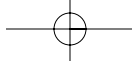


marketing as a conservation strategy



FY05 Offerings:
Expanding
the level of
marketing support
in the field.

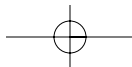
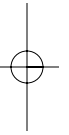
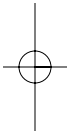
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results

Since the introduction of The Nature Conservancy's Marketing Resource Center (MRC) concept in 2002, MRCs have enjoyed widespread acceptance as they helped advance the marketing goals of state and country programs while achieving the overall marketing aims of the Conservancy.

Today, more than 20 Conservancy programs have entered MRC agreements, which are co-invested with the Worldwide Office. Another 10 agreements are pending. Working closely with skilled marketing professionals in the MRCs, programs are creating and implementing detailed marketing plans to advance their conservation marketing and philanthropy objectives. In fact, more than half of the field marketing positions in the Conservancy are now co-invested.



results

Here is what Conservancy leaders have to say about MRCs:

"The MRC has done everything we had hoped it would do - and we have only just begun our work together. Our publications are far better and more strategic. We are getting more for our money, both in terms of quality and expertise. We are able to develop effective materials for cross-cutting initiatives such as the Great Lakes and Upper Mississippi River projects. When the MRCs were developed, these were the benefits we hoped they would deliver; and they have."

Bruce Boyd, Illinois

"The MRC partnership has performed well beyond my expectations. The quality of our publications is much improved and the application of branding criteria has stimulated comments from members, donors and envious partners. What a treat for me to generate some thoughts and ideas and receive back clear, concise narrative for updates and reports. I am very glad we made this move."

Ron Nargang, Minnesota

"The South Carolina Chapter's relationship with the MRC has resulted in improved media coverage and new communications tools that we would not have been able to produce. It has been cost-effective, and the staff at the MRC have been very responsive and professional."

Mark Robertson, South Carolina

how we define marketing

The definition of marketing varies greatly from one organization to the next. Typically, it also has many shades of meaning among employees within an organization as decentralized as the Conservancy. With that in mind, the Conservancy defines marketing as follows:

*Marketing provides strategic direction as well as the **tools, support and direct action** necessary to engage key audiences to achieve pre-determined conservation outcomes.*

From the Conservancy standpoint these audiences include, but are not limited to: members, trustees, major donor prospects, Congress and state legislators, the "conservation-concerned" members of the public, agency heads, private land owners and corporations.

Overall, marketing at the Conservancy is charged with contributing to three primary goals:

- ♦ Increase major gift fundraising to support conservation goals
- ♦ Influence conservation activities among a broader constituency
- ♦ Help the Conservancy become the most respected organization among key audiences

marketing evolution

Recognizing the need to support ever increasing conservation and fundraising challenges, the role of marketing has rapidly evolved over the past two years. A Field Marketing organization was created in 2002 as a joint venture between the organization's field-based programs and the Worldwide Office. The charter for Field Marketing grew from recommendations of the 2002 Marketing Alignment Project, which brought together more than 100 field staff members to design a method to rapidly enhance marketing for the Conservancy.

These recommendations led to the creation of Marketing Resource Centers (MRCs) staffed with professionals with expertise in a variety of marketing disciplines. The MRCs develop co-invested agreements between the Worldwide Office and Conservancy programs. These agreements define an appropriate level of marketing service, based on a program's needs and resources. In turn, MRCs work with programs to create and execute comprehensive marketing plans. These plans detail the top priority audiences for the program, as well as marketing tactics and anticipated outcomes by audience. Projected staff time and production costs are also determined on a tactic-by-tactic basis. Today, the marketing organization has three MRCs: MRC-West, MRC-Central and MRC-East. And, more than 25 program marketing plans are in the process of development or in place.

maximizing support

In late 2003, the Conservancy marketing organization was reshaped to more closely align Field Marketing with marketing and communication departments in the Worldwide Office. The field-based MRCs and Worldwide Office marketing group work as one team, reporting to the Director of Marketing. This ensures that all marketing/communication vehicles, including *Nature Conservancy* magazine and nature.org, are leveraged to have the greatest impact across the organization.

This structure is also expected to improve the ongoing flow of communications between the state and country programs and the Worldwide Office regarding key marketing and communication issues, including ensuring consistency of the Conservancy's visual identity and sharing media crisis communications knowledge.

maximizing support

Three field units (MRC-West, MRC-Central and MRC-East) and three headquarters units (Communications, Public Relations and Publishing) comprise the marketing organization. Their areas of responsibility are as follows:

MRC-West: Regional marketing support for programs in the Pacific Western Conservation Region. This unit also serves as a marketing planning and research hub for the organization.

MRC-Central: Regional marketing support for programs in the Mid-Americas Conservation Regions. This unit also acts as a digital media hub, providing services across the Conservancy for state and country program Web site content/development, video and emerging digital technologies.

MRC-East: Regional marketing support for programs in the Atlantic Conservation Region. This unit also serves as a hub for Conservancy-wide graphic design and production expertise.

maximizing support

Communications: Responsible for national and international media relations, issues management and crisis communications.

Public Relations: Directs internal communications, senior Conservancy leadership outreach, branding and events.

Publishing: Responsible for content development and knowledge management, *Nature Conservancy* magazine and nature.org.

benefits

Entering into an agreement with an MRC can provide Conservancy programs with a number of advantages such as:

Access to experienced professionals with skills in an array of marketing disciplines. MRC staff bring to their jobs diverse backgrounds and seasoned experience in areas, including:

- ♦ Marketing planning and marketing strategy
- ♦ Media relations (including media planning, story pitching and crisis communications)
- ♦ Web development and marketing
- ♦ Programs and events
- ♦ Conservation writing
- ♦ Presentation development
- ♦ Publication production
- ♦ Video

Partner programs also benefit from the collective marketing expertise of all three MRCs as well as that of professionals in the Conservancy's communications, public relations and publishing groups. Staff members in these groups collaborate to share and reapply best marketing practices, resulting in greater marketing effectiveness and the most cost efficient production of marketing vehicles for our partners.

benefits (cont'd)

Marketing expertise available when a program needs it. Given that a program typically has broad demands for marketing support - media relations, publications, Web, video, event support - it is difficult to hire individuals who have expertise and depth of experience needed in all those areas. By working with an MRC, program partners have access to staff who have just the expertise they need, when they need it.

A "hybrid" between needed local presence and centralized marketing functions. As the Conservancy MRC model has evolved, we have found that program partners benefit from keeping certain marketing support at the local level. Often, this means having an "on the ground" professional with strong media relations skills - whether that be someone on the program's staff or an MRC employee - who can focus on building strong relationships with local media outlets. Other functions such as Web, video, writing and publication production are more easily centralized within the MRC and can be tapped by the program partner at predetermined times as indicated in the program's marketing plan.



other benefits

Beyond the ability to tap the expertise of professionals in a number of marketing and communication disciplines, there are other advantages to partnering with an MRC:

Flexibility. A program's marketing needs can vary from one year to the next. The launch of a capital campaign, for example, may necessitate an increase in marketing efforts. Conversely, a program that has developed a robust suite of marketing printed materials in one year may have relatively reduced marketing needs the next. By providing for annual renewals of MRC agreements - and closely monitoring a program's future needs - agreements can be scaled up or down in terms of staffing (in 1/2 FTE increments) and production budgets.

Accountability. At the end of each fiscal quarter, program directors with MRC agreements receive a Utilization Recap Report. The report highlights key projects that have been completed for the partner program, the amount of MRC staff time used during the quarter to service the agreement, and a preview of key projects scheduled for the upcoming quarter. The review of the recap report with the program director and MRC director provides an opportune time to give feedback on MRC performance and to make necessary adjustments to a program's marketing plan.



other benefits

Service continuation. Historically, a marketing or communications employee stays with the Conservancy 18 months. When a program loses a marketing staff person it has hired directly, the flow of marketing and communications is inevitably disrupted, with potential negative affects on brand awareness and philanthropy marketing support, for instance. With an MRC agreement, service continuity is ensured because the MRC is staffed by a number of individuals representing an array of marketing and communication skills.





FY05 offerings

The following are three ways that MRCs can support your program's marketing efforts in FY05:

MRC Essentials: This fundamental level of service is available at no cost to every program, regardless of whether or not they have a co-investment agreement with the Worldwide Office.

MRC Basic: This is an "entry level" arrangement with an MRC, whereby a program receives a basic level of service to enhance its existing marketing efforts or launch a new effort. It includes services provided in MRC Essential. MRC Basic is an opt-in agreement that offers co-investment with the Worldwide Office and requires programs to secure 1/2 FTE minimum level of staffing. Programs will also be required to cover agreed upon marketing production costs (printing, photography, etc.).

MRC Expanded: This offering is aimed at existing MRC program partners who seek to continue building on their marketing effort after their first year working with an MRC. It includes services detailed in the MRC Essential offering. MRC Expanded is an opt-in agreement with co-investment from the Worldwide Office; programs must make an investment of a minimum of 1/2 FTE. Programs will also be required to cover agreed upon marketing production costs (printing, photography, etc.).

included in MRC: Essentials

MRC Essentials includes:

- 1) Marketing advice and resource referral.
- 2) Editing of quarterly Landmarks for *Nature Conservancy* magazine.
- 3) Editing of expanded quarterly Landmarks content for placement on a program's home page on nature.org.
- 4) Best practices available via FieldLink (home.tnc/fieldlink), an intranet site developed and maintained by Marketing. FieldLink contains a wealth of information on topics such as marketing planning, media relations, publishing, programs and events.
- 5) Quarterly marketing training sessions available through WebEx.
- 6) Ability to participate in Marketing's annual Field Day event, where marketing and communications staff members from around the Conservancy gather to share ideas and learn about best practices.
- 7) Crisis communications support
- 8) Media training for senior managers.

included in MRC: Basic

MRC Basic includes:

- 1) Development of a marketing plan, marketing plan oversight and implementation, and ongoing strategic counsel.
- 2) Writing and editing of quarterly Landmarks articles for *Nature Conservancy* magazine, including expanded content for placement on a program's home page on nature.org.
- 3) Quarterly content updates to program Web sites.
- 4) Selection and archiving on CD of 20 "signature" photos or support for five days of preserve photography (to include photographer selection/recommendations, arrangement of the photo shoots and photo production and digital archiving).
- 5) Five percent of MRC staff time available for opportunistic marketing tactics.

included in MRC: Basic

In addition, programs that enter an MRC Basic agreement can choose from a media relations or publishing package option, as described below. Or, a program may decide that it needs to purchase both packages to meet its objectives:

Media relations package: This includes basic media relations components such as media strategy, story development and pitching. It also includes media training for select staff, and customization and placement of Public Service Announcements (PSAs) in a program's key media markets.

Publishing package: This includes the development and production of one major publication, two PowerPoint presentations and one customized print PSA. The package also includes the creation of up to four customized template publications, such as preserve fact sheets or a program director's update to key audiences.

included in MRC: Expanded

MRC Expanded includes:

- 1) An audit and update of the program's marketing plan, ongoing strategic counsel and marketing plan execution.
- 2) Writing and editing of quarterly Landmarks articles for *Nature Conservancy* magazine, including expanded content for placement on a program's home page on nature.org.
- 3) Quarterly content updates to program Web pages.
- 4) Fifteen percent of staff time available for opportunistic marketing tactics.
- 5) Beyond this basic level of service, MRC staff will work with program partners to develop a customized marketing approach, incorporating a mix of marketing tools aimed at the program's priority audiences. Media relations, publishing, presentation development, and programs and events are among the suite of tools customized to meet a program's needs. Under an MRC Expanded agreement, programs can purchase MRC staff time in 1/2 FTE increments.

long-term partnerships

From the outset of the MRCs' introduction, the Worldwide Office has encouraged programs to adopt the MRC marketing model by co-investing 50% of the cost of MRC staff time and all associated overhead (benefits, rent, equipment, travel and training). In FY05, the Worldwide Office will co-invest with new partner programs at a 33% level, while retaining a co-investment of 50% with early-adopter programs through the end of the fiscal year. Beginning in FY06 and beyond, the Worldwide Office will offer a co-investment of 33% for all programs.

Annual co-investment is based on an FTE (Full Time Equivalent) increment. An FTE represents the combined time of a flexible team of MRC marketing professionals who have expertise in a number of disciplines.

The cost of a fully-loaded MRC FTE in FY05 is \$92,000; \$30,360 paid by the Worldwide Office at a 33% co-invested level. A minimum level of service is 1/2 FTE with \$30,820 funded by the program and \$15,180 co-invested by the Worldwide Office.

who to contact

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