

Review, Revamp and Revitalize: How National Research Corporation Doubled Associate Giving and Participation in One Year A Case Study:

In spring 2009, the annual associate giving campaign at National Research Corporation (NRC) was in a lack luster place. Associate giving was flat, participation was declining and the associate giving committee was facing turnover and burnout. Saying the outlook was bleak would be an understatement. We knew that we needed to change the way we conducted our campaign to both increase associate awareness and participation and also decrease the amount of time required to run the campaign.

The Power of an Idea

An associate with no official ties to the campaign committee had a great idea. He had seen a political video / advertisement on YouTube the year prior focusing on the importance of voting. It used sarcasm and reverse psychology to convince everyday Americans that they must vote. His idea was to create a video featuring NRC associates and use the script from the voting ad, but replace 'voting' with 'giving'. This idea was important for two main reasons: it gave the committee something fresh to rally behind and it gave 20-30 NRC Associates who were not directly involved in the committee 'starring roles' in the campaign.

Streamline and Simplify

In the past, NRC had found success in hosting events to raise dollars and participation for the campaign. We hosted bake-sales, beer tastings, jeans days, associate meetings, jail & bail afternoons and celebrations with up to \$1,000 in prizes. By the end of the two week campaign, the committee was exhausted. As the committee made plans for the 2009 campaign, we knew we had to simplify for our own sanity, but just as importantly to streamline our message to the associates. The campaign wasn't about two weeks worth of events. It wasn't about winning a prize. It was about giving back to the community and simply filling out the pledge form.

Welcome to the Digital Age

The primary goal was to increase participation. And we knew that if we wanted our associates to give, we needed to make it as easy as possible. The tradition of including the three local federations was important to the committee. We purchased a very basic online giving software program. For a small fee, this software took the campaign online making it more convenient for both associates and the committee, allowed for real time monitoring of our results and also allowed us to process our own campaign.

Tried and True

As the old saying goes, we didn't want to throw the baby out with the bath water. We knew that it would be important to get buy-in and public support from management. We made sure that our video and the employee meetings had a message from our CEO stressing the importance of the campaign. Also, because the majority of our associates are sales professionals, we knew that healthy competition would be important. We divided all associates into groups and gave a lunch to the floor with the highest participation rate. The winning team had a 100% participation rate. There was one event related contest, but it was a simple Wii Bowling Tournament. The finals of that contest were held during a short but festive Thank You Celebration.

2009 NRC Campaign Results:

Employee giving and participation doubled

Campaign awareness increased

Committee morale improved and time investment decreased

Gained new traditions and best practices to build on

A recommitment to the main purpose of giving, not just two weeks full of events

Campaign was a true reflection of our workplace: the people and the personalities

NRC employees took ownership of and pride in the campaign.

We hope that 2009 was our turn around year and 2010 will be even better.



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