

Blanket-Bundle Drive Campaign Overview

Reno Guardian Angels
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The Situation

In the fall of 2008, the Reno city council voted to dismantle the impromptu 'tent city' that had been steadily growing in an open parking lot in downtown Reno, populated by homeless men, women and children. With nowhere else to go in the area, many of these people were seen huddling in alleys and alcoves at night during the regular patrol of the Reno chapter of the Guardian Angels. Record-breaking low temperatures combined with this new influx of homeless citizens on the streets prompted Scott Tootell and his wife to consider, 'what can we do'.

An excited conversation during a drive home from lunch in early December, and subsequent approval by the chapter's leader, resulted in the first-ever 'Blanket-Bundle Drive', wherein the Reno Guardian Angels would plan, raise funds, produce and deliver 100 sets blankets, hats and gloves to Reno's homeless before Christmas.

The Challenge

Since 1996, the members of the Reno Guardian Angels have channeled their volunteer time and limited resources into regular safety patrols and providing additional security support for community events. But, they had not coordinated fundraising efforts before. Nor had they ever launched a campaign.

There was no 'marketing' in place - no collateral, no Web site, no donation systems, no forms, no databases, no vendors - only a logo and several dedicated people with good hearts and a willingness to help their community. It was a clean slate... and the rest is history.

The Goal

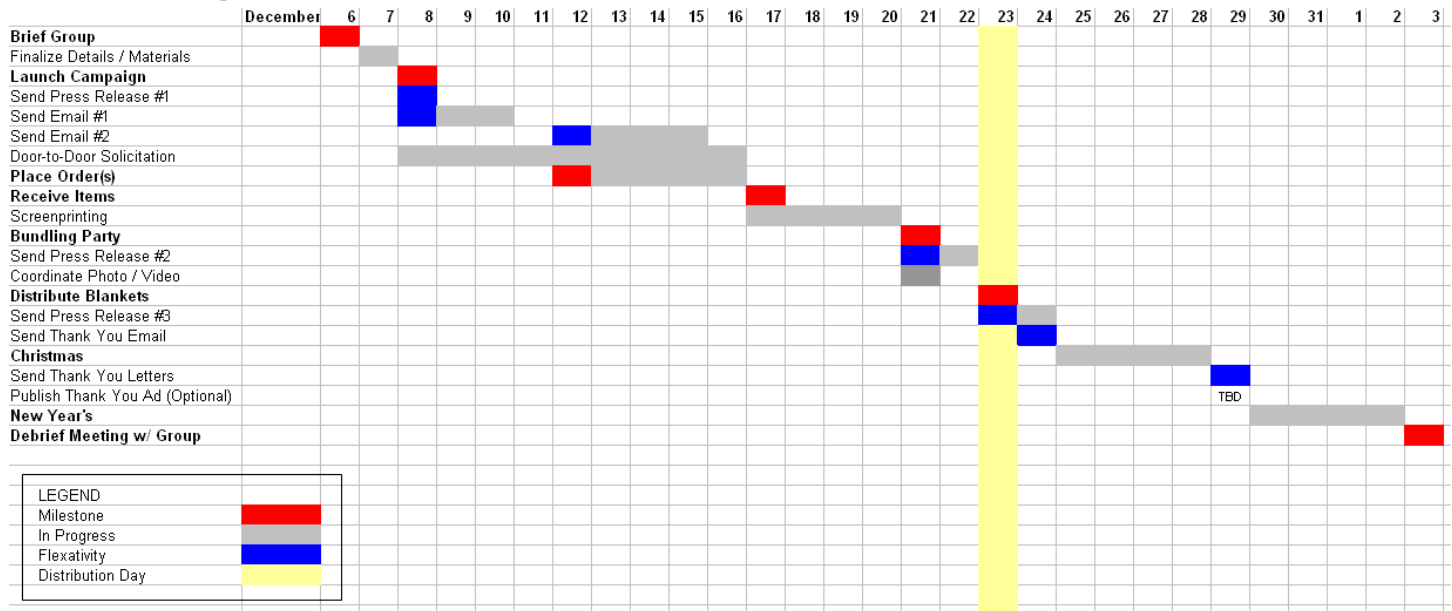
- Raise \$2,000
- Purchase 100 sets of blankets, hats and gloves
- Screen-print blanket with Guardian Angels logo and package 'bundles'
- Distribute 100 blanket-bundles by December 25, 2008 (Christmas)
- Bring attention to the existence and efforts of the local Guardian Angels chapter
- Do it all in < 30 days and with no start-up budget

The Preparation

In order to achieve the goal, the following needs to be in place (or set up in preparation):

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| Bank Account | Email Deployment System (e.g. Constant Contact) |
| PayPal Account | List of Media Contacts (Local, Regional, National) |
| TaxID and Receipts | Single Person Assigned as Media Contact |
| Web Site (for local chapter and/or campaign) | Staff and Resources for Bundle Assembly |
| Web Site with Link to PayPal Account | Transportation of Bundles |
| Email Templates | |

The Timing



The Strategy

- Solicit \$20 donations using online donation system (PayPal)
- Showcase the basic need (vs. toys / holiday food)
- Leverage news of cold snap, economic times and plight of homeless without 'Tent City'
- Make it simple and easy to help immediately

The Tactics

- Online marketing
 - Branded web site (www.renoguardianangels.com)
 - Branded receipts and auto-reply messages
- Email marketing
 - Branded email templates
 - Donation solicitation email to Flexativity database
 - Press release email(s) to local and regional media contact list
- Direct sales
 - Chapter members solicited donations from Downtown Reno businesses
 - Personal phone calls local aid agencies
 - Branded flyers, handouts and receipt forms
 - Personalized thank you letters
- Public Relations
 - Media Coverage
 - RGJ [12/12], RGJ Neighborhood [12/16], KRNv (TV) [12/17], RGJ [12/21], Sparks Tribune [12/23], RGJ [12/24] and possibly others
 - Web Sites, Blogs and Portals
 - rgj.com, krnv.com, guardianangels.com (headquarters), msnbcreno.com, yourstreet.com, nvmoney.com, nvcorruptions.com and various others, picked up from media outlets
 - Posts on RGJ Events Calendar, craigslist, Facebook and LinkedIn
- Partnerships
 - Secured discount from Urban Apparel Warehouse
 - Secured discount from Dream Imaging
 - Engaged Chapter members and their families to solicit donations, package bundles and distribute

The Partners

Reno Guardian Angels
Flexativity, Inc.
Urban Apparel Warehouse
Dream Imaging
Many Generous Donors (Businesses and Individuals)

The Results

Raised \$8,316 (quadrupling the initial goal!)

Purchased 400 sets of blankets, hats and gloves

Screen-printed blankets with Guardian Angels logo and packaged 'bundles'

Distributed 100 blanket-bundles on December 23, 2008

Distributed 200+ blanket-bundles in January

Members continue to carry blanket-bundles on community patrols and distribute as needed

Print and broadcast media published articles, calendar listings and photos, and were on-site to cover the distribution, including interviews with organizers and recipients

The Future

Word of this hugely successful local campaign has piqued the interest of the international headquarters, and we now hope to roll out the program to Guardian Angels chapters worldwide. We also plan to launch the campaign again locally for '09-'10 winter season

It is our hope that this will become a 'signature' campaign for the Guardian Angels organization.

The Samples

Samples of timeline, press releases, calendar listings, forms, correspondence and more can be found at www.renoguardianangels.com.