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Fundraising & Marketing for Between the Bars

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Type: Essay
Topic: Fundraising,
Non-profit orgs

First off, what are you selling? What's your product? Prison-related writing only or writing by prisoners? Knowing what your product is will tell you who to try & sell it to (solicit financial support from) & tell your employees (me & other prison bloggers) what to produce. I've assumed anything goes, & produce some literary quality material, some commercial grade articles, some prison-activist pieces, humor, satire, in a desperate effort to satisfy a variety of readers & pull in the attention of people who otherwise don't give a shoot about prisoner issues (f.y.i.) Philanthropists who support the arts, penal reform, journalism need to know how BtB is tickling their particular fancy to be persuaded to support you!

Some suggestions I have:

- 1) Plug Financial Leaks: a) Why do you not have Non-Profit Org. Status yet? By registering BtB as such (contact your lawyer for details on how to do so in your state & with the feds under §501(c)(3), so you're exempt from taxes and get free postage —  — to mail us comments left by readers, postcards, soliciting our writing about particular subjects, newsletters, etc.) you will save a pile on postage alone. www.prisonforum.org is registered as such, e.g.
- 2) ~~Solicit Appropriate Philanthropists~~ b) Stop printing & sending your form letter on the back of every comment you print & mail us. Waste of your ink & postage. You only gotta tell us once that you print & mail comments w/out editing them.
- c) Use lighter-weight paper, lighter ink, & only mail out comments when they come to at least 5 sheets (6 sheets of lightweight paper, 7 in winter when there's less humidity; will fit in an envelope with 1 First-Class stamp — each addition 6-7 sheets (1 oz.) costs 20¢ more in postage, so 2 First-Class stamps will mail 20 sheets. You often use 2 First-Class stamps unnecessarily.
- 2) Solicit Appropriate Philanthropists: a) The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation likes to promote internet access by funding rural libraries, etc. Hit 'em up!
- b) the Academy of American Poets (academy@poets.org) provides fellowships & awards to promote poetry. I post poetry, as do others. BtB gives us a means of publishing such we'd otherwise lack. Hit 'em up. ^{their attorney}
- c) The MacArthur Foundation (dchernoff@macfound.org) offers fellowships & grants to support writers. Are we not writers? Hit 'em up!
- d) shakespeareprisonproject.blogspot.com, closhailor@uwp.edu, and a f-ing ton of other college & university org's (e.g. Sigma Tau Delta — S.T.D.)

eager to promote writing of all kinds. Hit 'em up to: help hype BtB, engage in fundraising for BtB, pimp particular posts on other sites, internet directories, etc. (it hypes BtB too!) + maybe even do writing contests that seek specific types of writing or writings on specific topics + awards prizes that are split with BtB (it'll encourage higher-quality submissions/posts).

e) Review a current edition of American Charities by Nabu Press, to find other philanthropical org's + approach them as is appropriate for \$ support.

3) Get Experts Help. Your computer maestros have no business doing your fundraising! It's not their thing. If M.I.T. has Marketing students it has marketing fraternities + sororities - hit them up to help you as a practical way to teach students fundraising. I was a Marketing Mgmt. student at the Western Wisc. Tech. College + in WI's Marketing Mgmt. Assoc., which did this type of thing. At the very least you can get the students to draft a good spiel + start cold-calling the charities you'll find in American Charities for support. Then move on to The Celebrity Black Book 2013 by Mega Niche Media + cold call them!

Consult: cnardi@thecne.org (the Ctr. for Non-Profit Excellence), joe.nisofsewi@gmail.com (Non-Profit Legal Services of S.E. Wisconsin), dmaher@pir.org (the Public Interest Registry) + related org's for further expert help raising \$, cutting costs, etc. Ask + you shall receive! Faint heart never won fair funds!

4) Other F-ing Ideas! a) link up with Narrative4.com, recently established by Esquire, which is a world-gathering place for great writers! They have a Progressive aim, as does BtB. I've already wrote Esquire about you, set up the blind date, but YOU gotta do the kissing! Schnell, Schnell! Narrative4's paywall technology may be a good idea for you too - let readers see the 1st page of posts for free, then charge a paltry 10¢ to read the rest of each post - that 10¢ will add up fast!

b) Steal www.prisoninmates.com tactic of charging a fee (nominal in your case, with no word limit - say 25¢ per comment, maybe per page) to those who leave comments. Downside is it'd discourage the poorer + decent people from commenting. That's all of my commentors, so far.

c) enable readers to fund blogs, akin to www.writeaprisoner.com's allowing readers to donate to fund a prisoner's profile. List/reveal account level, if you start charging. Enable funders to pay to request writing on specific topics they want info about.

d) sell rights to reproduce original art, maybe to T-shirt companies, tattoo artists, publishers, etc.

There's no way I can pay sheet, at this point. Bloggin's not been profitable for me. Nor has much else. But if I hit it big, I kick in what I can.

Hugs + kisses,
Nate