

3 Great Ways to Market A Controversial Nonprofit

Your nonprofit is making a difference in your community. It's handling a delicate issue that troubles countless people. In many ways it's a true force good in the world. But it's not something that everyone appreciates.

Any organization can find themselves at the center of a scandal. But some nonprofits – by their very nature – are lightning rods for controversy year after year. If you're ready to change the world, but your cause isn't universally beloved, you might want to keep the following techniques in mind when you market your cause.

Stand strong, even when it upsets people.

The NRA could be considered the text book definition of a controversial nonprofit. But there's a lesson in the way they stick to their guns. (No pun intended.) When faced with the angry survivors of the Parkland Shooting, NRA Spokesperson Dana Loesch was bombarded with calls for change, and a mountain of facts about how her organization had failed. [But Loesch never changed her position](#). She acknowledged that the Parkland shooting was a tragedy, and that things needed to change. But she also made it clear that she wasn't going to stop fighting the government's attempts to pass laws that might make responsible gun ownership harder.

Considering the shooting had left 17 teenagers dead, many people considered Loesch's remarks infuriating. But the stance she took was powerful. Standing up for your organization's mission can be terrifying. Especially when you have vocal detractors. But it shows that you have integrity, and are devoted to your cause – even when everyone else in the room is against you.

Let those you've helped speak for themselves.

Any organization that isn't actively promoting hate, exclusion, or abuse has the potential to be relatable to their community. But you need to show the community why they should put their trust in you.

Testimonials go a long way towards erasing the idea that your organization is some kind of a terrifying monolith. After all, people don't rely on your services for no reason. The people you've helped the most may have had some decidedly chilly opinions on your nonprofit... until they needed your help. Show that before they ran into some problems, your participants were just like anyone else. [They never thought they'd be here](#). But when they hit rock bottom, your organization's resources helped them reclaim their life and get back to normal.

Show why your organization offers a better solution.

Many misunderstood nonprofits were created to deal with a difficult issue that has no clear answers. But while your organization can't offer a perfect solution to the issue you've decided to take on, you're trying to offer resources that will help. And you should show that.

The catholic churches that are [issuing IDs for migrants in Dallas](#) may not have the ideal solution to immigration, but their efforts give stability to families caught in a political whirlwind. The opioid crisis gets worse every day, but with grassroots organizations offering [long-term birth control to female addicts](#), the number of children affected is slowly being reduced.

Your critics see the problems you're trying to address. They just don't understand why your method would be a solution. Show them why you're truly making a difference.