



THE MATCH AWARD: Marketing Excellence Using a Shoestring Budget

Project Challenge

Trio Solutions Inc. was hired by the African American Historical Alliance, a newly established nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing awareness about the role of African Americans in the Civil War and the Reconstruction period that followed, to plan several events including a fundraiser, a memorial service and monument dedication, and a lecture at the Charleston Museum.

Since the Alliance was a newly established organization, groundwork had to be laid before we could begin to plan a successful event. This entailed creating a cohesive brand identity for the Alliance as well as conducting a membership and sponsorship drive. What started out as a weekend of events, turned into a massive marketing and PR campaign on a shoestring budget! Additionally, the campaign had to be created, managed and completed within six months.

Primary Goal:

BUILD AWARENESS!

The primary goal of this plan of action was to increase awareness and gain visibility within the state of South Carolina about the African American Historical Alliance through public and media relations, as well as marketing efforts.

Secondary Goal:

GENERATE ACTION!

The secondary goal of this plan was to secure individual and corporate memberships and sponsors for the organization and to promote the series of events in October.

Campaign Elements

1. Establish brand identity and create marketing collateral: identity package, informational brochure and Web site
2. Complete membership drive (see results section)
3. Secure sponsorships
4. Plan events and develop event collateral: save-the-date, invitation and signage
5. Public and media relations: national, state and local

Results

Results were measured through total membership gained, event attendees, sponsorships and media coverage

- Foundation of a cohesive brand identity was established for the Alliance (www.aahasc.org)
- Entire identity package and all events were developed for less than \$35,000 (see budget for details)
- 50 individual membership and 6 corporate memberships (Santee Cooper, Williamsburg Historical Society, Magnolia Development, Merrill Lynch, Patrick Properties and First Federal)
- 178 gala attendees
- \$50,220 raised through sponsorships, memberships and gala ticket sales allowing the Alliance to make a profit
- \$17,000 profit made for Alliance to put toward future events
- PR efforts:
 - Appearances on Lowcountry Live and Channel 5 Live at Noon Segment
 - Pre- and post-event articles in Post and Courier
 - Full page article in The State paper
 - Associated Press article picked up by major newspapers across country
 - Story on NPR's All Things Considered <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6417951>
 - Event coverage by all local television stations

Post-event Wrap-up and Lessons Learned

At Trio Solutions we measure the success of our events based on our client's satisfaction. The African American Historical Alliance was extremely pleased with the success of the weekend. However, after our internal post-event review we came to several conclusions

1. Board members need to become more involved with the PR and sponsorship efforts.
2. Begin marketing and PR efforts early than six months prior
3. Develop a volunteer network to assign tasks