Nonprofit Organizations and the Art of Fundraising

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In our society, giving to charity is seen as a good thing. Yet, when money is scarce, charitable giving is usually the first to be cut from a monthly budget. So what keeps donors giving to nonprofit organizations? USA Communications Director for Compassion International Tim Glenn suggests, “Organizations can be really good at getting money directly to their beneficiaries, but if the program isn't good, the money is wasted” (T. Glenn, Personal Communication February 17, 2016). Donors want the assurance that the funds they are providing for an organization are not wasted. The following study will examine the ins and outs of fundraising strategies and will help provide an understanding of how organizations persuade people to donate, regardless of what their circumstances may be.

Nonprofit organizations are established to bring about societal change and benefit. Many people have probably given to an organization that is advocating and taking steps to change or benefit something about which they are passionate. Nonprofit success is not possible without fundraising and advocacy. The number of organizations and the amount of money that nonprofits generate each year makes this an important topic. According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics, there are over 1.5 million nonprofit organizations in the United States (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2016, “Quick Facts About Nonprofits,”). According to the Foundation Center, foundations gave over $50.9 million in aid in the year 2012 (Foundation Center, 2014, “Key Facts on U.S. Foundations,”). The goal of this study is to understand the strategies and tactics nonprofit organizations utilize to persuade people to donate money.

Literature Review

For-profit and nonprofit organizations differ greatly in mission and approach to a task accomplishment. The denotative definitions of a nonprofit and a for-profit organization explain the key differences. According to *Merriam-Webster Dictionary,* a nonprofit is defined as “not existing or done for the purpose of making a profit.” According to *The Free Legal120 Dictionary Online*, there is not simply one type of nonprofit, there are many, such as credit unions, civic leagues, recreational clubs, fraternal orders, societies, labor, agricultural and horticulture organizations, small insurance companies, and organizations of past or present members of the armed forces. There are many examples of nonprofit organizations. In New Zealand, for example, the majority of food and services are marketed by private enterprises in business to earn profit. The New Zealand government also provides the same services to the communities at large. These programs are funded by taxes. Other than the markets and the government-run programs, there are many products and services produced by individuals and households combining their trades in order to make surpluses. “While these institutions may make profits (surpluses), they do not have profit-making as a goal, do not distribute any profits to their members, and are often reliant on the voluntary provision of free labor and resources to operate successfully. As such, they have been broadly described as nonprofit institutions” (Statistics New Zealand, 2007, pg. 18). This example of a food program in New Zeeland helps us to understand that nonprofit organizations exist to meet a need in society.

According to *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, a for-profit organization is different. These organizations are defined as “existing or done for the purpose of making a profit”. While these definitions do illustrate a broad difference, there are more differences in the way that employment happens and the way in which finances are handled. For example, one difference between a for-profit and a nonprofit organization are their tax codes. Nonprofit organizations can qualify for tax-exempt status. Most nonprofits in the United States will fall under section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code. There are more than two-dozen different categories of income producing yet not-for-profit organizations that qualify for tax exemption under this section. Along with the organization itself having tax exemptions, any donations made to a nonprofit by an individual donor are tax-deductible. For-profit organizations do not qualify for these same tax codes. It is important to take into consideration these tax codes because nonprofits can use the tax deduction as a way to encourage people to give money. Research in the *Stanford Environmental Law Journal* says, “A tax benefit provides a ‘marginal’ conservation benefit to the public” (Wolf, 2012, p.324). The tax codes are important to fundraising for nonprofit organizations, but they are not the only area of importance to examine when studying nonprofits and for-profits.

The way an organization is structured highlights another difference. Researchers Hull and Lio (2006) structured a three-point model for the evaluation of organizational structure and policy. These three points are vision, strategic constraints, and financial constraints. Each of these three points is a definite indicator of differences between a for-profit and a nonprofit organization.

First, vision sets nonprofit and for-profits apart from each other specifically with their scope of impact (Hull & Lio, 2006). Each nonprofit has a group of people that it is targeting and a role for society that it is trying to fulfill. For example, groups that are focused on benefiting war veterans will stay focused on war veterans rather than focusing on feeding the homeless. A for-profit, on the other hand, is more likely to cross societal borders to sell its product. A for-profit is not necessarily held to a certain scope of impact.

The second point in the three-point model is strategic constraints (Hull & Lio, 2006). Stakeholders can give a nonprofit many constraints that enables the organization itself to complete some societal duties. The stakeholder’s desire is to keep the company focused on the vision and benefiting those people who are within their scope of impact (Hull & Lio, 2006). A stakeholder is different from a stockholder in a for-profit company. “The word *stakeholder,* coined in an internal memorandum at the Stanford Research Institute in 1983, refers to those groups without whose support the organization would cease to exist” (Freeman & Reed, 1983, p.89). Therefore, it is clear that stakeholders play a significant role in all of the decisions that a nonprofit makes. Stockholders, on the other hand, are people who invest in the company and are primarily responsible for the business that is handled within the for-profit organization (Hull & Lio, 2006). While stakeholders and stockholders are different, they have similar duties. They are responsible for the progression of the organization (Freeman & Reed, 1983). For a for-profit organization, satisfying the stockholders is a comparatively simple matter of maximizing the wealth of the company.

The third and final difference according to Hull and Lio (2006) between for-profit and nonprofit organizations are the financial constraints that each faces. The primary goals of a for-profit organization are to increase its financial value and increase profits. This makes the vision and the goal of the organization very clear. Employees know what their job is when they enter into a for-profit organization. They are required to help the organization make more money. Nonprofits, on the other hand, cannot be as focused on revenue. This is where the financial constraints can really inhibit the vision of a nonprofit. Not only does a nonprofit have to be focused on the impact that it is making on society, but it must focus on providing a positive cash flow (Sansing, 2000).

To summarize, there are many factors that separate a for-profit and a nonprofit organization. For-profits are solely focused on gaining profit while nonprofits are focused on what impact they can have on society. The complicated side to running a nonprofit is that money still has to be a focus of nonprofit organizations. “The value of raising and obtaining funds has become urgent within the field of nonprofit organizations because there is an increasing competition to obtain donors and government funding” (Kaplan, 2001, p. 353).

Along with understanding the difference between nonprofit and for-profit organizations it is beneficial in this study to understand how persuasion works. In Aristotle’s *The Art of Rhetoric* (1991), he provides an idea of what persuasion is. According to Aristotle, there are three methods by which one can be persuasive: ethos, pathos, and logos. Ethos is utilized when “the speech is given in such a way as to render the speaker worthy of credence” (pg. 74). It is the type of speech that is focused on persuading the audience by appealing to their worth and character. Pathos is “proofs from the disposition of the audience…produced whenever they are induced by the speech into an emotional state” (pg. 75). It is the type of speech focused on persuading an audience by appealing to a certain emotion. Logos is “proof achieved by the speech, when we demonstrate either a real or apparent persuasive aspect of each particular matter” (pg. 75). When a speaker uses Logos they would be using fact and logic to persuade the audience. Understanding these three areas of persuasion will serve as a springboard into understanding how nonprofits use strategy and tactics through the avenues of ethos, pathos, and logos.

This study will examine two specific nonprofit organizations that are dedicated to lifting people out of poverty, one international organization and one local organization. Two different types of nonprofits are examined in an effort to provide a better understanding of how different organizations solicit donors. The international nonprofit organization studied is Compassion International, headquartered in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The local organization studied is The Hub: Urban Ministries, headquartered in Shreveport, Louisiana.

Even though there are differences in operating an international organization and a local organization, fundraising is the key to the advancement of both organizations. In order to study how The Hub and Compassion International solicit donors, one must understand the different types of fundraising methods and strategies. There are two primary strategies that nonprofit organizations use. According to Scherhag & Boenigk (2013), the organization can choose whether to treat all donors the same or to give certain donors special treatment. More specifically, these two strategies are called equal treatment - otherwise known as the transaction-based approach- and donor priority strategy, otherwise known as, relationship fundraising. These two strategies encompass many different approaches to fundraising (Sargent, 2001; Scherhag & Boenigk, 2013).

Equal treatment, or the transaction-based approach, is one of the two strategies for fundraising. In a transaction-based approach, the organization is more than likely driven by the initial returns that might be expected from each fundraising event. “The focus of transaction-based fundraising is soliciting single donations” (Sargent, 2013, p.25). For example, one might go to a concert or a charity event where an organization is taking one-time donations to help raise money for the organization. When someone gives money to that cause, the person is not committing to give a certain amount of money every week or come to volunteer. It is simply a one-time donation.

That is ultimately the focus of transaction-based fundraising. The orientation and the approach that organizations go about when they are planning a fundraising event is the focus on urgency of the cause (Sargent, 2013). When marketing a one-time fundraising, event there is more than likely going to be urgency within that campaign. Along with these characteristics, the equal treatment strategy has no emphasis on customer service for the donor when she gives, the donor will not receive anything in return. For example, there is a Christian conference called Passion sponsored by Passion City Church in Atlanta, Georgia. Each year there an offering that is taken for an organization known as "The End It Movement". This movement is working to end human trafficking. A bucket is passed around to all in attendance and everyone has an opportunity to put some money in the bucket. This is an example of equal treatment because an individual giving $10.00 is no more recognized than the person who gave $100.00.

The donor priority strategy, also known as relationship fundraising, is the second strategy that organizations use. This strategy focuses on the relationship between the donor and the organization. "The concept of benefit accruing to both parties is fundamental to the success of this strategy" (Sargent, 2013, p.27). The goal of this strategy is the retention of the donor. This is the complete opposite of the transaction-based approach, because the goal is to ultimately maintain a relationship with the donor that is giving to the organization. The way that organizations measure success in this strategy is the lifetime value of the donor. Every approach that an organization takes to fundraising within this strategy is based on the relationship between the donor and the organization.

The time frame of relationship fundraising affects the amount of money given because it is a long-term relationship. When an organization practices an equal treatment strategy, the goal is to obtain as much money as possible from the donors in order to "break even" (Sargent, 2013). This means that in a transaction-based approach there is a certain goal that an organization would like to meet within one donation from multiple people. As in the case with the Passion Conference and the End It Movement the goal at a certain conference could be to raise $20,000 in order to rescue a certain number of people from human trafficking. In contrast, a relationship focused fundraising strategy does not require that there is a "break even" point within the first time donors give; this means that the goal may be to raise $20,000 over a course of one year and multiple donations from the same group of people. This group of donors and the employees of the organization collecting the money would have a more of a relationship than the donors who participated in the transaction-based strategy of fundraising.

Along with these characteristics, the customer service in the relationship strategy is different from that of the equal treatment strategy. The donors are treated with much care. The organization will usually go out of its way to get to know the donor, to keep in touch, to make sure that the donor is 100% satisfied because they want the donors to be lifetime donors (Sargeant, 2013).

Some organizations practice relationship fundraising which use marketing tools like “membership programs” (Bhattacharya, 1998, p.31). “This strategy is an approach of many organizations such as art museums, YMCA, and symphonies. The idea of this approach is to pull in donors and keep them donating for a lifetime. If organizations can give donors an incentive or a reward for giving, more people are going to be likely to continue giving” (Bhattacharya, 1998, p.32).

Most scholars believe that donor priority strategy is the most effective strategy to fundraising. Scholars Scherhag and Boenikg (2013) researched the two strategies and came to the conclusion that donor priority strategy is more effective. They concluded that the relationship between donors and the organization out-performs less relationship-oriented strategies and ultimately leads to higher fundraising performance (Scherhag & Boenikg, 2013). Scholars believe that donor priority strategy is most effective because it is relationship-oriented. The organizations are able to build lasting relationships and can hold donors for a long period of time (Sargeant, 2013).

It is true that many organizations use both strategies at different times. In considering Compassion International and The Hub: Urban Ministries, it is obvious that there are certain events that require both to use equal treatment strategy and the acceptance of one time donations. Additionally, there are times where these organizations present an opportunity to donate regularly or, in the case of Compassion, sponsor a child. All of this information is relevant and valuable to the advancement of this project. However, unlike most previous research conducted, this study examines why funding for nonprofit organizations is so important and how organizations obtain donations. It is important to understand that there is a clear difference between for-profit and nonprofit organizations in order to understand why nonprofit organizations rely so heavily on donations. Unlike previous research, this study will look specifically at the two organizations previously mentioned with the intent of gaining a deeper understanding of how different size nonprofit organizations may choose a fundraising strategy and why that strategy is important to each organization's fundraising success.

Method

This project will pose three research questions:

RQ 1: What strategies and tactics do Compassion International and The Hub: Urban Ministries use to persuade people to donate money?

RQ 2: How do these organizations implement the tactics and strategies that they decide are the most effective?

RQ 3: Why do these organizations choose one specific strategy or tactic over another?

In order to answer these questions, this research had used a mixed research methodology, of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Before detailing specifics of methodology used, a discussion of the benefits of qualitative research is warranted.

Why Qualitative?:

“Good qualitative research is relevant, timely, significant, interesting, or evocative” (Tracy, 2010, pg. 840). Qualitative research consists of many characteristics that help researchers understand the “how and why” behind participants’ actions. The qualitative researcher seeks precision in, “accurately reporting and interpreting what research participants said” (Treadwell, 2014, pg. 193). Qualitative researchers also “depend primarily on words for presenting results in participants’ own terms, but do not necessarily reject quantitative reporting” (Treadwell, 2014, pg. 193). “Qualitative researchers lean more toward fewer participants and ‘drilling down’ to get an in-depth understanding of what their participants have to say” (Treadwell, 2014, pg. 193). Qualitative researchers understand that human opinion is “individualistic, unpredictable, and subjective” (Treadwell, 2014, pg. 193).

Qualitative research will be effective for this project because it strives to understand the status quo of how nonprofit organizations operate. We all know that nonprofit organizations exist to make a difference, whether through feeding the hungry or building houses. This study is committed to understanding nonprofit organizations and the strategies that, specifically, The Hub: Urban Ministries and Compassion International utilize to persuade people to donate money. Many people have probably given to some sort of organization at least once in their lives. Donors must make choices about when to give and to whom, and it is unclear what is persuading them to make such choices. This study seeks to understand how nonprofit organizations persuade their donors to give money and which strategy is most effective that organization.

The most effective way to reveal the “how and why” behind fundraising for nonprofits is qualitative research. These methods provide ways to collect data that will lead to a deeper understanding of each participant’s specific motivations. “Qualitative research leads to different kinds of knowledge claims than from those resulting from the use of quantitative…qualitative research is *idiographic* and *emic* (focusing on one or very few individuals and finding categories of meaning from the individuals studied)" (Morrow, 2005, pg. 252). Therefore, this study has employed open-ended surveys and textual analysis in order to gather data for this study. To ensure that this research is exhaustive and rigorous, as all qualitative research should be, this methodology follows Tracy's (2010) eight criteria for excellent qualitative research. This research address each of these criteria and illustrates how the research conducted fits into each of these criteria. See Table 1.

Table 1. Eight "Big-Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research

Criteria for quality
Worthy topic
Rich rigor
Sincerity
Credibility
Resonance
Significant contribution
Ethical practices
Meaningful coherence

Worthy Topic

The first criterion demands that the topic of study is worthy. To be considered worthy, the topic must be "relevant, timely, significant, and interesting" (Tracy, 2010, pg. 840). The topic of the current study is relevant because, as stated previously, there are over 1.5 million nonprofit organizations in the U.S. and millions of dollars are given to nonprofits each year. But the question remains as to which strategy is most effective for Compassion International and The Hub.

Rich Rigor

The second criterion requires that there is rich rigor involved in the study. “High quality qualitative research is marked by a rich complexity of abundance” (Tracy, 2010, pg. 842). The rich rigor of qualitative research is exhibited through this study. There is a rich complexity found in the data obtained through the surveys and the content analysis. The participants in the research provided in depth answers and deep insight on the process that each organization uses when fundraising.

Sincerity

“Sincerity as an end goal can be achieved through self-reflexivity, vulnerability, honesty, transparency, and data auditing” (Tracy, 2010, pg. 841). Throughout this research project, all the methods are clear and concise. Through the distribution of surveys there was no judgment or guilt because someone may or may not have donated to a certain organization. There is also a clear option for the participant to skip any questions or refuse to complete the survey. The conducted research is transparent and ethical.

Credibility

Another criterion is credibility. “Credibility refers to the trustworthiness, verisimilitude, and plausibility of the research findings” (Tracy, 2010, pg. 842). Credibility can also be described as authenticity. This study is authentic in order to gain more knowledge and understanding of the persuasion of nonprofits. Another phrase that Tracy uses to describe credibility is “thick description” (pg.843). When recording the findings of this study there will be an abundance of detail in order to have a deep understanding of which strategies and persuasion tactics are used by the two organizations of study, and help audiences understand motivations as much as possible.

Resonance

Fifth, all qualitative research needs to have resonance. “Resonance can be achieved through aesthetic merit, evocative writing, and formal generalizations, as well as transferable data” (Tracy, 2010, pg. 844). This study will reach a deep understanding of these two organizations. Through qualitative research, it is possible to understand the details of these two organizations. Then future research conducted will be able to make suggestions about other organizations because some findings from this study will be able to resonate with other organizations. Hopefully, others will be able to take these findings and apply them in their own contexts, and collect more money for their nonprofit. Though there might be differences in the organizations, such as location and size, larger concepts related to fundraising will remain relevant and helpful.

Significant Contribution

The role of significant contribution is to “bring clarity to confusion [and] make visible what is hidden or inappropriately ignored” (Tracy, 2010, pg. 846). This paper brings clarity to the status quo of fundraising for organizations. Many have a general understanding that nonprofit organizations have to raise money. The topic of fundraising in nonprofit organizations is significant because of the common knowledge that nonprofits need money, but few have knowledge of the best ways to gain donations. This study understands how nonprofit organizations obtain money. It examines what the representatives have to say about their nonprofits, as well as the literature published by these organizations in order to make a significant contribution to what many know and understand about nonprofit organizations and their fundraising strategies.

Ethical Practices

As in all research, ethical practices are an important part of qualitative methods. “Ethics are not just a means, but rather constitute a universal end-goal of qualitative research quality itself, regardless of paradigm” (Tracy, 2010, pg. 846). Throughout the surveying process specifically, the researcher practiced procedural ethics. There was an open-ended interview and survey questions to give respondents the opportunity to give their opinions, and the participants will not be harmed in any way.

Meaningful Coherence

Lastly, all qualitative research needs meaningful coherence. “Studies that are meaningfully coherent eloquently interconnect their research design, data collection, and analysis with their theoretical framework and situational goals” (Tracy, 2010, pg. 848). This study will interconnect findings throughout the literature that has been discussed throughout the literature review. This will be done by citing relevant studies as the results of this study are discovered. The end goal of this project is to take the literature though secondary research and provide new insights based on the findings of this study.

This project will identify which persuasive tactics nonprofit organizations use, through textual analysis of published material and open-ended surveys, to persuade people to donate money. By gathering and analyzing the data, this study will provide insights into strategies and best practices for fundraising so that other nonprofits can benefit from the findings.

Data Source

Research participants were employees of Compassion International and The Hub: Urban Ministries. These two organizations were chosen to study an international organization and a local organization.

Compassion International is an organization based in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Compassion International was founded in 1952 by Reverend Everett Swanson. Swanson was moved with compassion during the Korean War ("Who is Compassion International," n.d.). He noticed that there were a significant number of war orphans with no home, no food, and no clothing. He began providing those necessities and eventually opened his first orphanage in Korea in 1952. The organization expanded from there and now helps more than 1.5 million children in 26 different countries. "Compassion exists as a child advocacy ministry that releases children from spiritual, social, and physical poverty and enables them to become responsible fulfilled Christian adults" (Compassion International, 2016, "Mission Statement," para. 1). Compassion prides itself on its financial integrity, "Compassion is committed to investing at least 80 percent of donations received into front-line ministry. In fact, when you gave to Compassion this past year, 81.8 percent of expenses went to programs that directly benefit children" (Compassion International, 2016, "Financial Integrity," para. 2). In 2014 Compassion raised a total of $719,291,375 as compared to $657,748,746 that was raised in 2013. This giving comes from individual contributions, gifts-in-kind, contributions from Global Partner Alliance, and other contributions (Compassion International 2014, "Annual Report").

The Hub: Urban Ministries is a local organization headquartered in Shreveport, Louisiana. Cassie Hammet of Shreveport founded the Hub in 2010 (The Hub Urban Ministries, 2016, "About us,"). Hammet had a desire to see the bondage of poverty come off of the people of Shreveport. "The Hub: Urban Ministries exists to walk those in poverty through a process that gives them hope, friendship, community, a place where they belong and the skills needed to become self-sufficient, which brings them value and worth" (C. Carter, Personal Communication

January 29, 2015). The Hub does not have an annual report, but the organization's website does give a clear description of the way operations are managed at The Hub.

The Lovewell Center is a community center where the homeless and impoverished can come and take classes, receive food, clothing and other support. "Through our classes Lovewell members receive the tools necessary to change their lives, which translates to rescue on many levels: from life on the street, from addiction, from abuse and from the crippling cycle of poverty." (The Hub Urban Ministries, 2016, "About us," para. 2). In order for people to receive food or clothing, those who are receiving these benefits have to pay for it with fake dollars that they earn by attending classes, doing work around the center, and being available to volunteer. Purchased is another entity of The Hub. "Purchased exists to provide rescue, relationship, resources and recovery to women in the sex industry and victims of sex trafficking." (The Hub Urban Ministries, 2016, "About us," para. 1). The Purchased staff and other women who have been rescued visit local jails and talk to the women who are incarcerated for prostitution. Those who are willing to go through the Purchased renewal program move to a house that was donated to The Hub and they relearn how to live life in a way that is free from prostitution (The Hub Urban Ministries, 2016, "About us,").

Data Collection

Open-ended surveys were distributed to employees of these organizations or represent these organizations asking what types of persuasive strategies and tactics each uses and which are most effective. The surveys were distributed in the same method to both organizations. The surveys were posted onto a website called *Surveymonkey.com*, and then sent to one contact person at each organization. The survey was then forwarded by the initial contact individual to others in the organization that were seen as able to answer questions about fundraising. The survey began with an informed consent form. There was a total of nine completed surveys. In order to gain participants, the “snowballing technique” was used as a process of obtaining participants, “Snowballing samples emerge through a process of reference from one person to the next” (Streeton, Cooke, & Campbell, 2004, pg.37). When one participant completed a survey he/she would forward the survey to someone who was also involved with the fundraising tactics of their organization. Along with the surveys, brochures, websites, and any other literature published by these organizations were collected for analysis. Analyzing these provides insight into how these two organizations use the resources that they have to persuade people to donate money and how either donor priority strategy or equal treatment (or a mixture of both) is displayed in the literature.

Four pieces of literature were used, including the website of each source. In order to analyze the information received from the surveys a content analysis has been conducted. “Content analysis is described as a method to classify written or oral materials into identified categories of similar meanings” (Ji Young & Eun-Hee, 2014, pg. 3).

Specific themes were found to be reoccurring through the literature. The process of finding these reoccurring themes is coding. Coding is “‘cleaning’ and organizing [of] qualitative data” (Gläser & Laudel, 2013, pg. 1). The type of content analysis that has been performed is what can be considered a mixed methodology with statistics, interpretation, and quantification (Brejla & Gilbert, 2014). This mixed methodology will be modeled after the content analysis executed by Brejla and Gilbert, "instead of simply counting the occurrences of a word in a text this paper expands the analysis to qualitative dimensions by viewing the text in its context” (2014, pg. 158).

There are certain themes that occurred in the literature because of the context that I have studied. The context underlying all of the content is persuasion. There are terms from other literature that can be considered “god terms” and “charismatic terms”. “God terms carry the greatest blessing in a culture and demand sacrifice or obedience” (Gass and Seiter, 2014, pg. 150). “God terms” put a challenge on people and they challenge how far one is willing to go to be obedient or to help someone who might be in need. Charismatic terms are, “terms of considerable potency whose referents it is virtually impossible to discover” (Larson, 2004, pg. 135). These type of terms include words that are vague, yet intriguing. These include terms such as: freedom, life, hope, surplus, and saving.

Results

Through the content analysis, persuasive themes based on the “god terms” and “charismatic terms” appeared. The analyzed materials from Compassion International include a sponsorship campaign, a sponsorship packet with a newly sponsored child, the *Compassion Magazine*, and *www.compassion.com*. The coding process included examining the four pieces of literature and four open-ended surveys from Compassion International employees. This project has noted emerging themes that fall under the category of “god terms” or “charismatic terms”.

The first piece of literature that was coded is the packet sent to a donor after he or she decides to sponsor a child. This piece of literature will be called the “Donor packet”. The themes that emerged through the coding process includes: “Jesus/Christ/God” noted five (5) times, “Life/living” noted three (3) times, “individuality” noted two (2) times, “support” noted two (2) times, “safe/safety” noted one (1) time, “love” noted one (1) time, “empower” noted one (1) time and, "journey” noted one (1) time.

The second piece of literature that was coded is the packet that a potential donor or sponsor would receive. This packet will be called the "Sponsorship campaign packet". The themes that emerged from the sponsorship campaign packet include: "future" noted eight (8) times, "urgency" noted seven (7) times, sponsor "engagement" with the child noted six (6) times, "support" noted two (2) times, "hope" noted two (2) times, "education" noted two (2) times, "health" noted two (2) times, "donor priority strategy" noted one (1) time.

The third piece of literature that was coded is the annual *Compassion Magazine* that donors receive. The themes that emerged during the coding process include: "education" noted five (5) times, "future" noted four (4) times, "hope" noted three (3) times, "convenience" of donating noted one (1) time, "Jesus/Christ/God" noted one (1) time, and "life" noted one (1) time.

The fourth piece of literature that was coded was the first page of Compassion International's website. This will be called "Compassion.com". In the coding process four key categories emerged: "urgency" noted three (3) times, "Jesus/Christ/God" noted two (2) times, "future" noted one (1) time, and sponsor "engagement" with child noted one (1) time.

These terms and phrases that were used are not by accident. The words and phrases that are used in published literature by Compassion International are well thought out and researched. We can take a quote by Moos and Koslin (1952) in reference to charismatic leadership and cross-apply it to the use of charismatic terms in the published literature of Compassion International, "The chief difficulty in attempting to isolate the personality attributes of leadership is the fact that leadership appears to be dependent upon the group," (pg. 78). Similar to charismatic leadership, charismatic terms that have emerged in the literature appear to be dependent on the group to which an organization is appealing. As charismatic leaders are careful to use certain words in their language to lead effectively, organizations are careful to use certain words in language and literature to solicit certain feelings and emotions.

The surveys also help support the idea that Compassion International is using charismatic terms and donor priority strategies to persuade people to give money. In the surveys, not only were there some emerging charismatic themes in the surveys, but some successful approaches and tactics that are used in the marketing strategies of Compassion International were also present.

The strategies and tactics below were noted within four surveys, answered by the Market Research Analyst, Marketing Agency Assistant/Product Assistant, the USA Communications Director, and the Marketing Director of Compassion International

For the sake of the rich rigor of this qualitative research project, all of the key themes that appeared in the surveys are listed. A few of those things have been elaborated upon for pointed discussion about donor priority strategy and equal treatment which have been key theories that have been considered while examining these two organizations. Four (4) times, Compassion respondents noted donor priority strategy to be a successful approach. According to the survey of the Marketing Agency Assistant/Product Assistant, “When a family gives a lot of money to Compassion International they have their own personal representative that is catering specifically to that family and shows them exactly where their money is going in the organization of Compassion.”

The Marketing Director also said something similar: “Higher donors receive additional detailed information about the specific areas that they give to.” The unit of the organization that Compassion uses to execute donor priority is called “The Mass”, which specifically takes care of the donors that specifically give a large amount of money. The type of mail that these donors receive is different from the type of mail that people who only sponsor one child receive.

Compassion also has a department that manages relationships specifically with donors and a department that deals with bequest giving. Bequest giving is property that one owns given by a will. Noted (2) times in the surveys by two of the respondents, the Marketing Director and the Marketing Agency Assistant/Product Assistant was the value of one-on-one interaction between the sponsor and the company and, most importantly, the sponsor and the child. According to the Marketing Agency Assistant/Product Assistant, “There is a large retention which is keeping the sponsors engaged. This is the kid’s job. The children keep the sponsors engaged. They show the sponsors that kids are grateful.” Also, according to the Marketing Director, “Sponsorship incorporates continuity giving - which along with the unique 1-1 relationship to their sponsored builds long-term supporters.” During the process of child-sponsorship, a donor has the opportunity to be directly involved with the child that they are sponsoring. This is a form of donor priority strategy. According to the USA Communications Director, the most effective way to appeal to people is this one-on-one relationship, saying, “People partner with Compassion because they want to make a difference in the world, because they want to be involved in changing the shape and direction of a child's life. And those are the types of people and hearts we want to connect with.”

The use of “media” was noted to be a successful approach two (2) times by the Marketing Agency Assistant/Product Assistant. Donor Priority Strategy, in the form of intentional follow-up, was noted to be a successful approach one (1) time by the Marketing Agency Assistant/Product Assistant. Direct mail was noted to be a successful approach one (1) time. The

Market Research Analyst noted the financial integrity of compassion to be a successful approach one (1) time.

There were also some themes that were noted in the surveys that were similar to the themes that emerged in the literature. Those themes include: “Jesus/Christ/God” noted seven (7) times, “release” noted two (2) times, “future” noted (2) times, “engagement” of the sponsor note two (2) times, “health” noted one (1) time, “advocate” noted one (1) time, and “love” noted one (1) time, “education” noted two (2) times, “hope” noted (1) time, “urgency” noted one (1) time, and “individuality” noted one (one) time.

The total number of times the themes appear throughout all of the literature and surveys for Compassion International are listed below in Table 2.

Table 2

Theme	Number of times used
Future	**15**
Jesus/Christ/God	**15**
Urgency	**11**
Education	**9**
Donor Priority	**8**
Engagement	**6**
Hope	**6**
Support	**4**
Life	**3**
Health	**3**
Individuality	**3**
Love	**2**
Releasing	**2**
Media	**2**

Safe/safety	**1**
Empower	**1**
Convenience	**1**
Advocate	**1**
Integrity	**1**

The words in the table above are considered charismatic terms. Charismatic terms are "terms of considerable potency whose referents it is virtually impossible to discover" (Larson, 2004, pg. 135). These type of terms include words that are vague, yet intriguing. These terms are used by Compassion to reach a much larger goal, and that would be to support children in poverty. According to the Marketing Director, "For Compassion, sponsorship is not a simple fundraising technique - it is a development tool." And when asked in the survey "Why do you believe that your organization has chosen to use the persuasive approaches it currently uses to persuade donors to give money?" the Marketing Director replied, "Because it is an accurate articulation of the work we do." The words, the themes, the strategies and tactics are all part in persuading people to give money to Compassion in order for the organization to function in within their realm of effectiveness. Compassion executes these strategies and tactics in the ways examined above. Compassion wants to make it clear that they are a religious-affiliated nonprofit organization that feels there is an urgency to meet the need of children who are in poverty in order to provide a better future for them. Compassion does this by engaging donors in the work it is doing abroad.

Five pieces of literature and five surveys that were returned from The Hub were coded in a manner similar to those from Compassion. There were some re-occurring themes and charismatic terms that were used but the results indicate there were different successful approaches used by The Hub.

The first piece of literature from The Hub that was coded was a campaign and a short story about a girl name Keeley who asked all of her friends and family to give to The Hub for her birthday. The story campaign was posted on The Hub's Facebook page. This piece of literature will be called the "Story campaign". The emerging themes of the story campaign included: "love" noted two (2) times, "Jesus/Christ/God" noted two (2) times, "engagement" of volunteers noted one (1) time and, "help" noted one (1) time. This was not the only campaign-type story that was posted on their Facebook page. In addition there were short stories of inspiration. There was a schedule of events, places where volunteers were needed, and where The Hub needed help financially. This type of strategy should be noted as a successful approach.

The second piece of literature from The Hub was a personal blog about The Hub from director Cassie Hammet. This blog was about the difficulties of working with the homeless and the misfortune of having their facility broken into and $5,000 being stolen. The famous Robertson family from *Duck Dynasty* played on a game show in which all of their winnings were going to benefit The Hub. This piece of literature will be called "Cassie's blog." The themes that emerged included: "provision" noted ten (10) times, "Jesus/Christ/God" noted seven (7) times, "trust" noted four (4) times, and "celebrity endorsement" noted one (1) time.

The Hub's website was coded next. The website had a two-pronged approach involving detailing the problems and struggles of the homeless and what The Hub is doing to address the issues. This piece of literature will be called "thehubministries.com." The themes that emerged included: high "statistics" of how many people are effected by The Hub noted three (3) times, "free" noted two (2) times, "self-sufficient" noted two (2) times, "focuses" noted one (1) time, “exclusivity to Shreveport” noted one (1) time, “controlling addictions” note one (1) time, “isolated” noted one (1) time, “lonely” noted one (1) time, process of “hope, friendship and community” noted one (1) time, “located” noted one (1) time, “love” noted one (1) time, “motivate” noted one (1) time, and “restoration” noted one (1) time.

The final piece of literature reviewed was the thank you booklet that The Hub sends out at the end of the year to every person that gave money to The Hub. This packet will be called the “Thank you packet”. The coded emerging themes included: “personal story” noted ten (10) times, “scripture reference” noted seven (7) times, “freedom” noted one (1) time, “rescue” noted one (1) time, “restore” noted one (1) time, and “love” noted one (1) time.

To supplement the literature reviewed, the surveys were given to The Hub employees via *Surveymonkey.com.* The emerging themes identified in the surveys included: “engagement” of the donors noted six (6) times, “serve” noted four (4) times, “thankfulness” noted two (2) times, “ministry/people” noted (2) times, “freedom” noted two (2) times, “life change” noted two (2) times, “freedom” noted two (2) times, “life” noted one (1) time, “partner” noted one (1) time, “mercy” noted one (1) time, and “justice” noted one (1) time.

The five surveys that were completed by Hub staff members were completed by the Children/Outreach Coordinator, the Assistant Director of The Hub, the Public/church Relations Director, the Director, and the Assistant Director of the Lovewell Center. The surveys not only provided more themes similar to the ones throughout the other literature but also with what the staff members of The Hub would consider successful approaches. Similar to the approach taken when examining the surveys from Compassion, I have addressed all of the themes that emerged in the evaluation of the surveys, while considering a few of these themes in detail. The themes that emerged were: the “engagement of donors” noted nine (9) times and used in a context such as this, as noted by the Children/Outreach Coordinator, "Without your support none of this is possible" and "Come to The Hub and see where your giving is going." These quotes from the survey of the Children/Outreach Coordinator provide an example of how The Hub staff encourages the their donors to be involved with the work of The Hub.

The Assistant Director of the Lovewell points to the importance of letting the progress of the work that The Hub is doing speak for itself: "If we poorly communicated with donors about how their giving has supported, changed, and assisted individuals and our organization we would not be giving them the honor they deserve." "Lay-testimony" was noted a number of time the literature, and then noted by the surveys eleven (11) times.

A profound statement by the director gives us an idea of the importance of lay-testimony, saying "The most persuasive approach is telling stories of the people we serve. Their stories are what matters, not budgets or numbers or stats." According to the Assistant Director of the Lovewell, "By showing donors who their financial contributions are going to directly, you give donors the satisfaction of knowing they contributed to the well-being of others and made a difference!"

The Hub makes it a point to tell the stories of the homeless that the organization reaches. This is a form of equal treatment. Everyone hears the same story, whether they have given $1,000 or a dollar. According to the director, "[we send] quarterly thank you cards with specific stories that their donations went to change someone's life." These quarterly thank you cards are similar to the "Thank you packet" coded above.

The use of "social media" was noted four (6) times. According to the director the way that the messages are communicated are, "in everything we send out. Email, social media and newsletters." The Assistant Director of the Lovewell" also noted that one of the key avenues of communicating with the donors was social media: “updates [are sent to] donors thru yearly booklets, monthly emails, and social media.” Mentions of social media occurred in the survey completed by the Children/Outreach Coordinator, the Assistant Director of The Hub, and the Public/church Relations Director.

Casting the “vision” of The Hub was found to be effective in obtaining donors for the first time two (2) times. “Phone calls” noted one (1) time and financial “integrity” noted one (1) time, also appeared in the evaluations of the surveys.

The terms and phrases that emerged during the coding process did not appear by accident. The same quote that was analyzed previously, by researchers Moos and Koslin (1952), can be considered in this context as well: “The chief difficulty in attempting to isolate the personality attributes of leadership is the fact that leadership appears to be dependent upon the group” (pg. 78).

Compassion communicated differently with people and donors than The Hub did, and it is all because of the group of people that each is trying to appeal to. Compassion International has a broader base of donors. They appeal to people all over the world. The Hub, on the other, hand appeals primarily to people in North Louisiana. Both organizations are being extremely effective in the ways that they raise money. Before any more comparison is done, the themes used in The Hub’s literature and surveys must be analyzed. Because of the amount of themes noted in The Hub literature, listed below in Table 3 are themes that appeared during the coding process.

Table 3

Theme	**Number of times used**
Lay-testimony	**14**
Provision	**10**
Jesus/Christ/God	**9**
Engagement of donors	**7**
Scripture Reference	**7**
Freedom	**6**
Love	**4**
Serve	**4**
Equal Treatment	**4**
Statistics	**3**
Lonely	**2**
Restoration	**2**
Self-sufficient	**2**
Thankfulness	**2**
Ministry/People	**2**
Life change	**2**
Exclusivity	**1**
Integrity	**1**
Phone Calls	**1**

Other themes that were only noted once included: Updates on events, celebrity endorsement, focuses, exclusivity to Shreveport, controlling addictions, isolated, lonely, process of hope, friendship, and community, locate, motivate, rescue, life, partner, mercy, and justice.

The coding process of the literature and surveys from The Hub: Urban Ministries and Compassion International provided answers to the research questions.

RQ 1: What strategies and tactics do Compassion International and The Hub: Urban Ministries use to persuade people to donate money? Compassion uses a donor priority strategy in the way that they interact with their donors while The Hub practices the strategy of equal treatment. When giving to Compassion, if one were to give a lot of money he/she has the opportunity to receive a personal agent assisting with all of the donor’s giving. Conversely, The Hub sends out a thank you packet at the end of the year to all of its donors regardless of the amount of money donated.

RQ 2: How do these organizations implement the tactics and strategies that they decide are the most effective? Both of these organizations implement their strategies and tactics through social media, phone calls, emails, and published literature. A common theme noticed throughout the literature and the surveys was a sense of personality. All of the charismatic terms noted above have a personal feeling to them. These organizations infuse their tactics with as much personality to the audience, or potential donors, as possible. For these reasons, a content analysis of the implementation of strategies and tactics was effective for this research.

RQ 3: Why do these organizations choose one specific strategy or tactic over another? The reason each organization chooses one strategy over another is because of who they are appealing to and the size of their organization. Compassion International generates millions of dollars a year, providing them with the ability to show priority to certain people. Conversely, The Hub is a local organization that operates solely on donations from individuals and churches in North Louisiana, and therefore does not have the flexibility to show more priority to those who give more.

Discussion

First, when examining Compassion, it is important to note that this study is discussing an organization that is decades old and generates millions of dollars a year. This organization has a freedom and ability to engage donors in a unique way. The fundraising strategy that Compassion uses is called the donor priority strategy. Previously, in the literature review, some past studies were analyzed and indicated that the donor priority strategy is, “The concept of benefit accruing to both parties is fundamental to the success of this strategy” (Sargent, 2013, p.27). Within a department of Compassion called “The Mass,” a specific duty is given. The sole purpose of “The Mass” is to cater to the needs of the major donors to the organization. Because of this branch of the organization, there are two parties benefiting as in the definition from Sargent (2013). The donors are benefitting as well as the organization itself. When a family gives over and above the amount required to sponsor a child they have an opportunity to receive special treatment. This strategy can teach us a lot about fundraising. One thing that can be learned from donor priority strategy is that it makes donors feel special or feel good about what they are doing. They are able to see exactly where their donations are going. This could encourage them to continue giving. A larger organization like a private school or a private hospital will better benefit from practicing a donor priority strategy. The make-up of Compassion fits perfectly into the mold of what a donor-priority organization looks like.

The Hub is the opposite, and for the sake of this research, having an organization that runs a donor priority strategy and an equal treatment is beneficial. We have seen that there are advantages for a large organization to practice donor priority strategy, but those same advantages would not be cross-applicable to a smaller organization like The Hub. For these reasons the equal treatment strategy that The Hub uses is appropriate for the work it does locally. “The focus of transaction-based [equal treatment] fundraising is soliciting single donations" (Sargent, 2013, p.25). This is how The Hub is growing and gaining support: by soliciting single donations. This strategy leaves room for people to donate whenever they want and however much they want. This is a good and bad quality of the equal treatment strategy. When money is available to donors, giving goes up, but when money is tight, giving goes down and the organization could possibly suffer.

This study has advanced the field of communication studies by looking at nonprofit organizations and evaluating how they communicate to a population. The strategies and tactics identified in this research have reinforced the previous literature that has been published. Not only does this research reinforce the use of donor priority strategy and equal treatment in certain types of organizations, but also the use of "god terms" and "charismatic terms." Because all of the terms coded throughout the research fall either under the category of a "god term," which requires some sort of response from the receiver of the persuasive message, or a "charismatic term," which simply evokes an emotion of a certain kind, it is important that this research points to the use of these words in the literature and surveys collected. There were six "god terms" coded and 32 "charismatic terms" coded. Those six god terms include: "engagement of donors," "empower," "advocate," "donor priority," "urgency," and "releasing." The reason for there being fewer "god terms" than "charismatic terms" could be because of the emotions that the marketers and fundraising strategists want the receivers of the persuasion to feel. Evoking an emotion of love, followed by a charge to give, could lead to more giving.

The way that organizations communicate using "god terms" and "charismatic terms" are the reasons that donors want to donate money to specific organizations. Understanding how specific phrases and terms are used can help anyone who may be working as a marketing agent or in public relations.

Limitations and Future Research

The limitations of this study have prohibited this research from going further than it has now. The initial goal was to have five respondents from each organization. The number of responses received has prohibited me from exploring the other effective fundraising strategies that might be used by these organizations. In the future, in order to solicit more respondents, a future survey would be easier to complete and less time consuming. An open ended survey was beneficial, but it can be intimidating or time consuming for someone with a tight schedule.

With these limitations in mind, there is room for more study to be done in this field. The research questions addressed cover the “why’s and how’s” from the organizations side of this process, but fundraising is reciprocal. There will always be a donor and an organization, so it would be interesting to move forward with a study that analyzes the relationship between the people groups who do not donate to specific organizations and the practical ways that organizations persuade those people to give money. This current research project, “Nonprofit Organizations and the Art of Fundraising,” can potentially be the beginning to more in depth studies on a macro level, which could examine how large organizations appeal to groups or cultures, and on a micro level, which could study interpersonal relationships between organization advocates and potential donors.

Along with studying the relationship between people who do not give and nonprofit organizations, another interesting study would be to look at a different type of nonprofit. For example, analyzing a private school, a community theater, a hospital, or a city park project, to determine if the strategies and tactics of those organizations are different from an organization that helps the poor. This project has contributed to the field of communication studies and provided an outlet for further research into nonprofit organizations and fundraising.

To conclude, the organizations studied provided a clear difference in the way that donor priority strategy and equal treatment are used. Throughout the study it was shown that for a larger organization, it is beneficial to practice fundraising donor priority like Compassion. This would mean that those who give more get more attention. While running a local nonprofit, it is more effective to operate on an equal treatment strategy where there is equal recognition for all donors as The Hub. Fundraising really is an art, and it is not only about the terms used or the strategies used; it’s about the ability of an organization to use the money effectively.

Appendix A.

Informed Consent Document

East Texas Baptist University

Please read this consent form. If you have any questions, ask the experimenter and he or she will answer the question. The researcher may be contacted by sending email to: katelynn_burns@etbu.edu.

The Department of Communication Studies at East Texas Baptist University supports the practice of protections for human participants participating in research and related activities. The following information is provided so that you can decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time, and that if you do withdrawn from the study, you will not be subjected to reprimand or any other form of reproach.

The purpose of this study is to examine what strategies and tactics nonprofit organizations utilize to persuade individuals to donate money to the organization. The time taken to complete the survey will vary depending upon the amount of information provided by the participant. Each research participant's identity will be protected and not published in the study. Only the researcher(s) will know the identity of each individual respondent.

"I have read the above statement and have been fully advised of the procedures to be used in this project. I have been given sufficient opportunity to ask any questions I had concerning this project. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without being subjected to reproach."

Name of Participant____

Position Title: ____

Name of Organization: ____

Date ____________________________

Appendix B.

Q1: Please enter your: name, position title, name of your organization, and the date

Q2: How long have you worked for this organization and in what department or division of the organization do you work?

Q3: What do you believe are the most successful approaches used by this organization to persuade donors to give money for the first time?

Q4: What do you believe are the most successful approaches used by this organization to persuade donors to continue giving money after the initial gift?

Q5: How are the persuasive approaches detailed in above answers implemented into organizational messages to donors?

Q6: Why do you believe that your organization has chosen to use the persuasive approaches it currently uses to persuade donors to give money?

Q7: What words, concepts, or themes are used most often in organizational messages to existing or potential donors? Please list as many as possible.

Q8: Does the level of giving by an individual impact the way your organization communicates with them? If so, please explain.

Q9: Is there anybody else in this organization that you believe would provide additional beneficial information for this research study? If so, please provide their name and contact information.

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