

# Client Case Study: DDB California

# DDB<sup>o</sup>

DDB is an agency that prides itself on having big hearts and big ideas, and as such, each of the agency's global offices is encouraged to give back within its local community. The passionate, creative team of proud San Franciscans at DDB California is no exception. They approached CauseWay in July 2013 seeking to make a significant impact where they live and do business by aligning with a worthy Bay Area charitable organization to provide a robust volunteer program and full-scope pro bono creative effort.

The San Francisco office had historically supported charitable organizations exclusively through the donation of creative services and not typically through long-term alliances. Now, they hoped to build on that foundation by establishing a multi-year, multi-faceted charitable platform that would provide meaningful opportunities for all agency professionals to get involved, regardless of their job function, and become emotionally connected to the cause.

DDB California's desire to establish a charitable alliance was part of a larger organizational culture initiative. After a period of transition, which included the hiring of new leadership, a change in branding and the expansion of services, office-wide philanthropy was regarded as a powerful tool in cementing a reinvigorated team-oriented, enthusiastic culture that would define the agency's personality moving into 2014 and beyond.

"As we look to the future and how we want to grow both as individuals and as a business that is part of the fabric of community and equality for which the Bay Area is known, deep and lasting partnerships with worthy nonprofits play a pivotal role," said John Minty, Chief Operating Officer. "We're storytellers with big hearts, and we want to

put our talent to good use for the benefit of social change. Giving back to the communities in which we live and work is at the core of who we are and who we want to be as an agency."



## Partnership and Platform

To kick off the cause platform development effort, in September 2013 CauseWay polled the 120 DDB California employees to identify social issues about which they collectively care most. Employees completed a short, 10-question electronic survey designed to assess affinity for different causes as well as learn more about existing philanthropic involvement.

The result? The agency realized it had a shared passion for child welfare, and set out to find a nonprofit focused on improving the lives of children.

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Within this cause category, DDB sought to establish a multi-faceted relationship that allowed them to be as collectively involved as possible in helping the agency's charity partner fulfill its mission. Their investment in the nonprofit would include a combination of group volunteerism, a broad spectrum of strategic counsel and marketing support, board service and financial/in-kind gifts.

In reflecting on the process, DDB's Business Development Coordinator, Bryan Bucci said, "In a few words, working with CauseWay was engaging, collaborative and effortless. When we began our pro bono initiative, we had no game plan or strategy and had but a rough idea of the types of non-profit organizations we were interested in pursuing."

He added, "CauseWay conducted a comprehensive yet streamlined audit of our agency in order to pinpoint exactly what the organization as a whole felt passionate about. This was key in ensuring that everyone felt included in the decision making process, which has paid dividends in our team's commitment and interest in Edgewood."

## Charity Selection

CauseWay developed a list of 20 Bay Area charities with a child-centric mission and appropriate service footprint, as well as an RFP to outline DDB's objectives and solicit important organizational capacity and needs information from those charities.

Of the 20 charities that received an invitation to complete the RFP, seven submitted proposals for consideration. CauseWay carefully vetted the responses to determine the best candidates based on DDB's partnership goals and on the overall suitability and ability of the organizations to help DDB achieve those goals. The charities were given 30 days to respond, and during that time frame, CauseWay answered questions and worked with them as a resource while they completed their proposals.

After the proposal review, CauseWay recommended that DDB proceed to the in-person-interview stage with two charities. DDB reviewed the submissions and CauseWay's analysis and felt a very strong affinity for one of the recommended charities. As a result, they decided to proceed with an in-person discussion with only Edgewood Center for Children and Families.

"Causeway pro-vided us excellent guidance as we developed our proposal. They were very transparent about what the agency was looking for in a nonprofit partner, and we were able internally to think through our needs in a way that would be mutually beneficial to our organization and DDB," said Edgewood of the process. "CauseWay was quick to respond to our requests for clarification, and we felt that they were on "our side" in crafting a partnership that would be successful for everyone involved."

The oldest children's charity in the western United States, Edgewood was founded in 1851 as an orphanage. Since then, the organization has continually adapted its services to meet the changing needs of the youth and families in the Bay Area. Edgewood now runs more than 25 programs ranging from prevention and early intervention

mental health programs to community-based, day and residential treatment services. They serve 7,000 youth and families in San Francisco and San Mateo counties each year. Many Edgewood clients face interlocking challenges — abuse or violence in their homes, schools, and neighborhoods; parental poverty or incarceration; difficulties succeeding in the classroom; and lack of access to physical and/or mental health services. As they submitted their proposal, they were also gearing up to offer substance abuse treatment for the first time in 2014.

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Edgewood's proposal highlighted numerous group and individual volunteer opportunities for DDB

team members, as well as a long list of marketing support needs to satisfy the pro bono creative objective. The proposal identified that in recent years, the nonprofit had only the leanest of marketing efforts, and was eager for wide-ranging assistance in building its profile, donor base and signature event participation. In addition, the two organizations seemed to be culturally aligned, which can be the most important factor in establishing a long-term, successful corporate-charity partnership.

An in-person meeting and tour of the facilities at Edgewood's main campus cemented the relationship.



"We are extremely excited about our partnership with Edgewood and are very much looking forward to helping the organization gain the exposure and recognition they so greatly deserve.

CauseWay helped ensure that the parameters of the partnership were both clearly defined as well as mutually beneficial to both parties," said Fran Kelly, Director of New Business.

## Year One Activity Plan

To guide activities during the first year of the relationship, CauseWay set out to develop a "Year One Activity Plan" for 2014 with input from both DDB and Edgewood that spelled out each party's goals, deliverables and timelines. The plan's content was largely developed through a half-day kick off meeting facilitated by CauseWay. The plan will serve as both a roadmap as well as a tool to benchmark the success of the partnership at key intervals throughout the year.

Bucci explained, "While the relationship is still in its early stages, DDB California has already volunteered in several Edgewood events and looks forward to helping define Edgewood's brand identity and effectively communicate its mission. As more and more DDB employees become exposed to the passion and dedication associated with Edgewood and its staff, the stronger our office culture has and will continue to become. We are thrilled, yet unsurprised by the enthusiasm so many of our employees feel toward working with Edgewood."

The enthusiasm Bucci speaks of is readily apparent throughout the organization. International Account Coordinator Andy Whalen said, "It's one thing to read about Edgewood on its website or collateral brochures, but to be on campus and witness first hand the influence that this organization has on people is absolutely inspiring."

## Ongoing Support

To ensure that the partnership stays on track, CauseWay will remain available to both parties throughout the year to offer guidance and recommendations about how to maximize the program's success as well as address any questions or challenges that might arise as the collaboration develops.

Building on lessons learned in year one, CauseWay



will circle back at the end of 2014 to facilitate a year one debrief session and develop an Activity Plan to guide year two.

"With CauseWay's help, every individual DDB California employee had a chance to play a role in our search for a charitable partner, and it couldn't have been easier. The sheer passion and whole-heartedness that so obviously exude from Edgewood staff coupled with the impactful mission of the organization is truly

inspiring. We are beyond thrilled to combine our marketing expertise with Edgewood's dedication toward the behavioral health of our local youth and their families in order to initiate a larger bay area community impact," said Kelly.

She added, "We're all very excited to produce great work for Edgewood that will have a significant and positive impact on our community. 2014 is going to be a rewarding year for both of us, and we look forward to helping Edgewood receive the exposure and recognition they so greatly deserve. We owe CauseWay a huge amount of gratitude for its role in our partnership with Edgewood."