

Mind Over Mission



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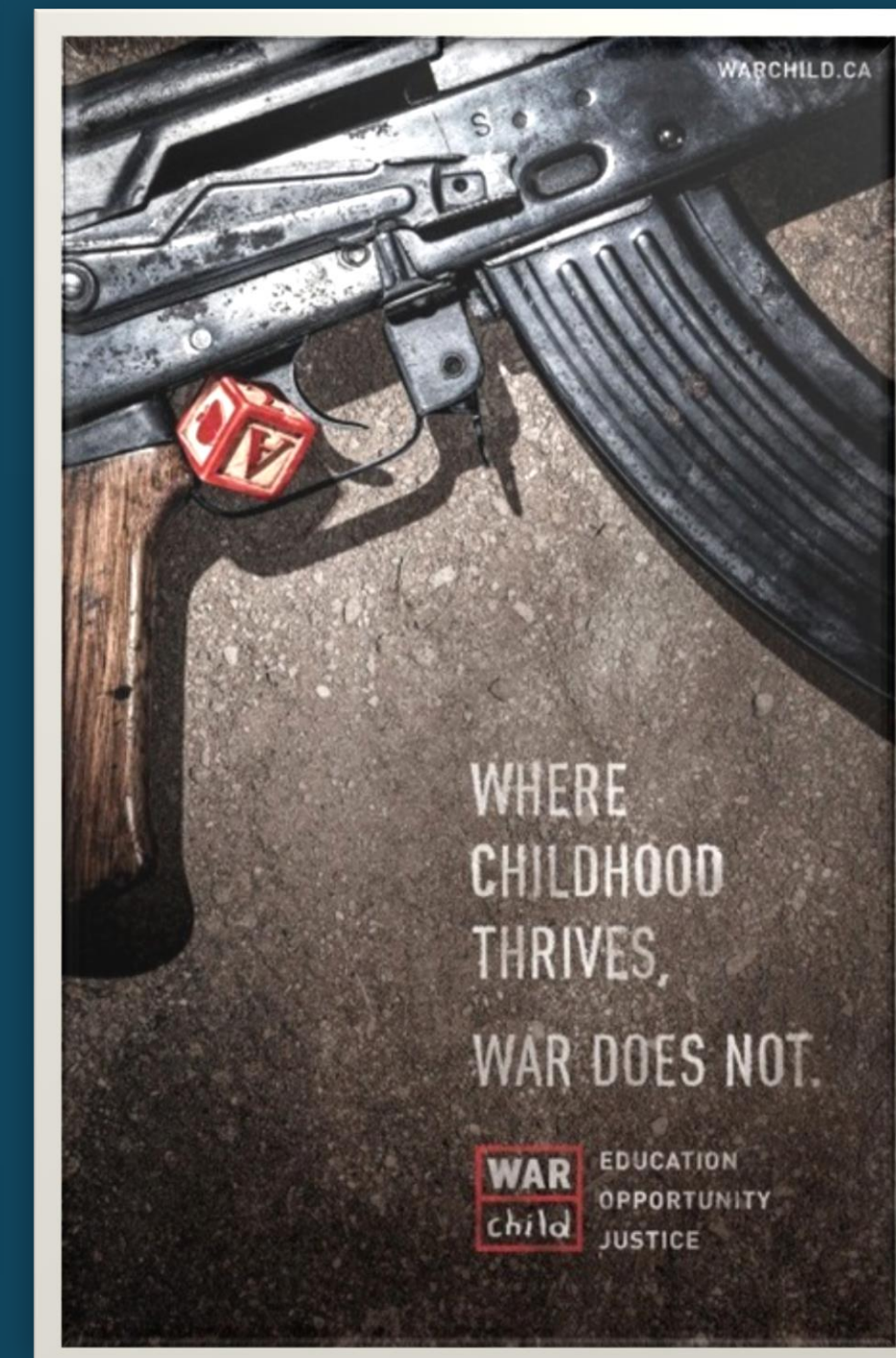
The Overpowering Mission

In the nonprofit world, so much of what we do is focused on our mission and that's how it should be. Yet, many times, we become so focused on our mission and dedicating money to program costs that we forget of all the other ways in which we can achieve our mission.

One of the forgotten ways where we can achieve our mission is marketing. As Laura Olsen says, "We cannot put mission over evaluating our impact, or building relationships, or marketing our brand. At least, we can't do that if we want to be able to continue doing our mission."

Our programs are always the focus of what we do because that is how we achieve our vision. But if no one knows what we are doing, how we are doing it, or why we are doing it, is our mission actually being achieved?

We will be able to achieve our mission's in much greater ways as we realize that informing people of our efforts and achievements through marketing does in fact fulfill our mission.



Priorities and Perspective

As said by Dan Pollotta, for-profit companies have this attitude: "Spend, spend, spend, on advertising until the last dollar no longer produces a penny of value." Their moto is: To make money, you have to spend money. Why don't non-profits have the same attitude? Non-profit companies have become hoarders of their money and do not want to 'waste' a single penny on advertising because that money could be going straight into a charity. Donors do not like to see their money going to a perceivably different cause.

Dan Pollotta also says, "If monetary donations given to non-profit companies were invested in advertising, this could bring in dramatic sums of money." Advertising is the answer to bringing in more revenue than otherwise possible. We must avoid the fear of spending money on advertising. If we do not advertise, the world will never know what good a non-profit company does. The money spent expanding the audience of the company and informing the community of the mission of the company will bring in more donors, donations, volunteers, and resources to fulfill the company's mission.

Power of Advertising

When we think of advertising big name brands come to mind. Nike, Walmart, huge companies that spend millions a year to advertise and promote what they do. It must be effective because year after year, advertising and brand management spending continues to grow.

When we look at the nonprofit world, what advertisements come to mind--sad, abused animals and sad, malnourished children. We've become branded as a sector focused on depressing issues and many times the ads cause people to feel guilty or sorrowful, and then they change the channel.

Many people don't know what nonprofits do and have no idea what is happening in their community through what we do. Advertising is not solely for for-profit companies and should not be used only to drive profit.

We have at our fingertips a powerful avenue to educate the communities we work in and to re-brand the nonprofit sector as one filled with diversity, happiness, service, and yes, sometimes sadness.



Return on Investment

Action follows education and awareness. As we engage more people in our communities through impactful advertising we will not only be able to increase the scope of our organization, but also the possibility for financial return.

In our research of nonprofits nationwide and by working with local nonprofits we have been able to see the financial benefits of effective advertising.

As seen in the graph below, the March of Dimes realized a 102% increase in donations and a 75% increase in participants after changing their advertising campaign. In our work with the Nature Conservancy of Utah in the Love Utah Give Utah campaign last year, we saw a 227% increase in donations and 253% increase in donors.

As with any investment, dedicating money to advertising can be risky. Without risks, though, we are unable to realize worthwhile returns. By striving to be diligent with the money we spend and as we recognize the importance of advertising, we will be able to reach farther and strengthen the connections we have with our community and those we hope to serve.

