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MAKE NONPROFITS PROFITABLE

THE AMA'S 2009 NONPROFIT MARKETING CONFERENCE WILL OFFER ACTIONABLE IDEAS AND INSIGHTS TO HELP MARKETERS FIND THEIR FOOTING IN THIS SHIFTING MARKETPLACE

THE WINDS OF change are blowing—and next month, they'll be blowing through Chicago, appropriately enough. On July 15-17, the city will play host to the **American Marketing Association** and American Marketing Association Foundation's 2009 Nonprofit Marketing Conference, "Thriving in Times of Change," at the Hyatt Regency Chicago, with presentations, tutorials and workshops featuring speakers from organizations such as AARP, Google, UNICEF (see story on opposite page) and Yankelovich.

"The theme is thriving in a changing world, and it's quite intentionally not just focused on the economy," says Cynthia Round, conference chairwoman and executive vice president of brand leadership at the Alexandria, Va.-based United Way of America. Nonprofit marketers' financial footing certainly is shifting, she says, but marketers also face two other pressing changes: in the demographics of nonprofit donor and volunteer bases, and in emerging marketing channels.

"In fact, the three subjects are all inter-related," Round says. Economic considerations are significantly affecting donor demographics, as is the rise of the civic-oriented and inherently more Web-savvy Millennial generation. Nonprofit marketers who learn how to embrace these converging changes certainly can help their organizations prosper, she says.

This year's nonprofit conference will feature presentations on how to reach multigenerational audiences, how to use interactive marketing and social media tools, and how to do more with less. "What we've got are the absolute blue-chip names here," Round says. Along with the companies mentioned above, executives from organizations such as the Ad Council, the Alzheimer's Association and Edelman also

agent of the hour: President Barack Obama. In the conference's opening keynote, "Lessons of Victory: How to Make Online Campaigning Work for your Organization," Thomas Gensemer, managing partner at full-service digital agency Blue State Digital in Washington, D.C., will discuss the president's historic online campaign successes, and how his company helped the Obama campaign mobilize more than 3

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will appear. Moreover, the conference will offer case studies and learned insights from smaller, but very successful, organizations such as Best Friends Animal Society and Girl Impact Youth Empowerment.

Further, this conference offers attendees opportunities for technical, rather than just conceptual, learning, says Rachel Hutchisson, director of corporate relations and philanthropy at Charleston, S.C.-based nonprofit technology partner Blackbaud Inc. and a member of the conference advisory board. Attendees can participate in tutorials on topics such as "Essential Tools for Communicating in Tough Times" and hands-on workshops including "Online Activism for Nonprofits of all Shapes and Sizes" led by experts from organizations such as Causes, a Facebook activism platform. Attendees will leave thinking, "[I've received] helpful content that's going to help me do my job better," Hutchisson says. Adds Round, "Our goal is that in every session, you'll walk away with three ideas you didn't have before, three things you can act on."

Also, during lunch and networking breaks, attendees will have opportunities to sign up for free one-on-one consultations with some nonprofit experts on the conference committee. "[The consultation] can be very specific around some challenge that the attendee is facing" and the expert will offer advice and ideas on how to solve it, Round says. "That might be worth the price of admission right there."

Of course, no Chicago-based nonprofit conference would be complete without valuable lessons learned from the change

million donors online and, ultimately, raise more than \$500 million online through My.BarackObama.com. "It's a lot about the process and demystifying how some of these tools can work for organizations," Gensemer says. "There's no magic. ... It's not about the latest, greatest, whiz-bang thing. It's not about technology. You need to look holistically across your organization" to determine what your goals are and whether you're positioned for success.

In a following hands-on workshop called "Making the 'Ask': Online Campaigns 101," Gensemer will be joined by Rich Mintz, vice president of strategy at Blue State Digital, to review general practices for writing and designing effective e-mails, and evolving communications to encourage participants to pass on the "ask"—in effect, encouraging participants to become brand advocates. "Every ask you make doesn't have to be about money," Gensemer notes.

Nonprofit organizations have to personalize the volunteer or involvement experience to build loyalty and engagement, he says. Rather than treating people as regular volunteers or occasional donors, for example, make them feel like the cause is *their* cause. Give them a sense of ownership, he says, which is easy to do with online fundraising and community-building tools. And for those organizations that think online tools are used only by Millennial volunteers, Gensemer says, "I can personally say that I've seen a 98-year-old grandmother in Florida who was using a virtual phone bank tool."

Times certainly have changed. **m**



WHAT	2009 Nonprofit Marketing Conference
THEME	Thriving in Times of Change
WHEN	July 15-17
WHERE	Hyatt Regency Chicago
INFO	www.MarketingPower.com/events or (800) 262-1150