

Feast for Southeast

Strategic Philanthropy Project



Principles of Marketing (BA 223)

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Strategic Philanthropy

Surplus wealth is a sacred trust which its possessor is bound to administer in his lifetime for the good of the community. –Andrew Carnegie

Strategic philanthropy is when businesses find creative ways to give to the community, causes, and non-profit organizations. The Merriam Webster Dictionary online defines philanthropy as: the practice of giving money and time to help make life better for other people.

In the Principles of Marketing class at Portland Community College, philanthropy was one of the concepts we discussed. One of our assignments of our marketing team was to get involved with a cause and show how a business can help.

Our team was comprised of Kimi Nam, Jonathan Poe, Sky Rouse, and Josh Taylor. The business we chose was Jonathan Poe's own Pinkleton's Curious Caramel Corn, a local start-up creating the most delicious caramel corn you'll ever taste from organic ingredients.

Purpose and goal of project

Our team decided to partner with Feast for Southeast to raise awareness of this organization and get sponsors for a table or seat at their Thanksgiving event on November 28th.

Our goal was to sponsor one table at a cost of \$100 per table or \$16.67 per seat. We surpassed this and were able to sponsor five tables plus one seat.

Pinkleton's has generously agreed to donate a free bag of Pinkleton's for each seat.

Within our group, Kimi challenged the group and would match sponsorship of a table if the other members were able to find sponsorship of a table. This was easily accomplished and our team was able to fund 31 seats, 517 percent our goal!



Why was this relationship chosen?

In one of our classes Maria Holmes, a representative from Feast for Southeast, spoke about social media, nonprofit organizations, and the Feast for Southeast event. Our group decided to partner with this organization, because it made sense for Pinkleton's to get involved with a grass roots effort with a similar philosophy. Both are local Portland organizations and starting out on a small scale. The cause of providing a free Thanksgiving meal to those on the eastside of Portland is something Pinkleton's feels strongly about.

Ms. Holmes supported our efforts, knowing Pinkleton's was a new company and this was its first partnership with a nonprofit. She loved the idea of table sponsorship and giving away free bags of Pinkleton's. She agreed that this was going to be on a small scale, and Pinkleton's at this point, is not able to give out unlimited amounts of free product.

As Feast for Southeast is a smaller grassroots organization, it felt less intimidating to approach them than the larger nonprofits. Maria was a wealth of information, with great ideas and logistical guidelines, and was able to direct us in how to make the donations part of our fundraising efforts.

“Helping people doesn't have to be an unsound financial strategy.”

Melina Gates

The Process



With Pinkleton's involvement in Portland Design Week earlier this year, and Jonathan's hosting a table at one of their parties, Pinkleton's was invited to set up a table at a new venue in Saint Johns called The Colony. It was detailed to Jonathan as being a "Day of the Dead" themed party, marketed to upscale design-oriented folk, and to families in and around Saint Johns. It seemed the perfect opportunity to tie in the Strategic Philanthropy

aspects of fundraising, and a place where we could share information about sponsorship of both tables and seats.

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It seemed the perfect opportunity to tie in the Strategic Philanthropy aspects of fundraising, and a place where we could share information about sponsorship of both tables and seats. We took to Facebook and Twitter to announce the event, as well as receiving some cross-promotional tweeting from the event itself.

We hoped that the event at The Colony would have been better attended. Pinkleton's had planned to sell bags of Salted Vanilla and Salted Molasses, donating half of the net profits from the night to Feast for Southeast. Our table had information about the event, where we were prepared to pitch the donation. The owner of The Colony and Delia, the event coordinator, were both excited about the philanthropic aspects of tying in Pinkleton's sales to the Thanksgiving event.

Perhaps they misjudged the wisdom in having an event on Halloween, and when all was said and done, Pinkleton's had sold just one bag.

Moving on, our efforts to drive "Feast Seats" were redoubled. When "Day of the Dead" failed, it really got us sending out feelers, and helped us come up with creative, unobtrusive posts for Facebook, such as creative print collateral, and good graphics.

Wrapping up our efforts, we are adding a "thank-you" post to our Facebook feed... directing people to Feast for Southeast's Facebook page.

Sky's reflection

I think we made a good choice when we decided to work with Feast for Southeast on this project. First of all, I think what they do is really amazing and it is something I feel really good about being a part of. Knowing I'm selling something I believe in is the most important thing for me when marketing anything. It was also fortuitous that we were working with an organization that would be holding an event that was very relevant to the time of year and the holiday season. It was certainly in our favor that we were developing a marketing strategy to find donors during the time of year that people are most likely to give donations.

With the help of my lovely girlfriend Emily Tuma, we were able to get her employer Northwest Ambulatory Surgery Center to agree to match a table sponsorship by their employees. The key to our success was getting Emily's manager Kecia behind it. Emily knows that Kecia and her husband love popcorn so we started by giving them a bag of Pinkleton's and explaining a little about Feast for Southeast and how the two were teaming up. They of course loved it. Kecia even convinced the board of the company to match a table sponsorship.

We created a poster for her that included information about the event and Pinkleton's offer. Kecia used the poster to explain what we were doing to her staff and the board. An interesting marketing decision Kecia made of her own accord was to ask her employees to give any amount that they wanted rather than simply the cost of a seat at a table. The result of this decision I would say has been good with some employees giving more and some giving less.

The effort has definitely been a success. As of today (just 2 days after the staff meeting), the employees have donated \$86 dollars and more have expressed their intent to give soon. It looks as if we will easily reach enough to get two table sponsorships on behalf of the company and their employees. One thing that has been a cause of confusion and a bit of a concern for those who are giving is questions about charitable donations and a tax write off. A good solution that Kimi came up with to help clear this up was to create a form for each donor to fill out that states their name how much they gave and that they would like to receive a receipt for their donation. Each donor that is interested can now fill out a form and will send it in with the donations so that Southeast Uplift can issue a donation acknowledgment letter for the donor to use a receipt for tax purposes.

Jonathan's reflection

This was a great learning experience for me. It has not been without its bumps and curves though. As the owner of Pinkleton's it was great to be able to offer a thank you bag to our donors, and as someone who loves organizations and events that encourage community, it was a natural fit.

For the past year I have had my head buried in my business's business... often employing the 'fake it 'til you make it' rule when going about the normal day to day delirium. At times it seems that I am bound and determined to make every business mistake that a start-up can make. I am learning from each one.

Our Halloween event was one such mistake... the offer to do it came at such a fortuitous time- right when we were picking our project. The offer came from a girl who was affiliated with a highly successful party where I had a tasting station at as part of Portland Design Week. Delia (the event coordinator) could not afford to pay Pinkleton's to be there, but I would be allowed to sell Pinkleton's. Seemed like a good deal to me.

Looking back (hindsight is 20/20, after all), I can see that having a product that is growing in demand, as mine is, really means I should look more carefully at what exactly I am saying yes to. My hours (and my brand image) are quickly becoming more valuable than I am used to them being. Thankfully, not all of our fundraising goals were tied to this one event.

One of the bigger learning experiences for me with this project has been the power of social media, and where it is appropriate to use which social-media venues. I talk more about this in the Social Media reflection paper. But in a nutshell, for a particular fundraising event like this it was really hard to expect an increasingly cynical public to jump on board with donating to a cause they have had little exposure to. I found that the most effective social media marketing occurred when direct connections were made with our own peer groups and tribes. I imagine that this was part of the learning experience.

Josh's reflection

I've been drawn to the concept of philanthropy for a while now. I believe when for-profits, non-profits, causes, and networks offline and online join forces it's a key to making things happen and truly changing society for the better.

Wanting to learn business skills, I took the marketing class at PCC, where one of the requirements was to help a cause and write about it.



The Joshes rocking SE Foster. Josh Holmes on left, Josh Taylor on the right.

I did some canvassing around SE Portland with a group from Feast for Southeast. We just went to businesses on SE Foster and asked to put up posters as well as giving donation request letters to those who were interested in helping out.

Going door-to-door was a good challenge for me, as I tend to be introverted. It was also a great experience to see how the process worked when businesses get involved with a cause.

In the marketing class it's been a thrill to see the dreams and passions of the students and faculty. So much vision, energy, and hopes for the future. I'm also glad to have teamed up with Feast for Southeast and look forward to great things happening there as well. Here's to changing the world!

Kimi's reflection

I felt that partnering with Feast for Southeast was a good experience. I liked the philosophy behind Feast for Southeast, which makes it a lot easier to ask for donations when you believe in the organization you are supporting.



Although the Halloween event was not as successful as we would have liked it to be, it is interesting how important it is to choose which events an organization partners with, especially when a business is just starting up. I think there is a tendency to do every event that comes along, just to get the word out about your product, however, the cost of doing an event may not be taken into consideration and sometimes it is better to pass on an event than to say “yes” to everything. But it is such a hard balance to determine what events to do because you never know who will be at what event.

I also think doing an event on Halloween was a challenge because there are a lot of competing events that night and may not have targeted the audience Pinkleton's is after – I'm not sure a lot of parents will purchase an \$8 bag of Pinkleton's for their child on Halloween (when the children are getting free candy from trick-o-treating).

The best philanthropy is constantly in search of the finalities—a search for a cause, an attempt to cure evils at their source.

John D. Rockefeller

Thoughts on Current Business Trends

Philanthropy has always been an important part of America and business.

From Ben Franklin's work in the community and Andrew Carnegie's universities and libraries, to the present, where organizations like the Gates Foundations want people to "lead healthy and productive lives."

In 1831 when Alexis Charles-Henri de Tocqueville traveled to American from France to study our country, he observed: "I must say that I have seen Americans make a great deal of real sacrifices to the public welfare; and have noticed a hundred instances in which they hardly ever failed to lend a faithful support to one another." (Retrieved November 14, 2013 from <http://www.unitedway.org/take-action/tocqueville-society-history/>).

The 2008 recession had a dramatic impact on nonprofits, however giving has slowly increased. What more and more companies are doing is in-kind donations and volunteer hours. The Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy's 2013 report found that "59% of companies have increased overall giving from 2007 to 2012. The largest increase in total giving came between 2009 and 2010, as revenues and profits began to pick up for the majority of companies. In aggregate, giving increased by 42% (\$4.48 billion) from 2007 to 2012." (Retrieved November 14, 2013 from <http://cecp.co/measurement/benchmarking-reports/giving-in-numbers.html>).

In addition, the Internet is bringing the world closer together and making it easier to learn about various nonprofits and its causes across the world. Internet websites like JustGive.org, Google.org, and World Vision are examples of this trend. According to a study from *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, online giving has risen by 14% in last year. (Retrieved November 14, 2013 from <http://philanthropy.com/article/The-Big-Boom-in-Online-Giving/139965/>).

Nonprofits are learning to be more effective and efficient as an organization. Blackbaud hosted a seminar entitled upNEXT, which brought together experts and fundraising leaders from across the nonprofit sector to discuss emerging trends and next practices. (Retrieved November 14, 2013 from <http://www.npengage.com/nonprofit-research/npnext-2013/-sthash.A5TAhNKI.dpuf>). With monetary donation becoming scarce, nonprofits will have to be effective in utilizing the donations they receive and donors are increasingly holding nonprofits to outcome standards similar to a for-profit business. (Retrieved November 14, 2013 from <http://www.socialvelocity.net/2012/12/5-nonprofit-trends-to-watch-in-2013/>).

An article in the New York Times profiled Lindsay Beck who has the idea of creating social impact bonds. What Ms. Beck is proposing is that creating the equivalent of a profit-driven stock market for nonprofits. "By some estimates, if just 1 percent of the money in the portfolios of wealthy individuals in the United States was directed to nonprofits through new financial instruments like social impact bonds or Ms. Beck's exchange, the nonprofit world would be sitting on \$1 trillion." (Retrieved November 14, 2013 from http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2013/11/11/plan-to-finance-philanthropy-shows-the-power-of-a-simple-question/?_r=0).

Our marketing team's involvement with Feast for Southeast was an educational experience and we have learned as a group from the challenges we encountered with this project. Despite these challenges, the effort was a success as awareness and sponsorship of tables were raised for Feast for Southeast.