

# Marketing

## Objectives:

- **Manage all efforts to solicit donations from local and regional businesses**
- **Gather donations to fulfill all needs lists**
- **Present creative ideas that truly sell Riley Hospital for Children and Dance Marathon to target businesses**
- ***Remember, clear rules and guidelines help you track donors and ensure that double solicitation is avoided.***

### ➤ The Dance Marathon Vision

- It is important that you become a resource on everything related to Dance Marathon. You will consult committee members, student organizations, campus administrators and businesses. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the duties and responsibilities of every committee.
- You are a spokesperson for DM. Discuss and represent the views of Dance Marathon throughout the campus and community.
- Make sure that you understand all rules/ guidelines set up by your school, the hospital, and even your community. These will guide you and your members need to understand the importance of following these guidelines.
- The responsibilities of a director are endless and limitless- you must learn to delegate. Many committees will work together to accomplish their responsibilities. Make sure your committee set-up is comprehensive and that one chair is ultimately responsible for each task.

### ➤ Committee Creation

- Chairs responsibilities can be time consuming. The majority of former Dance Marathon council members say the most important task they accomplished was selecting a strong council. After you relay the Marathon vision, the committee members carry this vision to reality.
- Involve as many people as possible, but make sure to assemble a committee that is dependable and energetic. Search to find individuals that are hard working and able to commit a large amount of time to fundraising for the kids!
- When faced with a great task, many of us find the urge to turn to our close friends. If you feel that urge when it comes to selecting your Dance Marathon council, try to resist it. The committee should be a diverse group that has the drive and determination to make Dance Marathon a hit. Use objectivity in your selection process. Just because someone is a close friend doesn't mean they are a good selection.
- Encourage students of all levels to apply.

➤ Run Committee Meetings

- Once the committee is selected, it is time to bring everyone together. This is a good time to get chairs comfortable with each other. Define expected actions and have them set goals.
- Make the first meeting fun. Conduct some ice breakers and team building games. These activities can immediately make you aware of committee members' personalities and how best to work with them throughout the year. Make the meetings motivational with members leaving feeling empowered to help the kids at Riley.
- Teach the chairs everything about Dance Marathon. Every member must know all marathon information inside and out.
- Be the critical eye and ear for your committee. Often chairs have great ideas, but they also have the tendency to get carried away. It is your responsibility to provide members with a reality check and help them design back-up plans.
- Keep the students on track. Everyone has great stories to tell about the weekend, etc, but you are there for a purpose.
- As you move throughout the year, you will be able to gauge how often meetings should be held. Some committees hold weekly meetings, some don't. This is up to you, however as it gets closer to the marathon (no less than three months away) each committee should hold weekly meetings.
- Set your meeting day, time and place in stone. Attendance should be mandatory and it is helpful to send out a reminder one week in advance.
- Be sure to construct a committee timeline and see that the president receives a copy as well as your committee.

➤ What is Marketing?

- Marketing is the process by which organizations exchange value among themselves, their customers, and their clients. Dance Marathon marketing is the tactical sell of Dance Marathon to businesses to gain donations.
- Although Marketing is a separate Dance Marathon committee, persons on every committee have a responsibility to market Dance Marathon. Much of what you will need to acquire will come from the needs lists of different committees. Students on committees may work at local businesses or have friends and family that may be interested in supporting Dance Marathon. If a relationship already exists, allow the individual to solicit the donor with your help.
- Explore every angle and every contact--your greatest support will most likely be generated from existing contacts. At every meeting, ask for contacts and ideas.

➤ Target list

- What businesses or individuals can bring the most to Dance Marathon? Develop a target list with three times the number of sponsors you wish to obtain.
- Your campus newspaper is a good place to prospect businesses. If they advertise in your paper, they are targeting students.
- Work with the Dance Marathon Coordinator; he or she may suggest you contact

current hospital sponsors or donors; however, they may not want Dance Marathon overlapping with any fund raising they do. Please respect their on-going efforts. The DM Coordinator knows the community and will have many suggestions of businesses to solicit.

- Attend a chamber of commerce or local business association meeting. Ask if you can get on the agenda of the meeting to speak briefly about Dance Marathon. This is an effective way to reach many people at once. You might be able to show the video and provide marketing kits.
- To keep things simple, inform dancers and organizations that they should not solicit local businesses unless a member of the organization is employed at the business, organization alumni work there, or the organization clears the prospect with the Marketing Director.

➤ Marketing Packet

- A marketing packet is a collection of information that will be important to business when making the decision to sponsor the Dance Marathon. Some items to consider:
  - Riley story
  - Fact sheet
  - Backgrounder
  - Dance Marathon Brochure
  - Hospital brochure
  - University Information
  - Testimonial from current sponsor
  - Benefit sheet
  - Donation levels

➤ Develop sponsorship benefits

- If I donate \$1,000 cash or in-kind to your Marathon, what's, in it for me? Creating sponsorship levels before visiting a business and making them a part of your marketing kit will answer that question. Sponsorship levels give businesses options and something to reach for. The examples provided come from schools in their first year and beyond. Don't fall in the trap of setting your levels too low; remember Dance Marathon is an event that will last a long time.
- A major responsibility is to create the marketing packet. This has to happen as soon as possible. A sample is provided for you. Contact your DM Coordinator if you have questions, would like examples, or would like assistance.

➤ Begin soliciting donations

- Start contacting your list of potential sponsors for donations early. Businesses need time to budget Dance Marathon sponsorships, and in some cases must receive permission from regional offices. The more time you have before the

Dance Marathon, the more sponsors you will obtain. If you can, give yourself at least four months. If you need to, involve the President. Continue seeking corporate donations right up to Dance Marathon time. Also ask your committee as well as other committees if they have any contacts.

- Make presentations short and to the point. Use stories of local Riley families. Have a standard presentation but allow each presenter to project their own personality and adjust the presentation to the audience's needs.
- Implement a system to track solicitation. A standard marketing procedure at many schools is the completion of contact sheets. (Please see the contact sheet in of this section) The contact sheet contains all the important information about businesses and persons that are contacted. After a marketing committee member contacts a business or organization, the committee member fills out the contact sheet and places a copy in the master contact file. Marketing maintains the master contact file. If another committee member wishes to call on a certain company, he or she would first review the master contact file to ensure that this company has not been approached.
- The Catering committee also contacts businesses to donate food and supplies. Require that Catering use the same solicitation tracking system your committee uses. It is unprofessional and embarrassing for a business to be contacted by two different people for the same purpose. The master contact file and contact sheets prevent double solicitation.
- Send thank you notes after every presentation, even if you were told no. Also send notes after the marathon to businesses that turned you down. Maybe one of the reasons was because they were unsure Dance Marathon would live up to its billing.

➤ Sponsorship exclusivity

- Sponsorship exclusivity is ensuring businesses that they will be the only Dance Marathon sponsor in their category. For example if Subway donates 500 sandwiches and several thousand dollars, you will not contact any other sandwich shops. This is a good selling point. We suggest placing category exclusivity in the higher sponsorship levels.

➤ Gather donations to fulfill all needs lists

- A needs list is an inventory of the products and services that a committee needs to function. For example, the morale committee needs toys and games to make people happy and all committees will need printing or copying. Other needs can be advertising space, garbage bags, silent auction items, items for the family room and trophies or other awards. Obtain a Needs List from every committee. Set the deadline as early as possible.
- Develop a Master Needs List which includes the needs of every committee. Post the master list in the Dance Marathon office. Update the list every time an item is procured. Take a few minutes during the weekly committee meeting to give a master needs list update. Council members should watch to ensure the items they

need are donated and necessary. For example, Morale needs hula hoops for a theme segment. It is two months before Marathon and no one will donate the hoops. Morale should reconsider this need, and if necessary adjust the planned activity. Sometimes, a committee's needs can be borrowed or otherwise procured without finding a sponsor. Meet often with the committees who have larger needs lists.

- Present creative ideas that truly sell Dance Marathon to target businesses
  - Nothing will look as good to a potential sponsor as the details of an enticing sponsorship creatively prepared and laid out before them. But you will find in the real business world that time is valuable so your marketing kit will need to be to the point. There are ideas for your marketing kits in this section.
  
- Specialty advertising
  - Specialty advertising is also a great way to promote the Dance Marathon and to encourage people to participate. Here is a brief list of some ideas that have been successful.
    1. Table Tents- Table tents are fold-over cards found on tables in restaurants. Attractively designed and printed on two sides, they give donors an opportunity to read about Dance Marathon while waiting for their meal. There are several groups to contact that may donate tent cards: the local restaurant association, food wholesalers, or printing companies.
    2. Pizza Boxes- Contact a local pizza restaurant that has a delivery and/or take out service. Arrange to have a Dance Marathon flyer attached to each box. This method will associate Dance Marathon with something fun and positive -- pizza. December is a huge month for pizza deliveries. Another popular time to order pizza is during finals. Offer the pizza restaurant space to hang a banner at Dance Marathon or maybe free mentions in other advertising. Although this idea has been successful with pizza restaurants, it works with any restaurant.
    3. Posters and Flyers- No one knows your campus community better than you. Hang posters and distribute flyers any place there are students:
      - Stores
      - Buildings on campus
      - Restaurants
      - Greek houses
      - Telephone poles
    4. Canisters- In conjunction with canning, canisters may be placed at the point of purchase in retail and food outlets. If the canisters have a little message about Dance Marathon raising money for hospitalized children, people will drop loose change in the jars. This preserves some of the man power required in canning.
    5. Local Personalities- Invite someone popular in your community to attend

Dance Marathon. This increases dancer morale and the likelihood of media coverage.

\*\*\* Helpful Hints:

- Be persistent!
- Contact as many corporations as possible- there are thousands across the United States! If you can't think of any, talk with committee members and chairs and brainstorm new ideas.
- Check all potential sponsors with the Dance Marathon Coordinator (to prevent double solicitation).
- Complete your marketing packet early! In fact, the earlier the better.
- You might get several rejections before you find someone that wants to donate- don't get discouraged! There are wonderful people out there that want to support Riley Hospital.

\*\*\* Remember:

- Always have a back-up plan!
- Delegate! Do not allow yourself to become overwhelmed.
- Act as a DM role model. You represent DM whether you are meeting with a potential sponsor, briefing campus administrators, or sitting in a class. Encourage all committee members to remember they are also role models; everything they do reflects on DM. Have fun but remember to never jeopardize the perception of your organization.

*Do it for the kids!*

## Prospective Sponsors

- ✓ Restaurants including campus eating facilities
- ✓ Fitness gyms or spas
- ✓ Dance clubs
- ✓ Phone companies
- ✓ Banks
- ✓ Kaplan or Ronkin
- ✓ Campus bookstores
- ✓ Airlines
- ✓ TV and radio stations
- ✓ Hotels
- ✓ Sandwich shops
- ✓ Pizza places
- ✓ Credit cards
- ✓ Jewelry stores
- ✓ Game centers
- ✓ Printing companies
- ✓ University student association
- ✓ Contact local bottling distributor (Coke, Pepsi, Gatorade, bottled water)
- ✓ Grocery stores
- ✓ Bakeries

The list of potential sponsors is endless but make sure that you check with the Dance Marathon Coordinator to prevent double solicitation!

### Acknowledgment Ideas for Sponsorships

1. Thank the businesses who help with Dance Marathon. If they feel good about what they did this year, they will want to participate again.
2. Encourage students to support the businesses who support Dance Marathon.
3. Stress long-term relationships and sponsorships.
4. If a reception is held, invite all sponsors and donors to the reception.
5. Provide sponsors with banner space or table space at Dance Marathon.
6. Award Dance Marathon t-shirt space for sponsors (place larger sponsors in the most prominent spaces).
7. Invite all sponsors and donors to Dance Marathon.
8. Thank sponsors at Dance Marathon. Some schools even give sponsors certificates or plaques.
9. Have sponsors speak at Dance Marathon.
10. Run a column in the student newspaper thanking all sponsors that donated.
11. Send Dance Marathon video with thank you letter to sponsors.