



Businesses are giving part of their profits to charities for causes such as breast cancer.

Brands capitalize on consumers' holiday goodwill

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In hopes that charities and compassionate consumers have a happy holiday, brandname companies are adopting a feel-good marketing approach to ensure their profits also partake in the festivities.

With the holidays just around the corner, companies including Pepsi, The Gap, Tweezerman, Uno's Pizzeria and Yoplait are appealing to customer's seasonal spirits by promising to donate that a portion of their proceeds to charity -- and the customers are buying.

According to a Sept. 29 article on the Charity Navigator -- an online donation guide -- philanthropy as a "consumer marketplace" is a growing trend among society.

"Over the last half-century, large philanthropic causes have capitalized on knowledge of consumer behavior, on building strong brands and using unified messages," the site reads.

"It's such a terrific marketing tool for a corporation to ally themselves with a charity," said Mike Smith, chief operating officer of Charity Navigator. "It's really a win-win situation."

According to Smith, consumers are more likely to purchase a product if part of its profits go to charity, rather than one not affiliated with a charity.

"Consumers want to feel good about their purchases," Smith said. "It enhances the purchasing decision of the consumer. They are going to feel better about their purchase because they know that part of the money will be going to benefit [charity]."

Smith said making a profit is a definite factor in why companies chose to give part of their proceeds to charitable groups and non-profit organizations, adding that both the consumer and the company profit from the charitable advertising technique.

"I like Newman's Own motto the best," Smith said. "He is donating all profits after taxes to all charities across the board [rather than other companies who donate only a part of their profits to one particular organization]. That is the most generous motto that you will find."

With October being National Breast Cancer Month, there was a recent surge of companies using the breast cancer's pink ribbon in their marketing and giving their profits to charities such as the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

According to a report on Give.org, the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation was founded in 1982 with the purpose of "eradicating breast cancer as a life-threatening disease by advancing research, education, screening and treatment."

The Komen foundation also funds programs like "breast cancer screening programs, health fairs and educational outreach."

According to Yoplait spokesman David Witt, Yoplait has been giving part of their proceeds to the Komen foundation for nine years.

"Every year in the fall we have pink lids on the yogurts," Witt said. "For every lid we get sent back we give 10 cents to the Komen foundation. We give up to \$1.5 million [and never less than] \$500,000."

Witt said Yoplait has given more than \$15 million to the Komen foundation.

"Every little bit adds up," Witt said. "It is going towards ending the fight against breast cancer."

Witt said in October 2006, a women's dormitory at Washington State University had a competition between the residence floors for collecting pink lids. Dormitory residents achieved their goal of generating 6,000 lids -- which equaled \$600.

Witt said Yoplait contributes solely to the Komen foundation.

"In order to have a meaningful impact we put all of our effort towards this one," Witt said. "Our employees are really dedicated -- this was begun by the employees. We feel if we can do one thing really well that this will be it."

According to Witt, Yoplait has had a long relationship with the Komen foundation and the company are the national sponsor for the Race for the Cure.

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