

Creativity Can Lead To Better Health.....Care Reform

by

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Today's principles of new media marketing are many, but a common thread connects them all. For the purposes of this paper I will use the steps in the creative process outlined in an article by Roger Von Oech, titled, *A Whack on the Side of the Head*. The author divides the creative process into four distinct roles which are meant to differentiate between the different thinking processes involved in being creative. They are; the Explorer, the Artist, the Judge and the Warrior. While working on a creative strategic plan for the nonprofit, Campaign for Better Health Care (CBHC), I was able to utilize Oech's four creative personas to help guide myself and my team through the process of drafting a plan. Putting myself into character allowed me to think and generate ideas more freely. And admittedly when a great idea presented itself that seemed obvious; I was tempted to whack myself on the side of my head.

The first of this cast of critical thinkers, the Explorer, embodies the act of performing due diligence. "Your Explorer is your role for searching for new information and resources."¹ Because our group's goal was to create new strategic ideas allowing CBHC to increase donations by building a broader general awareness of their activities and goals; we had to take an in depth look at who CBHC is and what are the messages they were currently trying to impart via various social media channels. Getting to know

¹ Roger Von Oech, *The Student Returns to the Creativity Teacher, A Whack on the Other Side of the Head*, (New York Warner Books, 1998) pg 178

and understand who our client is, what their organizations mission is, and who their target audiences are, is a vital first step. But results of our search were disappointing; CBHC did not appear on the first ten pages of a Google search, or on the first five pages of videos on YouTube, when health care reform' was entered as the search topic. Detailed background information was provided on a very thorough questionnaire outlining the CBHC's current marketing efforts via several social media channels, and their desired goals for 2010-11. The insights on the questionnaire, online searches for the phrase 'health care reform,' studying the CBHC's website, and a thorough look at competing organizations allowed our team to pinpoint three new audience segments who we thought would be eager to become involved and donate money.

The second character, called the Artist, whose role is to "turn the resources found by the Explorer into new ideas,"² brought inspiration to our first team brainstorming session. We realized that CBHC was using all of the key social media outlets, such as YouTube for videos, Facebook for members and volunteers, Twitter for events, but all without much impact. We all agreed that a key strategy, being cognizant of working for a nonprofit with no budget, was to enhance the CHBC's existing marketing campaign in order to reengage people who have donated in the past as well as reaching new members that could be moved to make future donations.

Another key idea in our strategy was to begin to position CBHC as a Thought Leader on the subject of health care reform. They needed to becoming known as an authority and an expert in their field by "delivering compelling content to their audiences

² Von Oech, pg 178

that would get them to take action.”³ But compelling content cannot be created without a broad understanding of who they want to help. Our team created three new audience personas to reach out to; Gen Y or eighteen to twenty nine year old, called the Underserved, working parents with a top priority being the health and safety of their children, the Overworked, and middle class adults, in transition or unemployed, without healthcare, referred to as the Overlooked. These three personas are already savvy social media consumers; so the next step, was to create an interactive dialogue that will move them to action, specifically, donating to CBHC.

Now our team knew who we wanted to reach out to, as Artists we had come up with great new ideas to help CBHC, but now what? It was time to bring out the third cast member in the creative thinking theatre, the Judge. Playing the Judge, each member of the team analyzed what we knew; we “evaluated the merits of each idea, and began deciding exactly what we could do with them.”⁴ Getting back together our team quickly realized we were just rehashing CBHC’s existing marketing plan, we were not be innovative. We felt stuck, thinking everything that could be done, had been done. Our creative momentum began to grind to a halt adding tension and frustrations that distracted us.

Time to try something new. The team went back into free flowing thought mode as we had done earlier as a class exercise. Remembering a chapter written by Anthony Westin, title Getting Started, we used free writing to get out of our “mental box,” by

³ David Meerman Scott, Know the Goals and Let Content Drive Action, [The New Rules of Marketing and PR](#), (John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 2007, 2009) pg 37

⁴ Von Oech, pg 178

“inviting exotic associations”⁵ attributed to the ideas we already had. For the We knew that the Gen Y persona was incredibly linked in to all things digitally interactive and love creating and posting videos. The idea was born to create a video competition.

Keeping the idea of building awareness in mind, the team took on the fourth role of Warrior⁶, where we put our idea into an actionable plan. For the Underserved, we created an online competition for YouTube where a speech by a politician on health care reform is translated by a Gen Y’er into their own understanding and language. Via a text generated donation of five dollars, the audience and participants can register to submit their video. And after all submissions were posted, the audience could again text in their votes for the best submissions, with the winners posted on YouTube. Now the team’s creative energy was flowing.

For the Overworked, we decided online social ‘key influencers’ needed to be cultivated in order to reach parents on a non chaotic, non threatening media platform. Blogs solely directed at and engaging to parents is the perfect stage on which to build trust with honest content. CBHC can initiate more word of mouth marketing by “learning to work within a conversation so people are talking about them.”⁷ Knowing they are surrounded by like minded individuals, parents feel free to ask questions and share their answers and opinions with their family and peers. And of course offer additional information on all subjects on the company’s website. To maintain our objective of increasing donations we provided an incentive in the form of a quality promotional tote

⁵ Anthony Weston, Getting Started, Creativity for Critical Thinkers, (New York: Oxford University Press. 2007)pg 12

⁶ Von Oech, pg 178

⁷ Andy Sernovitz, What Is Word of Mouth Marketing?, Word of Mouth Marketing, (Chicago: Kaplan, 2006) pg 5

bag made in fun colors made of recycled materials available thru a direct links placed in blog entries, to the CBHC website.

For the third of our targeted audience personas, the Overlooked, we know this group is also dialed in digitally but looking at the Web from a more mature view. They are, especially during the current recession, more often actively using social media to help with life transitions. Once again drawing on the plan to establish CBHC as a trusted authority figure, and once again being mindful of the nonprofit business model, we created another variation of enhancing their video campaign. In this video the screen is split in two, on the left, again the video of politician speaking about health care reform which pauses after a statement and on the right another video of perhaps a CBHC director or another trusted authority figure, again translating the statement into language any parent can relate to. An emotional plea such as “to help ensure health care is always available to keep your family safe, help the CBHC work toward reform by donating.....”

Coming together as a team to create a strategic social media marketing plan for a nonprofit organization was not without its challenges. Work ethics and schedules greatly differ and were more often than not, out of synch. But when we made the time to meet, each member was able to draw on their newly acquired knowledge and contribute creatively. What we found that truly improved our creative thought process was the free thinking exercise. It gave anyone who needed it, more confidence to generate ideas knowing they would most likely be transformed several times before they were accepted by the group. I found that putting on the hat for each of the four roles Roger Van Oech created, provided me with a well more structured frame of mind from which to generate

my creative thinking and planning. Having the four steps to follow made overcoming any mental blocks effortless. I will forever be thinking of myself as an explorer, an artist, a judge and a warrior, if the repeated whacks upside my head don't cause any lasting damage.

Works Cited

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