

CSI as a brand, brand building in development

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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For many non-profit and non-government organisations (NPO/NGOs), marketing is a swear word. Generally there is also little money for marketing in these organisations, and even in corporates CSI practitioners often feel left out of marketing. However, CSI itself is a brand, so there needs to be a shift from CSI being viewed as asking for something to what it offers.



These were some of the sentiments that kicked off the Trialogue *Making CSI Matter* conference panel on brand building in development. The conference took place at The Wanderers last week. Making up the panel were Paul Pereira, WHAM! Media, Mike Silver, MD Stretch Experiential Marketing, and Lauren Turnbull, CSR and Sponsorships Manager, KFC South Africa.

Turnbull told delegates that KFC had successfully grown a brand out of the Add Hope campaign. "Part of the reason for this success is the alignment of Add Hope to what the mother brand, KFC offers and communicates to its target audience. In the case of Add Hope it is feeding children. The premise is that if the CSI campaign is aligned to the brand it helps people understand it," she explained.

Communications must have a strong CSI purpose

A brand wants to associate itself with doing something good and not just making a profit. That's great, says Pereira, but everyone is doing it. So how do you make yourself heard above the clutter? "It is about your purpose. Is the communication we're doing helping the people or about the cause we are involved in? Does it attract other support? It cannot be so-so, but must be specific. Therefore, why are you supporting a particular school and not another school? Communications must have a strong CSI purpose," he says.

"A lot of people in this room are selling well and they are all competing with each other," says Silver. He encouraged NPO/NGOs not to avoid the new forms of communication or disruptive tactics at conferences and events. "Many agencies also do pro bona work and often this work becomes prestigious and award winning. Many NPO/NGOs have benefitted from great work from an agency so approach an agency. Agencies are hungry and you have a commodity they want."

The core message must be the same in 20 years' time

Apart from different channels of communication there are different reasons why an NPO/NGO must communicate, says Pereira. "Reasons include for support, to change behavior, or as an advocacy group, but the purpose of the CSI remains the main reason to communicate. No one opens an NPO/NGO because they are a marketer."

Clear communication from a CSI campaign helps NPOs and NGOs understand what the mother brand is about and therefore assists them in approaching the right brand for the right purpose. "For example KFC is about feeding. The brand does not provide infrastructure. Therefore NGO/NPOs involved in feeding and not in infrastructure should approach us," says Turnbull.

She says brand building is a long journey during which time you must remain true and consistent to your brand. Pereira agrees saying your core message must be the same in 20 years' time as it is now. "It must last forever even if the nature of your organisation changes. Anglo American started brand building in the 50s through putting out content. The slow dripping of credibility is now at a level that while they are no longer the biggest funder, they still outrank everyone in perceptions."

For a brand to take on cause marketing can be risky

KFC is a strong brand and then it built Add Hope, says Turnbull. "If anything goes wrong with Add Hope, the main KFC brand is affected. For example is a child gets food poisoning it is not the NPO/NGO that is blamed but KFC. Therefore we do a full audit on the NPO/NGO we want to take on and do take on and they sign a contract. We also assist in up skilling them on reporting. KFC donate the funds to Add Hope and reports on where that funding is going to its customers. Therefore our NPO/NGOs have to report to us on how the money is used. The money trail audit is very important."

She says there are more corporates in the CSI space today, as it is part of the score card for business, but many are realising that good CSI does make a difference to their business. Sliver agrees, but says too often they battle to get their clients to see the benefits of CSI, while at the same time they find many CSI practitioners or organisations do not see the need to build a brand.

NPO/NGOs to be cheekier, to up their game

Pereira believes NPO/NGOs could be cheekier. "Go to your supporter or funder and ask for your logo to be at their event, television commercial, newsletter, etc. They will probably like the idea."

Turnbull believes NPO/NGOs need to up their game. "While I understand that resources are an issue when it comes to marketing, NPOs operate in a market that is very saturated, and so a good proposal that communicates what the NPO does, its core purpose, its strategy and how the partnership will benefit the funder and the NPO."

A visual depiction of what a NPO does works well for her she says. "For example an infographic. All the time while doing all of this, you must build the mother brand".

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Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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