with inexplicable names, it can explain what the organisation does. A strapline can do a job of adding emotion or other attributes to the charity. Some of the best straplines come from the commercial sector. Think of Tesco's 'Every little helps' or John Lewis's 'Never knowingly undersold' and how they tell the punter more about the organisation and make a promise about the kind of service or style that each company has.

Train staff in being brand ambassadors

Once the other four new year's resolutions are sorted (or maybe even just three of them) it is time to go and work out how people can be brand ambassadors. This means

training. It's no good to have the best brand in the world if only six people in HQ understand it and can communicate it. So plan to visit team meetings up and down the land; grab the opportunity at management conferences and staff inductions to get the brand message across.