



## **Doing Good: Marketing Social Causes**

### **By Lisa Anthony Toller**

Ben & Jerry's does it. So does American Express, Home Depot, and Avon. In fact, one need not look any further than our own backyard to find a number of Napa Valley wineries doing it. What is it? Sometimes referred to as Cause Marketing or Values Led Marketing, this new breed of corporate philanthropy is becoming as common as Chunky Monkey®.

### **To Coin a Phrase**

Cause marketing was a term first used by American Express in 1983 to describe a campaign to raise money for the Statue of Liberty: every time someone used their American Express card, one cent was donated to the Statue's restoration project. According to American Express, card use jumped 28 percent and the number of new users grew by 17 percent. And, most importantly, over \$1.7 million was raised for the restoration. That successful initiative spurred other companies to launch a variety of different social marketing campaigns, thereby creating a number of new breeds and definitions. According to Philip Kotler and Nancy Lee, authors of the book, *"Corporate Social Responsibility: Best Practices for Doing the Most Good"*, there are six categories for social initiatives: *corporate social marketing* (using marketing principles and techniques to foster behavior change in a target population); *cause promotion or cause marketing*, (supporting social causes through paid sponsorships or promotions); *cause-related marketing* (donating a percentage of revenue from the sale of specific items during an announced period of support); *corporate philanthropy* (including direct cash grants to a charity or cause); *community volunteering* (wherein employees are encouraged to volunteer in the local community); and *socially responsible business practices* (discretionary activities, such as the use of recycled and reduced packaging).

### **What's the impact to the bottom-line and beyond?**

No matter what form their social corporate initiative may take, research suggests that companies benefit from supporting social causes. According to surveys conducted by Cone Inc., a marketing consultancy in Boston, 81 percent of US consumers are more likely to switch brands to support a cause (when price and quality are equal). This figure rose 27 points from 54 percent similarly polled before September 11, 2001.

The potential benefits to nonprofits are far greater than the dollars raised on their behalf. A recent study by the Arthritis Foundation indicated that consumer perception of the foundation was improved by their third-party alliances. The study was conducted to respond to concerns among AF stakeholders about the impact of corporate alliances.

“We were surprised by the extent to which our alliances improved overall perceptions,” said Mary Norman, group vice president of strategic marketing alliances. “There was a suspicion that an alliance could damage perceptions of your organization, but the study showed quite the opposite.”

## **Win-Win in Wine Country**

### **[Turnbull Wine Cellars](#) & [Napa Humane Society](#)**

Examples abound in Napa Valley of wineries engaged in supporting social causes. One such example is Turnbull Wine Cellar’s alliance with the Napa Humane Society to create and promote their annual fundraising event, Cause for the Paws.

Conceived by Turnbull General Manager, Tersilla Gregory and her crew during a staff meeting, Cause for the Paws reflects the company’s humanitarian values. “We are all animal lovers - our employees here at Turnbull are parents to everything from cats and dogs, birds and even goats”, stated Gregory.

Gregory solicited the help of other “animal friendly” wineries including, Frog’s Leap, Stags’ Leap Winery, Toad Hollow Winery, Duckhorn Vineyards, Eagle & Rose, Ravenswood, Mutt Lynch Winery, Swanson Vineyards & Winery, Cardinale, Honig, Paraduxx, Stag’s Leap Wine Cellars, Chameleon Cellars, and Robert Mondavi Winery’s Stags Leap District wines to pour wines at the event.

### **[Sutter Home Winery](#) & [City of Hope](#)**

A very personal connection drove Sutter Home’s decision to embark on a cause marketing campaign to help find a cure for breast cancer. In 2001,

winery owner Vera Trinchero Torres and Senior Vice President of Marketing, Terry Wheatley were both diagnosed with breast cancer within several weeks of one another. As they fought the disease, Vera and Terry decided that they would take advantage of Sutter Home's huge consumer awareness to send a message about breast cancer.

Sutter Home became a national sponsor of the City of Hope Walks for Hope to Cure Breast Cancer. City of Hope, a National Cancer Institute hospital and world-renowned research center, provides early detection and care to women with breast cancer. The winery expanded its support to additional charities such as the Evelyn Lauder Breast Cancer Research Foundation in New York City and other regional hospital, fundraisers, and organizations.

Some of the initiatives Sutter Home has launched to build public awareness and raise funds for breast cancer research include: sending free breast cancer awareness pins to consumers who write to them; conducting a major retail promotion on wine shelves across America to increase awareness and communicate the importance of early detection; and, pledging \$1 per bottle of Sutter Home White Zinfandel sold through December of 2004 when consumers send in the top quality seal from the capsule on the bottle.

### **What Does the Future Hold?**

Naysayers have pointed out that there could be a down-side to marketing-based funding. What if companies are only willing to fund causes with massive PR potential? What happens to the nonprofits that are not well-known or don't have the sex-appeal to attract corporate sponsors? At some point the nonprofit sector will become saturated with corporate names; will the novelty wear off and result in a decrease of corporate funding?

For now, these questions remain unanswered. However, there is no question that corporate philanthropy makes consumers and employees feel good, and raises funds for social causes that need help. In the near future, cause marketing or some variation thereof, may well become an integral part of any successful and responsible brand campaign.