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# Lessons Learned for Charitable Giving

Utilize cause marketing strategies and charitable donation accounts to make giving a reality



**CUNA  
MUTUAL  
GROUP**

By John Pesh

With a 127% increase in Charitable Donation Account (CDA) investments in the past year alone, credit unions are seeing the value in a CDA to earn more trust, more loyalty, and possibly more towards the bottom line.\* Take a moment to think how much it would benefit your community, and your credit union, to increase donations to your chosen 501(c)(3) charity or foundation or the National Credit Union Foundation. Cause marketing strategies and charitable donation accounts are tools you can use to help.

A CDA is a professionally managed investment portfolio following [rules](#) set by the National Credit Union Administration in 2013, which has the potential to earn more than traditional credit union investments, and allow your credit union to retain up to 49 percent of the earnings for your bottom line.

Your CDA investment can work much harder for your credit union (and community) if you follow some basic cause marketing strategies, such as these five:

1. **Believe wholeheartedly in the cause.** Connect with a cause that your board, management and employees are passionate about, giving everyone a reason to be enthusiastic about participating in fundraising and other volunteer activities.
2. **Align with a non-profit that supports your mission.** Know your community's greatest social concerns and build partnerships, perhaps even branch by branch (as long as the overall campaign is coordinated centrally).
3. **Forge a formal partnership, including marketing.** Make your cause marketing a formal partnership and work together with the non-profit on specific goals. Share one another's marketing platforms to increase awareness of what you're doing together. Focus on social media to tap into those who are active in the cause you've chosen and prompt other organizations to add their weight and credibility to your cause marketing efforts.
4. **Do more than donate money.** A key to differentiating your credit union is by engaging your entire staff in volunteer activities to augment monetary donations. This shows that your interest in the charity is sincere. It also leverages your best asset – your employees – as goodwill ambassadors.
5. **Show a clear impact.** After you've identified an important need, written a clear strategy for meeting that need, and engaged your resources, including your staff, document your results through various channels including articles, social media posts, video and more, detailing information such as how much money was raised (comparing to previous years, when applicable), number of volunteers with photos from the event, and comments or thanks received from community members. This can be the cornerstone of your cause marketing efforts – nothing speaks more eloquently or persuasively than positive results.

Together, cause marketing and a CDA can give your credit union new ways to have a bigger impact on your community to help further establish your credit union's status as a leader and reputable place to do business.

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