

10

FORMING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

“Social change is too important to be left to chance. Today in Jordan, a network of public and private agencies are working together to address water-related issues on a scale not previously considered possible—at a fraction of the cost. In January 2005, the Mansoura city park opened—the last of six in Jordan featuring a natural environment in the Middle East. One NGO donated land. Another designed the landscaping. A third designed the Interpretation Center. The private sector provided partial funding. An architect and engineer employed by the city will provide maintenance. The Ministry of Agriculture supplied plants. The Ministry of Water and Irrigation provided oversight, and USAID provided the funding. The whole program was coordinated and managed by the Academy for Educational Development, working at scale from the very beginning and employing the logic that if you increase the number of diverse players responding simultaneously to a specific problem and then increase the collaboration among those players, what you get is increased impact on the economy, environment and people’s lives.”

Gregory R. Niblett, Senior Vice President and Director
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This chapter is all about mutually beneficial relationships, ones that bring critical resources to your efforts and in return provide valuable benefits for your partners. If you are like most public sector managers, you know that partnerships are helpful. What you don't know as well is how to find the right partners and realize their full potential.

The reality is you need each other. You need resources that only the private sector has, and they have needs only you can fulfill. You need resources that only nonprofit organizations have in abundance, and they can't get their job done well without you. And you also need other public agencies supporting your efforts, and they are bound to call on you for the same.

A marketing mindset is key to finding and winning the best partners to make this happen. Seeing and approaching potential partners as customers will make it more likely that you will focus your efforts on the most attractive prospects and increase the chances they will say yes.

This opening story demonstrates these principles well.

Opening Story: Improving Jordan's Water Problems—For the People, By the People, Through Partnerships

Challenges

One of the most water-poor nations on earth, in 1999, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was in the midst of its worst drought in more than a century. Population growth from high birth rates coupled with unprecedented refugee immigration had placed intolerable pressures on water resources. Demand for water in the Middle East had reduced the Jordan River to a narrow, polluted stream. Millions of liters of water were being lost through antiquated infrastructure, leaking toilets, outdated plumbing systems, and inappropriate fixtures, in some cases accounting for one third of total water bills. Government had also limited household access to water to just one day per week.

Believing they were already making as many sacrifices as they could to conserve water, Jordanians felt there was little more they could do. Just six percent of the population believed that their personal

actions could help alleviate water shortages. Many felt that Jordan's neighboring countries were to blame, not understanding that water shortages were a chronic problem throughout the entire Middle East. Knowledge about water-saving plumbing devices was negligible, as was knowledge about other techniques for conserving water at home.

Despite active efforts from the government's Public Relations Office to educate the public, more needed doing. Most experts recognized that government efforts and communications alone could not hope to address Jordan's water-use challenges. Yet, environmental NGOs suffered from a lack of donor support, and only one NGO specializing in water issues existed in Jordan. Thus, community-based leadership in dealing with Jordan's water crisis was virtually nonexistent.

Strategies

In the year 2000, the Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation (MWI) and the Academy for Educational Development (AED) launched an initiative with big intentions: to reduce water consumption in Jordan by the largest consumers; to change knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding water efficiency in the larger population; to improve advocacy and efforts to deliver water demand education and programs; and above all, to build a deep, nationwide foundation for wholesale change. The initiative, conceived of and funded by USAID, was called Water Efficiency and Public Information for Action (WEPIA).

Initial WEPIA research identified the primary drivers of Jordan's poor water-efficiency environment—and underscored the need for a comprehensive response on multiple fronts. But funding allocations limited the WEPIA staff to nine members. How could so few people address a problem that clearly required the involvement of so many? From the outset, WEPIA worked to build a coalition of organizations and individuals to create change.

Program staff developed partnerships with other organizations, which in turn spearheaded key initiatives. After only a few months, WEPIA staff had built relationships with hundreds of stakeholders and decision makers throughout Jordan. In June 2000, they met in Amman for WEPIA's strategic planning summit. Together they crafted new solutions to Jordan's endemic water problems. Participants included engineers, behavioral scientists, government officials, media experts,

university professors, donor agency and NGO representatives, public and private schools, women's programs, lawyers, activists, and large consumers and suppliers from the private sector. Thus the nine-member WEPIA staff grew to a virtual ninety strong, forming a dynamic, interdisciplinary force, ready to act. The ninety participants returned to their own offices with a plan they had helped develop and their own roles clearly delineated.

The new approach represented a significant departure from past approaches. It would reduce demand, not focus on supply. It would rely on collaborative action rather than discrete initiatives, inspire actions including retrofitting of buildings and homes, disseminate water-saving devices, amend policies and laws, incorporate water-efficiency lessons into every school grade, stimulate media promotion, and even integrate messages into sermons at mosques.

In one such project, 112 poor women, most of whom had never worked outside of their homes, purchased water-saving devices at cost, sold the devices to friends and neighbors, and kept the profits. Another program, a joint effort with Jordan's Ministry of Planning, offered community grants to help increase water efficiency to over 98 community-based organizations, farmers' cooperatives, women's groups, and other groups primarily among the rural poor. An award-winning media campaign created by Prisma, a Jordanian advertising agency, focused on how water efficiency could bring economic gains for the average Jordanian. WEPIA's new messenger, Abu Tawfir, represented this possibility to all Jordanians through cartoons accompanied by water-saving tips on television, radio, and billboards and in newspapers and magazines. His name, an ingenious choice meaning "papa miser," represented in animated form a typical Jordanian family. He was part comic, part real, and all Jordanian (see Figure 10.1).

Rewards

This collaborative approach had multiple effects. It energized and strengthened Jordan's weak nonprofit sector. It applied social marketing concepts to change individual behaviors, and it helped create the standards and infrastructure needed to make water efficiency a reality. The results have been astounding. By 2004,



FIGURE 10.1 Abu Tawfir is the messenger for Jordan’s water-saving message appearing on billboards at 75 locations around the country

- Ninety percent of citizens were fully aware of the extent and cause of Jordan’s water shortage and knew three strategies for improving water efficiency.
- The number of people believing they could do something about Jordan’s water crisis grew tenfold.
- The percentage of those who knew about aerators climbed from 9 percent to 73.8 percent.
- Sales of aerators—at one time practically nonexistent—skyrocketed. During one stage of the campaign, one company sold 1,750 aerators in a single day.
- School curricula were rewritten to focus on interactive lessons in water demand management.
- Jordan graduated its first 15 female licensed plumbers under a revamped vocational training system.
- Each community grant yielded an average water savings of 45 percent. Average increase in income, per grant, for each family was 27 percent.

Most importantly, it saved water:

- Retrofitting reduced water use of Jordan’s largest users by 18 percent.

- Modernization of national plumbing codes saved 1.4 million liters of water each year.
- Estimated outdoor use of water dropped from 20 million liters per year to 11 million.
- Annual water deficits are projected to decrease by 50 million liters per year.

By the time the WEPIA program ended in 2005, Jordan had emerged as a leader in water efficiency for the entire Middle East region. Ultimately, it would vastly improve water-efficiency capabilities and competencies across Jordanian society. And it would give Middle Eastern countries an innovative model for creating sustainable, measurable results of their own.¹

Benefits of Strategic Partnerships

Partnership trends between public sector agencies and private as well as nonprofit organizations are not easy to measure with certainty. It appears, however, that directional signals indicate the numbers must be going up.

Charitable giving in the United States, for example, is at an all-time high. According to the Giving USA Foundation, estimated charitable giving from corporations, foundations, individuals, and bequests reached \$248.52 billion for 2004, a new record for the United States.²

Corporations are getting more strategic, however, about giving, choosing partners and initiatives that reflect an increased desire for “doing well *and* doing good.” You’ll find more corporations picking a few strategic areas of focus that fit with their corporate values and that support business goals. A study conducted by Cone Inc. in 2000, for example, found that 69 percent of companies planned to increase future commitments to social issues.³ Perhaps this is an indication that corporations have their fingers on the pulse of their customers, as another Cone study reported that 84 percent of Americans said they would be likely to switch brands to one associated with a good cause if price and quality are similar.⁴

Benefits for All

As summarized in Table 10.1, all partners can gain as they give, an essential condition if these exchanges are to take place and be sustained over time. Examples for each are described in remaining sections of this chapter.

TABLE 10.1 What Partners Give to and Get from Partnerships with Public Agencies

Partners	Give to the Partnership	Get from the Partnership
Private Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash • In-kind services • Products • Access to distribution channels • Access to customers • Increased visibility for communications • Advocacy • Volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical expertise • Increased brand preference • Increased sales • Community goodwill • Social impact • Increased employee attraction, retention, and satisfaction
Nonprofit Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical expertise • Talent • Local networks • Volunteers • Credibility • Access to distribution channels • Advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased resources • Increased visibility • Technical expertise • National networks and contacts of the public agency • Support for agency mission and goals
Other Public Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clout • Access to target markets • Technical expertise • Access to distribution channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for agency mission and goals • Increased resources • Increased visibility • Technical expertise

Partnerships with the Private Sector

In our book *Corporate Social Responsibility: Doing the Most Good for Your Company and Your Cause* (New York: Wiley, 2005), six distinct corporate social initiatives are identified, ones that corporations undertake to contribute to a social issue, most commonly in the area of health, basic needs, injury prevention, community development, and the environment. They include Cause Promotions, Cause-Related Marketing, Corporate Social Marketing, Corporate Philanthropy, Community Volunteering, and Socially Responsible Business practices.

Corporations have a variety of resources to contribute to public agencies, regardless of the type of initiative:

- **Cash** (e.g., Washington Mutual providing grants for teacher education)
- **Expertise** (e.g., Dell employees working at a regional electronics recycling event)
- **Access to distribution channels** (e.g., 7-Eleven displaying litter prevention messages in stores)
- **In-kind services** (e.g., a home and garden store printing a utility brochure on water conservation)
- **Merchandise** (e.g., a bike helmet manufacturer contributing bike helmets to a community clinic serving low-income families)

Partnerships with public sector agencies range from those representing long-term relationships (e.g., American Express and the Statue of Liberty) to ones that are more short-term (e.g., McDonald's printing childhood immunization schedules on tray liners). In the following sections, the nature of each social initiative is described more fully, with examples of public/private partnerships for each. The point is for you to be aware of the many options that corporations have for giving and the potential benefits they are seeking in the relationship.

Corporate Cause-Promotion Partnerships

A cause promotion is one specifically intended to increase *awareness and concern* regarding a social issue (e.g., Levi Strauss & Co.

distributing leaflets about AIDS). It may also focus on persuading people to do something to help: *find out more* about an issue (e.g., Ben & Jerry's promoting their Web site to teach about factors that contribute to global warming), *donate their time* (e.g., *PARADE* magazine encouraging citizens to conduct bake sales to raise money for food banks), *donate money* (e.g., British Airways collecting change on flights from Europe to benefit UNICEF), *donate nonmonetary resources* (e.g., LensCrafters collecting eyeglasses for those in need), or *participate in an event* (e.g., Subway promoting the American Heart Association's annual walk). Persuasive communications are the major focus for this initiative. Corporations sometimes implement these campaigns on their own (e.g., The Body Shop promoting bans on animal testing), but more often they are conducted in partnership with nonprofit organizations and/or public sector agencies, as illustrated in the following example.

Universities and Johnson & Johnson

In 2002, the National Research Center for College and University Admissions surveyed over a million college-bound students and found that nursing ranked only ninth among all professions. This was of special concern due to the nation's critical shortage of nurses, considered by many to be one of the biggest problems facing the health care industry. By 2003, nursing had moved to fourth place, and a Vanderbilt University study specifically cited the Johnson & Johnson Campaign for Nursing as a key factor in raising awareness about this shortage and in promoting positive feelings about careers in nursing.⁵ In 2002, Johnson & Johnson launched a multiyear, nationwide effort to enhance the image of the nursing profession and worked in partnership with colleges and universities to recruit new nurses (see Figure 10.2). Scholarships were an important component of this effort, and as of May 2005, the company had raised \$7 million for fellowships, scholarships, and grants and provided links to a variety of resources for additional scholarships on their Web site, discovernursing.com.⁶



FIGURE 10.2 Johnson & Johnson's campaign materials for enhancing the image of the nursing profession

Corporate Cause-Related Marketing Partnerships

In cause-related marketing campaigns, a corporation commits to making a contribution or donating a percentage of revenues to a specific cause based on product sales. This link to product sales or transactions most distinguishes this initiative, which contains a mutually beneficial understanding and goal that the program will raise funds for the cause and has the potential to increase sales for the corporation. Partnerships with public sector agencies most often involve contributions to a foundation that supports a public agency or institution, as was the case in the following example.

A National Monument and American Express

The *Statue of Liberty*, a national monument managed by the U.S. National Park Service, can trace its support from *American Express* back to 1885 when the company raised money through a call to

employees to help fund the Statue's pedestal.⁷ Then, in the early 1980s, they launched the first and best-known national cause-related marketing campaign to fund the restoration work on the Statue in preparation for its centennial celebration in 1986. Instead of just writing a check to help with the cause, American Express tried a new approach, and the marketing world was watching. They pledged that every time cardholders used their cards, the company would make a contribution to a fund to restore the Statue of Liberty, as well as an additional contribution for every new card application. The campaign generated \$1.7 million in funds for the "the lady," a 27 percent increase in card usage, and a 10 percent jump in new card member applications.⁸

Then in 2003, they rolled out yet another fundraising initiative, pledging a minimum of \$3 million to make critical safety improvements so that the monument could again be accessible to the public.⁹ The Statue had been closed since September 11, 2001. The company pledged one cent for every purchase made on an American Express Card, up to \$2,500,000 from December 1, 2003 through January 31, 2004. A ceremony in August of 2004 celebrated the improvements, the reopening, and the contribution American Express made to help make this happen.

Corporate Social Marketing Partnerships

In corporate social marketing, a corporation supports the development and/or implementation of a behavior change campaign, most often to improve public health, safety, the environment, or community well-being. Behavior change is always the focus and intended outcome. Most commonly, social marketing campaigns are developed and implemented by professionals working in federal, state, and local public sector agencies. Support from private sector companies is often critical to increasing the reach and frequency of campaign messages, as it was in the following example.

Health Canada and Pampers

In 2000, Health Canada announced a new corporate partnership to help reduce the incidence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), the leading cause of death in Canada for infants between four weeks

and one year of age. Procter & Gamble's Pampers brand included a new message in English, French, and Spanish on their two smallest diapers. The message read, "Back to Sleep," the sleeping position that evidence has shown helps reduce the risk of SIDS. In addition, Pampers supported the creation of a promotional door hanger distributed through hospitals in Canada and Wal-Mart stores. Pampers also promoted SIDS awareness and the "Back to Sleep" message in their own television and print advertising campaigns (see Figure 10.3).

Pre- and post-campaign measures made it clear the partnership had bolstered the agency's impact over prior efforts. Survey results showed that awareness that the proper position to place a baby during sleep is on his or her back increased from 44 percent in 1999 to 66 percent in 2001. The number of professionals who advised putting the child to sleep on his or her back increased from 21 percent to 67 percent, and most importantly, the number of caregivers and parents that placed their babies on their back went from 41 percent to 69 percent.¹⁰

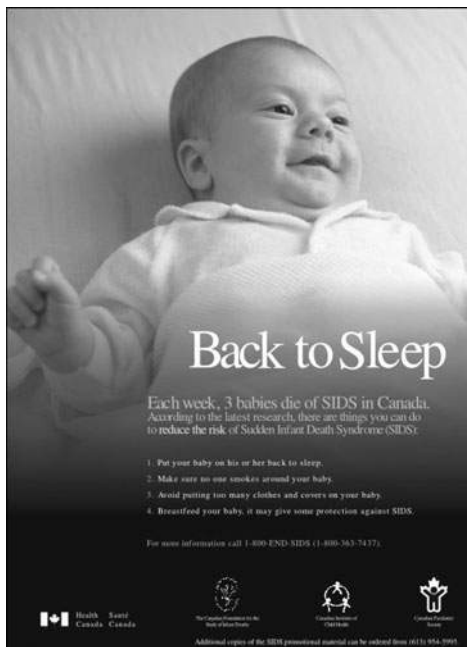


FIGURE 10.3 Promotional materials supported by Procter & Gamble
(Source: Health Canada. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Canada, 2006)

Corporate Volunteering Partnerships

Distinguishing corporate community volunteering as an initiative is not difficult, as it alone involves employees of a corporation personally volunteering at local organizations (e.g., at recycling centers) and for local cause efforts (e.g., removing ivy in public parks). Volunteer efforts may include employees volunteering their expertise, talents, ideas, and/or physical labor. Corporate support for employee volunteering ranges from programs that simply encourage their employees to give back to their communities to those representing a significant financial investment and display of recognition and reward. Types of volunteer partnership opportunities with the public sector are numerous, including those where volunteers from corporations can serve on citizen advisory committees (e.g., giving input to a five-year strategic plan for a school district), help staff community events (e.g., organizing a pancake breakfast at a city's summer celebration), host activities at corporate facilities (e.g., natural gardening workshops at nurseries), and staff phones for a special hotline (e.g., pediatricians from a medical group answering calls regarding benefits of childhood immunizations).

As you will read in the following example, tying volunteer work to the company's core business and products is always popular—for the company, the volunteers, and the recipients.

Public Schools and Washington Mutual

Washington Mutual—or WaMu, as it is known—is a national financial institution with a more than a 115-year legacy of contributing to communities where it does business. In 2003 alone, employees volunteered 44,000 times for a total of 184,000 hours of community service. Many employees volunteer for schools, organizing projects ranging from helping teachers in the classroom and sprucing up school grounds to conducting school supply drives. Employees worked on the projects either solo or in teams. One financial education activity is the WaMoula for L.I.F.E.[™] (Lessons in Financial Education) program, consisting of free, one-hour courses introducing young students to the concept of money and teenagers to the concept of credit management.

As an example, in Pasadena, California, WaMu volunteers arrived at Eugene Field Elementary wearing CAN! shirts, visors, and handmade medallions shaped like giant coins and made their presentation on financial literacy fun through rap songs (see Figure 10.4).¹¹



FIGURE 10.4 Washington Mutual employees volunteering in the classroom. (Photo courtesy of Washington Mutual © 2005, Washington Mutual, Inc. All rights reserved.)

Corporate Philanthropy

Corporate philanthropy is perhaps the most traditional of all corporate social initiatives, representing a direct contribution by a corporation to a cause, most often in the form of cash grants, donations, and/or in-kind services. Most agree that the character of corporate philanthropy has matured over the decades, primarily in response to internal and external pressures to balance concerns for shareholder wealth with expectations to demonstrate responsibility for communities that have contributed to the corporation's livelihood. As a result, contributions that support business objectives, such as the following one that showcases the company's products, are becoming the norm.

A National Park and General Electric Foundation

In May 2002, the GE Foundation, the philanthropic organization of the General Electric Company, announced a new program in cooperation with the National Park Service and the Yellowstone Park Foundation to restore the night sky over Yellowstone in Bozeman, Montana. The program, timed to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Old Faithful Inn, targeted the “sky glow” in the Old Faithful village. Based on an audit conducted with the National Park Service, GE agreed to donate 50 anti-glare fixtures, and the Foundation made a 2002 grant of nearly \$100,000 to support the overall effort to bring back the dark skies over Yellowstone. Over a three- to five-year period, support was expected to amount to \$200,000, including GE Foundation grants and in-kind donations. According to a GE spokesperson, “the media and headline writers liked the irony that a light bulb manufacturer would take the initiative to lower light levels.”¹²

Socially Responsible Business Practices

A key distinction for socially responsible business practice initiatives is a focus on activities that are discretionary, not those that are mandated by laws or regulatory agencies. They are also not ones that are simply expected, as with meeting moral or ethical standards. Corporations adopt and conduct these business practices and investments as a means to support social causes that improve community well-being and protect the environment. They can take many forms and often include partnerships and alliances with public sector agencies and programs, as illustrated in the following example.

Environmental Protection Agency and Motorola

Motorola’s environmental vision statement calls for the company to fully support sustainable use of the earth’s resources. Responsible business practices are concentrated in three major areas: protecting the land, protecting the air, and conserving water.¹³

Programs designed to protect the land include a program called Waste-Wise, a voluntary U.S. EPA program where organizations eliminate

costly municipal solid waste, benefiting their bottom line and the environment (see Figure 10.5). Since joining the WasteWise Program in 1994, Motorola's U.S. manufacturing sites are reported to have recycled almost 125,000 tons of waste. Motorola has also developed packaging reuse systems, such as the Compact™ system, eliminating over 140 tons of packaging waste each year with an estimated savings of approximately \$4.3 million annually.¹⁴ To contribute to protecting the air, in 1992 Motorola was the second electronics firm in the world to eliminate the use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) from manufacturing processes.¹⁵



FIGURE 10.5 Motorola participates on a voluntary basis in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's waste reduction program.

Partnerships with the Nonprofit Sector

Public sector partnerships with nonprofit organizations are even more typical and sometimes more mutually beneficial. This may be because they are often less controversial than those between private sector companies and public agencies (e.g., a fast food restaurant sponsoring an agency's nutrition education program). It may be because they more often represent common organizational missions (e.g., food banks and local health and human service agencies). It may also be

that public sector managers are more familiar with nonprofit partners and are more comfortable with approaching them.

In this next section, you will read about public/nonprofit partnerships that are helping a state reduce costs associated with their foster care system, convincing women to breastfeed exclusively for six months, increasing revenues on college campuses, and extending the reach of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. There is a marketing angle for each one.

Improving Programs and Services

Nonprofit organizations are great resources for technical expertise, expertise that can assist governmental agencies in improving programs and services and as a result increase participation and citizen satisfaction and even decrease costs, as illustrated in the following example.

Department of Family Services and Casey Family Programs

Even though in 2003 the state of Wyoming already exceeded national standards in moving children from foster care to adoption in less than two years and preventing children from re-entering the foster care system, they wanted to do better. They needed to. At that time they were placing youth in foster care at a rate six times higher than the national average, and it was costing the state \$32 million each year. In December of 2003, Governor Dave Freudenthal announced they would be forming what they considered to be an unprecedented partnership in the social services arena. They would be working with a national nonprofit foundation, Casey Family Programs, to improve services for abused and neglected children in the foster care system and for children at risk of abuse or neglect. Wyoming's Department of Family Services (DFS) Director explained the intent and hope for the partnership: "Casey has developed many of the best practices for helping children and families succeed, and we hope Casey can help DFS, communities and providers expand this capacity in Wyoming." Casey Family Programs is the largest national foundation whose sole mission is to provide and improve—and ultimately prevent the need for—foster care and will draw on its 40 years of experience and expert research and analysis to improve the state's child welfare practice and policy.¹⁶

Providing Talent

Nonprofit organizations can also bring tremendous and special talent to the table, and public agencies are fortunate when they are included in partnerships like the one in the following example.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Ad Council

Although many Americans are aware of the importance of breastfeeding, the United States has one of the lowest breastfeeding rates in the developed world. This is in spite of evidence from recent studies showing that babies who are breastfed are less likely to develop ear infections, respiratory illness, diarrhea, and childhood obesity. And it is behind the partnership between the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Women's Health, and the Ad Council's National Breastfeeding Awareness Campaign. The federal government set a goal to increase the number of mothers breastfeeding at six months postpartum to 50 percent by 2010. In 2005, we are only at about 33 percent. Campaign messages are intended to address confusion about the recommended duration and lack of belief that the added benefits are really that significant. All campaign ads drive home the message: "Babies were born to be breastfed" and highlight real, tangible benefits—with a little humor (see Figure 10.6).¹⁷

The Ad Council is a private, nonprofit organization that marshals volunteer talent from the advertising and communications industries to deliver critical messages to the American public, most often those sponsored by public agencies. For more than 60 years and with the help of some of the most talented advertising professionals in the country, the Ad Council has helped create some of our country's most memorable slogans, such as "Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk" and "A Mind Is a Terrible Thing to Waste."¹⁸

Sharing Distribution Channels

Nonprofit partners can add value to existing distribution channels and at the same time experience increased support for their own agency's

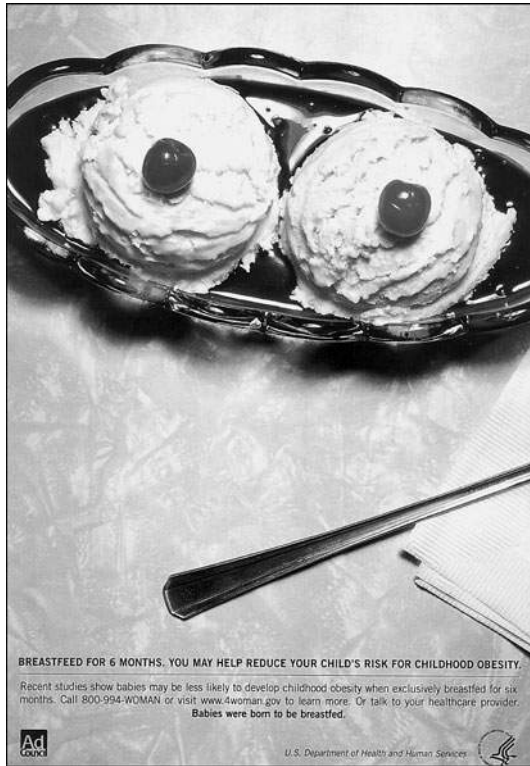


FIGURE 10.6 Poster for a breastfeeding campaign in partnership with the Ad Council

mission and goals. Being able to sign up to be an organ donor when getting a driver's license adds convenience for the potential donor and increases donors for nonprofit organizations supporting this cause. High school ID cards that have the names and phone numbers of local nonprofit organizational resources on the back add value to the card as well as the teens and the nonprofit agencies listed. Postal carriers across the nation get a chance to help the communities they see firsthand when they participate annually in a one-day food drive, collecting non-perishable food donations left by mailboxes and then delivering them to local community food banks, pantries, and shelters. They can also extend the reach and influence of governmental agency efforts (e.g., community health clinics posting HIV/AIDS awareness posters in churches).

The partnership described in the next example is a classic win-win, with university administrators happy with increased sales

and bottom-line profits, students finally satisfied with a socially responsible option, and a charity-run gourmet coffee company making inroads into a coveted distribution channel.

Universities and a Coffee Company

Pura Vida Coffee is a gourmet coffee company that is 100 percent charitably owned and 100 percent certified Fair Trade, Organic, and Shade-Grown. The company uses all of its resources to benefit at-risk children and their families in coffee-growing countries, and through its commitment to Fair Trade, it helps ensure that farmers are paid a living wage for their harvest and have access to affordable credit. Some would say, “All the world needed was another coffee company!” But this isn’t just another coffee company. It is one that combines the tough-minded focus of a business with the tender-hearted nature of a nonprofit, and as of the summer of 2005, over 70 campuses nationwide (many of which are public institutions) are now serving Pura Vida Coffee, providing both dining hall dispensers as well as standalone espresso kiosks (see Figure 10.7). According to the company’s president and co-founder John Sage, there has been an overwhelming positive response, which even makes



FIGURE 10.7 Pura Vida Coffee on college campuses

him hopeful that “the trend toward enlightened consumerism continues to grow and flourish and that the term *Caveat Emptor* (Buyer Beware) will give way to *Prosum Emptor* (Buyer Do Good).”¹⁹

Promoting Causes and Public Behavior Change

Nonprofit partners have a variety of resources that can be tapped to assist governmental agencies in promoting social causes and public behavior change. Volunteers certainly extend the reach, as they did in the following example.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the American Red Cross

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the American Red Cross seem like natural partners for an effort to increase public awareness about the importance of preparing for emergencies and to encourage individuals to take action. In 2004, Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge’s comments at an American Red Cross Annual Convention echoed this premise: “Homeland Security cannot begin and end at the doors of our federal department building in Washington, D.C. Washington can be expected to lead, but we cannot, nor should not, micro-manage the protection of our country. Instead, it must be a priority in every city, every neighborhood, and every home across America ... I’ve often said that for the homeland to be secure, our hometowns must be secure. So it follows that the Red Cross—dedicated to the protection of our communities for generations—is integral to this goal.”²⁰

Through this partnership, Homeland Security and the American Red Cross work with local, state, and federal government organizations, as well as the private sector, to highlight the importance of public emergency preparedness and present a variety of opportunities for citizens to learn more about preparing for emergencies, including natural disasters and potential terrorist threats. The Red Cross, with a nationwide network of nearly 900 locally supported chapters, one million volunteers, and 35,000 employees, brings critical resources to the table, as chapters across the country are already engaged in helping people create a family disaster plan so that each person knows what to do, where to go, and how to contact loved ones.²¹

Partnerships between Governmental Agencies

Although this is perhaps the most common and well-understood type of partnership, it is worthy of highlighting the potential marketing benefits. You may recall that these were included in Table 10.1, earlier in this chapter: increased clout, access to target markets, technical expertise, and access to distribution channels. A few examples may help make these seem real.

Washington State's Litter Prevention Campaign

Consider Washington State's litter prevention campaign mentioned in earlier chapters, the one that includes a hotline for citizens to call to report litterers. The campaign is managed by the state's Department of Ecology, but key to its success is the partnership with the Department of Licensing and the State Patrol. As you may recall, citizens who are reported for littering get a letter in the mail that describes the day, the time, the location, and the type of litter that a citizen saw being tossed out of their car or truck. Cooperation with the Department of Licensing is then critical to access the records of the registered owner of the vehicle. The letter then arrives in an envelope with the return address of the Washington State Patrol, printed on their letterhead, and the signature block reads "Washington State Patrol Chief." Imagine if instead the "criminal" got a letter from the Washington State Department of Ecology. Would it be opened as fast or at all?

New Zealand's Drowning Prevention Effort

It is hard to imagine a successful drowning prevention effort (anywhere in the world) that wouldn't include a coalition of governmental agencies. In New Zealand, with one of the highest rates of drowning in the Western world, a strategy to decrease drownings includes participation from a suite of governmental agencies as well as nonprofit organizations and private corporations, each providing unique areas of expertise as well as resources. Governmental agencies alone include

representatives from the Maritime Safety Authority, city councils, schools, public health, and internal affairs.²² This is not surprising, given the need for an understanding of governmental policies and processes, knowledge about drownings incidents and water safety, access to teaching core water safety skills in schools, political influence, and of course, funding.

Difficulties and Risks in Partnerships

These partnership examples may have left you feeling hopeful and inspired. Many of you, however, have experiences or have heard from others that the picture isn't always so rosy. This is true, and this section's brief discussion of the potential pitfalls for your agency may help you see them coming. After these warnings are posted, you will read in the following section about strategies to avoid some of these pitfalls and minimize others.

Regardless of the type of partnerships (public/private, public/non-profit, public/public), there are universal realities that impact your net gains from the effort. First, they take more *time* than going it alone—time for finding a partner, getting to know each other, joint decision-making, and approvals. It may have sounded like it happened overnight, but developing strategies with Pampers to support the Back to Sleep campaign no doubt required additional research, formal agreements, and coordination for Health Canada. Second, as with most relationships, success will include *compromise*. A company providing in-kind printing services, for example, may be willing to do this only if their contribution is acknowledged on the front of the brochure using their logo and brand colors, rather than being briefly mentioned in a closing paragraph. A third major downside is the potential that your corporate or nonprofit partner may subsequently have “fallen from grace” or be the subject of *negative publicity*, even for some minor deviation. No doubt this has the potential to cast a dark shadow over your agency as well, as it would on the Environmental Protection Agency if Motorola violated some major hazardous waste disposal guideline.

There are additional, more unique potential concerns with each of the relationship types. Regarding the *private sector*, citizens seem to be “naturally” cynical towards these gestures of goodwill. It often seems their first reaction is, “Why are they doing this?” Their next

one is, “If they really cared about the issue and the cause, why do they make me mail back my box tops or use a coupon to give to the cause?” The reality is that public partnerships with private sector corporations will have to pass the “smell test” with potential consumers and dissipate any thought that the company is just trying to advertise their way out of something (e.g., a partnership between a children’s videogame corporation and a health department to reduce childhood obesity). In relationships with *nonprofit organizations*, there are additional potential concerns: the public agency may be flooded with requests from other, similar nonprofit organizations, communications may be harder to control given the national networks of some nonprofits, and agency resources may be more drained because those from the nonprofit may be more scarce. When partnering with *other governmental agencies*, the major downside can be the additional time and effort often required for approval and decision making. Though this was noted for partnerships in general, it may be especially true given the more political, bureaucratic, and complex nature of this sometimes tangled network.

A Marketing Approach to Winning Great Partners and Reducing Risks

The following ten recommendations from *Corporate Social Responsibility* (Kotler and Lee) have been summarized to not only address the aforementioned potential risks of partnerships but to also make it more likely you will find great partners and realize their full potential benefits.²³ To illustrate each, we will use a hypothetical state health department’s quest for partners to assist in increasing timely childhood immunization rates. Notice the application throughout of fundamental marketing principles, from determining a clear focus on objectives to approaching and treating potential partners with a customer mindset to developing and implementing targeted and effective campaigns.

- #1 *Start by developing a list of additional resources that your agency needs in order to meet a specific program’s goals and objectives, resources such as increased funding, technical expertise, increased visibility, enhanced distribution channels, credible endorsements, and others.*

Assume a state public health department has a goal to increase the percentage of children who are fully immunized on time by the age of six from 72 percent to 80 percent in a two-year time frame, an increase of almost ten percent. Assume as well that rates have hovered around 70 percent for the past five years. A work group composed of state and county health department representatives believes that they have great materials and strategies (e.g., a direct mail campaign that reaches parents of children one month prior to the due date for their next immunization) but that they need additional funding (approximately \$200,000) to implement the program statewide. The legislature has indicated they want the health department to explore partnerships with private and nonprofit organizations to help make this happen.

- #2 *Identify a short list of organizations that these social issues might have a connection with, something that relates to their business mission, products and services, customer base, employee passions, communities where they do business, and/or corporate giving history.*

The work group first makes a list of organizations they think might have some interest in the issue of childhood immunizations and might be likely to provide financial or in-kind support for the mailing. With a keen eye on the potential partner's mission, customer base, and any prior relationships, initial categories include financial institutions, grocery stores, retail stores, foundations, and other select governmental agencies. Within each category, five to ten organizations are identified, ones the team believes might be a good match. They are especially concerned with eliminating any they think would be controversial or raise the "cynical" brow of a parent (e.g., a drug manufacturer or toy store).

- #3 *Approach potential partners to find out more about their priority social issues and potential interest in your program issue.*

The health department then commissions a local research firm to conduct brief telephone surveys with 75 organizations on the potential list, exploring priority social issues that their organization supports as well as interest in childhood immunizations. The decision to hire a research firm to do the interviews was based on scarce staff resources as well as the perception that

corporate and foundation managers might be more open with a research firm and not as suspicious that it was a sales call. Based on these findings, let's assume that 20 organizations appear to have at least some interest in the issue and indicated they are willing to discuss sponsorships further with a representative from the health department.

#4 Listen to their business needs.

At this point, members of the work group meet face-to-face with decision-makers at eighteen of the organizations and have telephone interviews with the other two who are located out of state. Topics of these subsequent conversations include acknowledgement by the health department that they understand there is some interest in supporting childhood immunizations but that first they are interested in knowing what business goals and objectives their organization is currently focused on, with specific attention to those that are marketing related, ones such as interest in building their brand identity, enhancing community goodwill, or increased visibility with specific target markets.

#5 Share with them the social issues your organization supports, the initiatives you are considering or engaged in, and your strengths and resources. Find out which, if any, they find most appealing.

During this same meeting, health department representatives then share program materials and the history and outcomes of the program. They show samples of the specific materials included in the mailings that the state is trying to find sponsors for: posters, charts, refrigerator magnets, and immunization cards. They then ask which, if any, might be of interest for sponsorship and what conditions in a proposal would make it more likely they would be interested, conditions such as funding levels and type of acknowledgement for the organization's contribution.

#6 Prepare and submit a proposal to those most interested in supporting your effort. Present several optional initiatives for potential support, ones that are the best match for their stated business and marketing needs. Be sure to include in this proposal specifics regarding what you won't be able to offer.

Assume, then, that five of the twenty organizations expressed interest in having the health department prepare and submit a proposal for their consideration, a proposal that would include specifics on sponsorship levels, recognition for the company, timing, number of parents reached by the materials, and length of the agreement. The health department will also include guidelines covering things they will not be able to do, such as providing organizational endorsement for the company or its products or altering content of materials.

#7 *Participate in developing an implementation plan.*

Of the twenty on the short list, it is realistic to imagine that perhaps only three to five organizations end up accepting their proposal, and even this may be after a few points are negotiated, such as the number of years they can commit to the sponsorship. Health department staff members then work more closely and directly with those in the sponsoring organization who will be involved in the day-to-day tasks related to the partnership and who need to be aware of deadlines for printing and copy approvals.

#8 *Offer to handle as much of the administrative legwork as possible.*

Even though the health department now has formal agreements, key to satisfaction and a long-term partnership (rather than a short-term relationship) will be the actual amount of additional time and resources the project ends up requiring of the sponsor. In this scenario, this might mean that the department would agree to have printed materials picked up from the corporation's print facility or deliver brochures to the grocery store partner interested in displaying the immunization schedules in their stores once a year.

#9 *Assist in measuring and reporting outcomes.*

Fortunately, in this scenario, the health department has a biannual survey they conduct with parents to assess satisfaction with mailings, awareness regarding content of materials, and changes in immunization behaviors. All partners were aware of this ahead of time and then were assured they would have results on parental awareness of their support for the program.

#10 Provide recognition for the corporation's contribution, in ways preferred by the company.

Two of the three major partners are satisfied with the recognition they will receive from having their logo prominently displayed on the materials and a mention of their contribution in a health department publication. One of the partners, however, does not want their name on the materials because they felt this would bring too many additional requests their way, but they were glad to be mentioned in the publication with the narrower distribution.

Summary

This chapter has been about stretching the limits of partnerships, from good to great and from a possibility to a reality.

You read about mutually beneficial public/private partnerships that helped increase water supplies in Jordan, encouraged more students to choose a career in nursing, provided needed funding for a national monument, persuaded parents and caregivers to reduce the risks of SIDS by putting infants on their backs to sleep, brought professional bankers to high school classrooms to teach financial management to students, and reduced waste headed for landfills. You read about public/nonprofit partnerships that are likely to decrease costs for foster care, increase breastfeeding, increase revenues for universities and colleges, and increase the number of households that have a family disaster plan. You read about public/public partnerships that are helping decrease litter and prevent drownings.

Finally, you read about potential risks and how a marketing approach can help minimize downsides and assist you to find, negotiate, and win with partners.