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Intergrating online communications for non-profits

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**INTEGRATING ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS FOR
NON-PROFITS**

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

by

Saba Obaid Siddiqi

December, 2001

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Kenneth D. Plowman", written over a horizontal line.

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ABSTRACT
INTEGRATING ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS FOR NON-PROFITS

by Saba Obaid Siddiqi

This multiple case study explored how four non-profits in California used the Internet in their communications mix. It considered what online tools the organizations used for fundraising and relationship-building, and whether their effectiveness strengthened the Two-way symmetrical model, the Learning hierarchy model, and the Integrated marketing communications (IMC) model. It also considered whether having a branding focus on Web sites, in accordance with the IMC model, made a difference in their effectiveness. Through focused interviews, documents, and personal observation of their Web sites, the study discovered that the most effective online tool for fundraising and relationship-building was email, which strengthened both the Two-way symmetrical model and the Learning hierarchy model, and it was also the most well-integrated tool. Online donation was not an effective fundraising tool. In addition, in accordance with the IMC model, the more organizations focused on using their Web sites for branding, the more effective they were.

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for Waseem & Sadaf

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Chapter I

Introduction

Since the Internet is an inexpensive medium with a high reach potential it may be an ideal channel of communication for non-profits as part of their communication mix. According to Burnett and Moriarty (1998), new technology is opening up new opportunities for communication that can be initiated by the customer. These types of communication will supplement or substitute for the mass forms of communication used exclusively in the past.

Although the number of media choices is expanding every day, the time people have to spend with media is not. Keith Reinhard, chairperson and CEO of DDB Needham Worldwide, describes the task facing the media strategist as the following: "In the future, the most important part of the promotion strategy will be to identify which media vehicles attract which consumers, and what media patterns those consumers follow through a day or week or month, and then to intelligently program messages on the consumers own personal 'media networks'" (Burnett & Moriarty, 1998, p. 514).

Furthermore, according to Burnett and Moriarty (1998), the advance in database technology has identified a very demanding consumer rather than a passive audience, one who wants relevant content, extra incentives, and signs of company commitment to things that matter, such as health and the environment. Most of all, this new consumer wants to be in touch with companies and brands on his or her own time, and has very little patience with intrusive communication forms such as advertising.

According to Mitchell and Orwig (1998), for the non-profit sector, generation Xers is a customer segment that will be a major force for many years to come; therefore, organizations need to be able to successfully market to their needs. "Coming on the heels of the well-known Baby Boomers (those born between 1948 and 1964), Baby Busters or Generation Xers represent 50 million people born between 1965 and 1978. Some demographers extend this period from 1961 to 1981 to encompass those with similar life experiences. If we use that broader classification, Xers outnumber Baby Boomers and have done so since 1980"(para. 2). Generation X is the first generation that has grown up with VCR's and video games, and has experienced computers at home and at school. To successfully market to this computer generation, organizations must give them plenty of ways to connect with them through email and the Internet, put information on the Web, and offer them ways to donate through the Internet and electronic funds transfer (EFT).

Miles Fawcett, founder and president of (iapps®), a Washington, D.C.-based Internet development firm that has distinguished itself in the non-profit and foundation world, says, "The Web is no longer just for those on the cutting edge. It is rapidly becoming the norm for communications. In today's fast paced culture, the last thing we need is difficulty reaching people or locating information"(Barnett & Barnett, 1999, para. 8). The benefits of being online are magnified for non-profit organizations because they operate on such tight resources that it is hard to get their message heard over the "marketing mania of capitalist firms" (Blom, 1999).

However, to get real results from their online marketing, organizations must be in it for the long haul. Developing an online presence is time-consuming. To achieve

success, online marketers must be prepared to answer hundreds of email messages a day, spend time poring over customer logs to find out what works and what does not in their site design, and learn their publics' likes and dislikes by reading what they have to say on discussion boards (USWeb & Bruner, 1998).

Goals of Non-profits going Online

The Internet is being used by non-profits as a low-overhead marketing tool and as a way to analyze and target donors more effectively. Non-profits are constantly challenged for ways to keep overhead and administrative costs down so that donors feel that the majority of their money is going to support their cause. Furthermore, building relationships that encourage donors to give generously is key to a non-profit's health (Tillett, 2000). According to Rados (1996), computer networks and bulletin boards will become an important medium for non-profits to reach clients (those who use its services) and backers (those who support the organization) in the near future. Tools such as web-based bulletin boards or mailing lists, for example, can provide forums for discussion, disseminate news about an organization, or direct their community to resources they will find useful.

Cindee Archer, online media manager at the American Red Cross, regards the Internet as a means of disseminating information and collecting donations (Sanborn, 2000). According to Russ Finkelstein, director of outreach at Action Without Borders, an organization based in New York that lists more than 21,000 non-profit and charity organizations around the globe, the Internet is an excellent arena for non-profits because

“Typically, there’s a lack of resources and a lack of time, so whatever makes your job easier and whatever ways you can share resources are always useful” (Sanborn, 2000, para. 15).

From the discussion above, the goals of a non-profit going online are the following in order of importance:

1. Fundraising for the organization.
2. Raising awareness and support for their cause/organization.
3. Building relationships with clients and donors.

IMC Goals

The IMC (Integrated Marketing Communications) goal is to create synergy, which means that coordinating marketing communication tools creates more impact than the tools would have without such coordination. Integration promises more efficiency, customer loyalty, and impact of the marketing communication program and helps maintain consistency in global marketing programs (Burnett & Moriarty, 1998). “While every manager knows single-focus, clear-cut company strategies and selling messages are important, most firms, because of their functional organizational structures, still tend to send disparate messages to the outside world. Worse, they miss the opportunity to gain the full value for their marketing dollar that integrated programs can provide” (Schultz, 1998, para. 2).

In a study cited by Shultz (1998), the American Productivity & Quality Center (APQC), a Houston-based non-profit consortium known for benchmarking studies on

production, quality control, and the distribution process, revealed several findings by IMC best-practice companies that can be applied to any organization wanting to focus its customer efforts and maximize return on marketing investments. First, integration is a process, which is established by involving everyone in the organization. Second, in implementing IMC practices, organizations go through four separate stages:

1. Firms start with identifying and managing all forms of external communication and focus on corporate and product branding.
2. Moving beyond external activities such as advertising, public relations, they begin to align and coordinate internal employee communication, trade promotion, product packaging, etc.
3. Firms begin to apply information technology in the development and implementation of marketing and communication programs. Databases are developed about customer and company interactions over time. This provides major marketplace advantages, because it helps develop more relevant programs with less waste and redundancy.
4. Organizations treat marketing communications activities as investments.

By utilizing the Internet as an Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) tool, non-profits can get the most from their online efforts. Although IMC emphasizes branding the cause/organization, and treats fundraising and relationship-building with a constituency as two modalities of that, all branding efforts indirectly help fundraising as well as relationship-building goals.

Scope of Study

This study examines (1) what marketing communications strategies non-profits use with respect to their online presence, (2) how well these communications strategies

are integrated according to the IMC model, and (3) which strategies are best for an organization's communications mix, according to the Learning hierarchy model of marketing, and the Two-way symmetrical model of public relations. This study also examines how effectively the organizations use their Web sites according to the Integrated marketing communications (IMC) model.

The Learning hierarchy model, derived from the Hierarchy of effects model, states that in situations where the audience is highly involved, attempts to influence their interest and desire are the best marketing communications strategies. On the other hand, in low involvement situations attempts to influence feelings or getting individuals to act first works better in achieving marketing communications goals. Since Internet users are a highly involved audience, this study compares the Learning hierarchy model of marketing to the practices of the organizations to determine the effectiveness of their online efforts.

According to Grunig and Grunig (1992), the best model for public relations is the Two-way symmetrical model. It allows for two-way communication between the target audience and the organization for the mutual benefit of both. Other models are two-way asymmetrical (which allows for two-way communication but for the purpose of persuading the audience to the organization's views), and one-way publicity/press agency (publicity campaigns to promote the organization's views), and one-way public information (truthful information about the organization but geared to enhance its image). This study compares aspects of the two-way communications models with the practices of the organizations to determine the effectiveness of their online communications.

This study departs from other studies in that it looks at online communications strategies from the perspective of an integrated communications approach, that is, how an organization's online presence is integrated into its communications mix. It hopes to reveal that well-integrated communications strategies that follow the IMC model can provide organizations better results for their dollars. IMC is the practice of unifying all marketing communication tools, from advertising to packaging, to send target audiences a consistent, persuasive message that promotes company goals (Burnett & Moriarty, 1998). IMC focuses on promoting the brand image, and emphasizes customer loyalty by focusing on long-term relationships with customers and other stakeholders.

The results of this study will be useful in revealing the patterns of communications management by organizations that integrate technology into their communications mix. This study endeavors to reveal the strengths and weaknesses in the organizations' approach, according to theory, so that improvements may be made where necessary. The study will contribute to the body of knowledge of mass communications by providing it with an analysis of a multiple sample of communications management as practiced in the four proposed organizations that incorporate technology into their communications mix.

This study does not attempt to look at the core effectiveness of individual strategies of online communications, nor does it compare non-profits that do not utilize online with non-profits that do. Since this is a qualitative study, the results are not statistically generalizable (Yin, 1994). It does, however, provide a theoretical framework for building effective online communications strategies and integrating them into the

communications mix, from which future organizations wanting to enter the online arena may benefit.

Background of Study

The researcher's interest in online as part of a non-profit's communications mix stems from her interest in new technology as a communications tool and her interest in pursuing a career in the non-profit sector. The various causes she is most interested in are children's issues, being a new mother, Islam and Muslim issues, being a Muslim woman, environmental issues, being an environmental enthusiast, as well as issues of race relations and discrimination, being of color and a minority. With these interests in mind, the researcher has tried to choose the organizations for her study.

Overview of Methods

The multiple case study was the method chosen for this study. Through this qualitative method, the researcher will be able to explore in-depth how several non-profit organizations use the Internet as part of their communications mix and how they integrate these strategies with their overall communications plan. Data collected will include interviews with appropriate staff involved in the set-up and maintenance of each organization's Web site and other online strategies, as well as with members of upper management who are involved in the decision-making process of what strategies comprise their communications plan. Documentation from each organization may include, but not be limited to, the original proposal for each Web site, and the proposals

for other online communications, such as email appeals, the organization's communications plan, the organization's fundraising plan, direct mail appeals, documents describing the mission and vision of the organization, as well as promotional items. Direct observation of each Web site will reveal how well the organizations communicate their mission and vision in their messages and brand themselves, how well-organized the Web sites are with respect to user-friendliness, what, if any, interactive elements are available, and how well integrated is the Web site into the organizations' communications mix.

Chapter II

Literature Review

This chapter looks at marketing communications models that are most appropriate to online communications, namely, the Learning hierarchy model and the Two-way symmetrical model. But first, it begins with a definition of some key terms used in the study. It further examines the research that has been done on the online strategies that are most important to non-profits going online, namely for fundraising, branding, and client/donor relations. It concludes with a summary and research questions that arise from the synthesis of the literature review.

Definition of Key Terms

Below, in alphabetical order, are definitions of some key terms as used in this paper. Explanations of these terms are useful in understanding the way they are used in the study.

Fundraising.

Fundraising is the management of communication between an organization and its donor publics, not just raising money. According to Kelly (1991), who is the first to use Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four public relations models to explain fundraising, the dominant presupposition is that the purpose of fundraising is to manipulate the behavior of donors for the potential benefit of the recipient organization and the assumed benefit of the donors. The two-way symmetrical model is defined as a symmetrical worldview of

fundraising, which holds the purpose of matching institutional objectives with external interests to achieve mutual understanding between an organization and its donor publics.

IMC (Integrated Marketing Communications).

IMC is the practice of unifying all marketing communication tools, from advertising to packaging, to send target audiences a consistent, persuasive message that promotes company goals (Burnett & Moriarty, 1998). According to Schultz, “Initially defined as the alignment of all external communication programs to present a coordinated, single selling message to customers and prospects, IMC has been expanded to include the organization’s total sales and marketing efforts” (1998, para. 2). In IMC planning, the strengths of the various tools, such as direct mail, print advertising, catalogs, public relations, trade shows & exhibits, literature, radio, television, etc., are matched against the problems and opportunities to decide which ones are best able to accomplish the organization’s objective (Burnett & Moriarty, 1998). IMC focuses on promoting the brand image, and tools such as PR and advertising are formulas for achieving that. IMC emphasizes customer loyalty by focusing on long-term relationships with customers and other stakeholders.

Mission.

What an organization stands for, its purpose. A mission statement is an organization’s statement of purpose.

Relationship-building.

Establishing mutual understanding and goodwill between an organization and its constituency. Relationship marketing, which is the popular term for relationship-building, is concerned with cooperative and collaborative relationships between an organization and its constituency. McGarry (1950, 1951, 1953, 1958), cited in Sheth and Parvatiyar (2000), suggested the following as relationship marketing functions:

1. Building a structure for cooperative action.
2. Focusing on long-run welfare of business and continuous business relationship.
3. Developing an attitude of mutual interdependence.
4. Providing a two-way line of communication and a linkage of customer and business interests.

Vision.

What an organization wants to accomplish, its goals. Marketing in an organization becomes effective when the organization is very clear about what it wants to accomplish, and when it has taken steps to implement this vision in a way which brings about that result.

The Learning Hierarchy Model

The Hierarchy of effects models, from which the Learning hierarchy model is derived, say that consumers move through a step-by-step process as they receive marketing information and move toward a decision. The classic hierarchy of effects model, sometimes called AIDA, describes the effect of marketing as beginning with

awareness, then moving to *interest*, then *desire*, and finally *action*. According to Ray (1973), the first proponents of this model, Lavidge and Steiner, argued that these levels of hierarchy are linked in a stair step fashion, learning before attitude change, before behavior change. A great deal of research, however, indicates that there are three common orders of hierarchy that may exist in any communication response situation:

1. Learning hierarchy: cognitive-affective-conative (awareness-desire-action).
2. Dissonance-attribution hierarchy: conative-affective-cognitive (action-desire-awareness).
3. Low-involvement hierarchy: cognitive-conative-affective (awareness-action-desire).

Learning hierarchy occurs when the audience is involved in the topic and when there are clear differences between alternatives. Research on the diffusion of new products and innovation provides the best illustration of such conditions. Those audiences that are most interested in new ideas are involved, and new ideas or products offer clear alternatives. In Learning hierarchy, cognitive response comes first and is the most influenced by a communication whereas conative response is most difficult to attain (Ray, 1973).

Dissonance-attribution hierarchy occurs in situations in which the audience has been involved but the alternatives have been indistinguishable. The consumer is forced to make a choice or behavior on the basis of some non-media or non-marketing communication source, for example, the advice of a friend, then s/he changes attitude in order to bolster that choice after the experience. Finally, learning occurs reducing dissonance (Ray, 1973).

The Low-involvement hierarchy occurs when low involvement makes actual differences unimportant to the audience and the most repeated item is learned and acted upon and then attitude changes toward the item. In the Low-involvement hierarchy, there is almost unlimited affect on the cognitive function, because audience members do not care or are not involved. This eventually leads to a conative response on the basis of almost blind choices, and much later, some change in the affective function (Ray, 1973).

The key explanatory variable in the three hierarchy models is involvement in the communication and its topic. Under high involvement the Learning hierarchy should occur, otherwise, there will be a low-involvement hierarchy result. Since the online audience comes with high involvement by virtue of actively seeking information, the Learning hierarchy model would be in effect. In this situation, then, marketing communications strategies that work on influencing learning and attitudinal responses should be most effective, as opposed to strategies that call for an immediate action response.

Two-way Communication Models

Two-way communication models allow for the creation of relationships between customers and the organization. IMC planners have the advantage of the inherent two-way nature of the Web platform to build such relationships. There are two kinds of two-way communication models: Two-way asymmetrical and Two-way symmetrical. “In both two-way models, research provides feedback from publics to management, closing the loop and making communication two way” (Dozier, Grunig & Grunig, 1995, p. 41).

In the 1920s, Edward Bernays formulated the Two-way asymmetrical model, which says, “the communicator gathers information from target publics in order to devise effective media and message strategies . . . But communicators might use such feedback from publics to persuade or even manipulate them into compliance with organization’s objectives” (Dozier, et al., 1995, p. 41).

The Two-way symmetrical model seeks to provide both information about the publics to the organization and information about the organization to the publics. In the two-way symmetrical model “communicators negotiate with both publics and dominant coalitions” (Dozier, et al., 1995, p. 49) to reach a win-win situation for both. “In communicating to the publics, communicators try to persuade publics to move toward the organization’s position. In communicating with the dominant coalitions, communicators try to persuade dominant coalitions to move toward the public’s position” (Dozier, et al., 1995, p. 49). Unlike the two-way asymmetrical practices, two-way symmetrical practices use research to facilitate understanding and communication rather than to identify messages most likely to motivate or persuade publics. “In the symmetrical model, understanding is the principal objective of public relations rather than persuasion” (Grunig & Grunig, 1992, p. 289).

The two-way models of communication grew out of a need for better ways of communication than those provided by the traditional one-way models of communication. The earliest model of public relations is the Publicity/press agency model. This model allows “dominant coalitions to send messages to publics through pamphlets, brochures, news releases, . . . etc., for distribution through controlled media”

(Dozier, et al., 1995, p. 45). The other model is the Public information model. It favors “truthful disclosure of information to the media, . . . which generates favorable publicity in the long run” (Dozier, et al., 1995, p. 41). Both the Publicity/press agency model and the Public information model are one-way models, because communication flows one-way, from the organization through media channels to target publics (Dozier, et al., 1995). According to Grunig and Grunig (1992), “One-way communication disseminates information; it is a monologue. Two-way communication exchanges information; it is a dialogue. Purpose describes whether the model is asymmetrical or symmetrical. Asymmetrical communications is imbalanced; it leaves the organization as is and tries to change the public. Symmetrical communication is balanced; it adjusts the relationship between the organization and public” (p. 289).

Dozier, et al. (1995), argue that communication excellence occurs when organizations demand two-way practices from their communication departments. Top communicators understand these demands for sophisticated two-way practices. According to Grunig and Grunig (1992), organizations often do not practice the models purely but use different models for different situations and different programs. This means that it is possible to have a combination of one-way practices and two-way practices within excellent departments.

It is important for IMC planners to understand that the new era of electronic communication recognizes that two-way communication can be more effective than one-way because it deals with real feedback (Burnett & Moriarty, 1998). Interactive communication systems, using computer technology, allow the marketing communicator

to send persuasive messages while simultaneously allowing the receiver to react, modify, and customize the message and the response, that is, interactive technology delivers messages to the masses while providing the benefits of interpersonal communication (Burnett & Moriarty, 1998). Hence, two-way communication is not only valuable for optimizing an organization's function, but it also builds relationships with its publics.

According to Kelly (1991), who is the first to use Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four public relations models to explain fundraising, the Two-way symmetrical model is also the best model for fundraising. It is defined as a symmetrical worldview of fundraising, which holds the purpose of fundraising to be the matching of institutional objectives with external interests to achieve mutual understanding between an organization and its donor publics. This model uses formative research to balance the needs of the organization and its donor publics, that is, research is used to identify opportunities for funding and to identify issues that the charitable organization is not addressing through donor relationships. The effectiveness of this model is evaluated by its contribution to enhancing and protecting organizational autonomy through the fundraising process. Other fundraising models, represented by the asymmetrical models of communication, are those whose purposes are to publicize a cause that through emotion will manipulate publics into giving (the Press agentry model); to disseminate incomplete information of needs to indirectly manipulate enlightened publics in making rational gift decisions (the Public information model); or to persuade donor prospects to give through scientifically researched and designed messages (the Two-way asymmetrical model).

Finally, relationship marketing also emphasizes two-way symmetrical communications for relationship-building with the constituency. McGarry (1950, 1951, 1953, 1958), cited in Sheth and Parvatiyar (2000), suggested the following as relationship marketing functions:

1. Building a structure for cooperative action.
2. Focusing on long-run welfare of business and continuous business relationship.
3. Developing an attitude of mutual interdependence.
4. Providing a two-way line of communication and a linkage of customer and business interests.

Hence the Two-way symmetrical model is relevant for fundraising, as defined in Kelly's fundraising models, as well as for relationship-building with the constituency. The theories discussed above are explained in terms of the research done on online communications strategies and tactics available to non-profits.

Online Fundraising

Using online for fundraising is a key part of every non-profit's plan when they include the Internet into their communications mix. Online fundraising strategies may include one or both of the following: direct donations and donor cultivation via email. Tactics for direct donations, among others, have included secure credit card donations and donations via online charity malls. Tactics for donor cultivation include email marketing to donors to connect with them as well as to solicit them for funds.

Although, historically, direct-mail appeals have been the main method non-profits have used to raise funds, non-profit organizations such as Baltimore-based Catholic

Relief Services, Atlanta-based CARE USA, and the Washington-based American Red Cross are using interactive Web sites to accept online donations. From a marketing standpoint, these sites do much more: they are a profitable marketing tool that effortlessly adds names to their databases and promises increased donations in the future (Schmidt, 1999). According to Leslie Credit, spokeswoman for the American Red Cross, "In general, people are becoming more comfortable making purchases online, and that is directly transferring to giving online" (Schmidt, 1999, para. 2). Cost-effectiveness makes Web site-generated names beneficial to non-profits. According to Margaret Guellich, director of database marketing for Catholic Relief Services, organizations and companies typically rent a list for mailed solicitations, which gives them rights to use the name only once. Names garnered from the Web, however, are the property of the non-profit organization and can be used more than once (Schmidt, 1999). It also appears that online donations provide the disaster-relief groups with funds they would not have received otherwise. Regarding the donors for Kosovo aid, Tom Gaffny, VP of the creative group at Burlington, Mass.-based Epsilon, a national database and direct-marketing company that provides names and manages the direct mail for 90 non-profit organizations, notes that 88% were new to the organizations' databases. These donors had not given to the groups before and perhaps had never received a mailed solicitation from them (Schmidt, 1999).

Although the name-capturing ability, immediacy and minimal cost all are contributing factors making the Web an attractive addition to a non-profit's fundraising, non-profits such as Catholic Relief Services say the technology is too new for them to

project large growth in Internet donations. The Internet is being viewed more as a partner or enhancement to direct-mail pieces, according to Guellich, who also notes that the Internet helps donors respond instantly to a need, and reciprocally, allows the agencies to send an immediate acknowledgment of the gift (Schmidt, 1999).

According to True (1999), although “socially conscious Web surfers say they welcome online giving as long as they are assured it is secure and the charity is legitimate” (para. 4), in a study conducted by the Mellman Group for the consulting firm Craver, Mathews, Smith, in September 1999 (which surveyed a sample of 1,200 Internet users), of the 50 million American adults or 25% of the adult population that have Internet access and report giving time or money to social causes, most of those “socially engaged Internet users” have never visited the Web site of a charity, and only 7% say they have donated money online (True, 1999, para. 13).

Among the barriers to online giving are lingering concerns about privacy and credit-card security, and 71% of survey respondents reported that they were “extremely” or “very” concerned about inappropriate use of their personal information. However, the study also found that donors quickly get over their reluctance, after having donated online once (True, 1999). In another survey, done in Australia, similar concerns about credit card security (64%) and privacy (54%), as well as concerns over whether the money goes to the cause (66%) were considered “most important” to the people surveyed (Johnson, 1998).

Given the research on e-giving, one industry expert, Michael Gilbert, a Seattle-based consultant to non-profits, says that this is a period of massive experimentation for

online giving, and non-profits, while taking advantage of the technology, should not turn their backs on traditional fundraising methods (True, 1999). “The most successful online fund-raisers are also philanthropy’s biggest brand names, such as the American Cancer Society and the American Red Cross” (“U.S. nonprofit,” 1998, para. 9).

According to the Learning hierarchy model, however, because of already high involvement of Internet users, the online medium seems to be more fit for teaching/informing and a gaining a favorable attitude from the audience rather than obtaining a behavioral response. Therefore, according to theory, direct donations over the Internet would not be the best tactic for an organization’s strategy for online fundraising. On the other hand, using email marketing may be an effective addition to fundraising efforts.

Targeting donors via email is an obvious extension to direct mail marketing, but to go about it successfully, an article in New Media Age, gives the following advice: “you must pick your media with the same care you would choose your traditional direct response media and . . . actively look for opportunities to reach those people most likely to welcome your message” (“Convergence matters,” 1997, p. 4). To use email as a marketing tool, organizations have to obey exactly the same rules as with direct mail, that is, to make sure their lists are up-to-date and of high quality. Names and email addresses should not be bought in bulk just because they are cheap. This strategy should be exercised with the same caution used when sending direct mail appeals, so as not to offend users by sending them what they will consider “junk” mail, but taking the pains to find out which donors would welcome this method of interaction. And before buying any

lists, organizations should look at their existing customer databases to find out how many of them have access to the Internet or an email address. This is the place to start, because encouraging the customers you already have to spend more with you is far easier and far more profitable than to win new ones (“Convergence matters,” 1997).

According to the Forrester Report (2001), on the effectiveness of email marketing, email works for retention of existing customers, not for acquisition of new ones. “Through email, we talk to our customers throughout the year—not just when they are up for renewal. The customers who receive email are 50% more likely to renew than those who don’t. And existing customers click through 50% more frequently than rented names do (Financial services company)” (p. 2). On a scale of 1 to 5, email’s effectiveness for customer retention ranks at 4.5 and the percent of marketers sending email to their existing customers is 92% versus email’s effectiveness for customer acquisition ranks at 2.1 on the scale and the percent of marketers sending acquisition email is 54%. According to the report, the number of emails sent per month by marketers will increase over the next two years, as marketers grow their customer lists and send more types of emails to existing customers. The same report, however, also states that off-target and too-frequent emails destroy customer relationships by making the customer feel that a once-trusted marketer no longer understands her needs. So, to really engage customers with email, marketers should shift from email campaigns to managing email conversations, that is, taking a customer-focused approach to message content and frequency. Forrester defines an email conversation as “An ongoing series of emails tailored to customers’ motivations and sequenced to guide them through their purchase

process” (p. 8). Rather than include “Act now!” in every email, marketers must sequence messages to bring people through the decision process. Email conversations take segmentation beyond a customer’s interests or past purchases, because they also consider motivation: why a customer has certain interests or purchases as she does. Besides using email to drive customers toward purchase, email can also move a customer through the loyalty process by identifying and growing loyal behaviors and attitudes, like referrals or a greater level of trust.

In a first ever survey about how non-profits can profit on the web, a strategic marketing firm, Peppers and Rogers Group, found that none of the 20 national and international non-profit online charities reviewed recognized donors already in their offline databases. In addition, 70 % of the charity Web sites reviewed would not even recognize a visitor on his second visit to the site, one of the most basic capabilities of an online for-profit enterprise (Reis, 2000). Two-way communication models insist that excellence in organizations comes from two-way communications. Furthermore, according to Kelly’s (1991) definition of fundraising, the best way to maximize results from fundraising activities is by using the Two-way symmetrical approach to fundraising, that is, focusing all fundraising activities on providing mutual benefits to donors and organizations in their association, rather than trying to manipulate donors. In other words, fundraising should focus on providing satisfaction and fulfillment for the donor, rather than getting the donor to take what the organization has to offer.

The discussion above leads the researcher to her first set of research questions:
What online fundraising strategies and tactics are being used by non-profits? How

integrated are they with the organizations' overall fundraising efforts? Is the Two-way symmetrical model being used for fundraising? Is the Learning hierarchy model used for fundraising?

Online Branding

The Internet lets customers interact more intimately with brands than any other media. The Web invites netizens to get involved with the brand, learn details about the product, sign up for special services, return to the site as a resource for a specific topic, and closely bond with the brand along the way (USWeb & Bruner, 1998). Talking about the benefits of Web sites for non-profits, Alina Blakesly, online community organizer for Maine Communities online, says, "They're not visible. You don't find them in the newspaper. Having a site can make them more visible" (Blom, 1999, para. 11). Ken Goldstein, director of online community development for HandsNet, a San Jose, Ca. Group that advises human services organizations about technology, goes so far as to say that these groups need to make more use of the Internet because being online is becoming akin to being listed in the telephone directory (Abelson, 2000).

However, just having a Web site is not enough. According to Miles Fawcett, founder and president of (iapps®), a Washington, D.C.-based Internet development firm that has distinguished itself in the non-profit and foundation world, "If you currently have a Web site, you need to evaluate it for its effectiveness. Above all else, Web sites need to be user-friendly-functional, simple to navigate and easy to maintain" (Barnett & Barnett, 1999, para. 9). Fawcett also states, "It's important to remember that a Web site is an

additional tool for the promotion and communication of your organization and its mission. A Web site should convey a look and feel that is appropriate for the organization and for the content the site contains”(Barnett & Barnett, 1999, para. 27). According to Knauft, Berger, and Gray (1991), the four hallmarks of excellence in non-profit organizations are a clear mission, strong leaders, a committed board, and stable revenues. Therefore, effective non-profits must have a clear mission statement that is embodied in all the words and actions of the organization, including their marketing communication efforts.

According to the Learning hierarchy model, there is a great opportunity for influencing the learning and attitudes of a highly involved online audience, and by providing information and interaction through a Web site to the active, information-seeking netizens, organizations can immediately gratify their learning needs and create a favorable attitude towards the brand.

Furthermore, organizations must have measurable return on investment goals for their Web sites. According to Jane Westlind, manager of electronic commerce for the Web site called Andy’s Garage Sale, which is owned by Fingernut Companies Incorporated, one of the world’s largest catalogue and direct-marketing businesses, “Don’t just take your existing model from another medium and cut and paste it into this one. Really rethink it. There’s got to be a reason for being online, some added value. . . . It’s got to be smarter or faster or better or cheaper or more fun or more informative” (USWeb & Bruner, 1998, p.21).

Many top commercial sites, such as Coca-Cola, Nike, Toyota, and so forth, have organized their Web sites in a clear, simple fashion. Their home page is very clean, geared only to selling their brand, with an index of basic links signifying company history, news, some place to buy products, and company financials. Consistent design elements make the sites easier to navigate, for example, having the company logo and an index of the main sections of the site on every page. Organizations should make sure they know what image they want to create with their Web site, usually a simpler, consistent image is best, and avoids confusion and information overload.

Hence, for non-profits going online, for the reasons mentioned above, a Web site should be treated as an important part of the branding strategy. This leads the researcher to her second set of research questions: How effectively are the non-profit organizations' Web sites being used in branding the organization: from communicating the organization's mission in their messages to being user-friendly, all of which is a reflection of their brand? How well-integrated are the Web sites into the organization's communications mix according to the IMC model?

Online Relationship-building

The Web's most important value is direct interaction with users. Static brochure sites miss the point. Online is about engaging with them, listening to them, and learning from them. People yearn to be involved and the Internet makes that easy. Simply providing an email address to the Webmaster is not real interactivity. People want to

know their opinions are being heard, they want to make a difference, they love to see their names and words in print, even if only on their monitors (USWeb & Bruner, 1998).

IMC planners can get publics involved with the organization through establishing virtual communities, where people can communicate with other members and become part of a group. "CharityCounts.com has created a forum specially designed for people to voice their opinions and get others to do the same. Interactive features such as scheduled live chats, message boards, and a newsletter help foster an online community" ("Now charity counts," 1999, para. 6). Members can also send private messages to each other and see who else is currently using the site by clicking the "Who's online" icon while logged in ("Now charity counts," 1999).

In their book Net Gain, Hagel III and Armstrong (1997), argue that businesses on the Internet and other networks do little more than advertise their wares on billboards on the Web in the hope that a passing surfer will stop by long enough to buy something. These old media advertisements, dressed in their new media clothes, are only one indication that marketers have yet to discover the secret to unlocking the revolutionary potential of the Internet and other networks. According to the authors, "lack of email, bulletin boards, and chat areas is a clear symptom of a failure to grasp the essentials of what the experience of being on-line can offer" (p. 129). The authors also believe that by creating strong virtual communities, organizations can build membership audiences and use those audiences to bring in revenues in the form of advertising, transaction fees, and membership fees.

Virtual communities give people with similar experiences the opportunity to form meaningful personal relationships without the constraints of time and space. The Cancer Forum on CompuServe, for instance, provides support for cancer patients and their families. Participants talk about how they deal with the disease, exchange information on medical research, pain medication, and so forth, and can download literature on cancer from the forum's library. The primary value of the community, however, is based on its ability to bring people together to share personal experiences. One of the fastest growing relationship communities is SeniorNet, a virtual community of more than 18,000 members. SeniorNet maintains forums targeted to senior citizens on America Online, Microsoft Network, and the Internet. Furthermore, the forums cover a broad terrain, for instance, there are forums called Christian Corner, Divorced Pals, Federal Retirees, and Senior Entrepreneur (Hagel III & Armstrong, 1997).

A key assumption driving the formation of virtual communities is that members will over time derive greater value from member-generated content than from more conventional forms of "published" content. Member-generated content is typically produced in real time in chat areas and accumulated in the postings to bulletin boards. Bulletin boards and chat areas are particularly powerful in terms of their ability to build personal relationships within a community. Member generated content, the accumulated postings to bulletin boards and the transcripts of chats, if accumulated and edited to maintain high standards of quality, and indexed for easy access to future member needs, can build a unique asset, which will serve to differentiate the community and make it harder for members who rely on its access to leave (Hagel III & Armstrong, 1997).

In their study on relationship-marketing activities in membership associations, Gruen, Summers, & Acito (2000), found that by utilizing virtual communities, marketers can enhance relationships by providing an environment that promotes the members' motivation, opportunity, and ability to create value among themselves. In addition to providing regular opportunities for members to exchange value face to face, associations can benefit by providing forums on their Web sites, where the members can interact with one another on the basis of their common interests. The study revealed that customer interdependence is becoming an increasingly important issue to marketers across industries, as many customer groups or communities are beginning to form and interact through Web sites on the Internet: For example, when SPSS Inc. president and CEO Jack Noonan announced his company's Web site, he also announced that the Web site gives SPSS users an open forum for exchanging ideas and tips that can help them get the most out of data analysis tools. However, according to Gruen, Summers, & Acito (2000), organizations that seek to develop and manage Web communities should first study the ways that associations have successfully brought people together around a common cause or interest.

Interacting with customers is not only a way to keep them coming back to the site, but it's a great way to learn from them as well. Reading what customers have to say on discussion boards can teach organizations what their customers really believe about the product and market (USWeb & Bruner, 1998). Building relations by providing online customer support is a true cost-saving opportunity. From simple FAQ web pages to staff replies to email inquiries, automated email responses, to Web-based bulletin boards,

newsgroups, AOL forums, searchable FAQ databases, to live support chat, organizations can use the web as an effective customer support mechanism (USWeb & Bruner, 1998).

Some marketers have realized that instead of trying to drive surfers to their Web sites, it is sometimes easier to drive their Web Sites to the surfers. With HTML-compliant email, maintaining an email mailing list is an excellent way to keep users engaged with the brand without waiting for them to visit your Web site (USWeb & Bruner, 1998). According to Mr. Boettiger, creator and moderator of I-Advertising, a daily interactive discussion forum for Internet marketers delivered via email, "The idea is, you visit my Web site once, and from there afterwards, my Web site visits you" (USWeb & Bruner, 1998, p. 210).

Hence, online forums, email networking, and customer support can be very effective strategies for an organization's online relationship-building activities. Two-way communication models insist that excellence in organizations comes from two-way communications; therefore, using the Internet to build better relationships with key publics should be part of the online communications strategy for non-profits.

This leads the researcher to her third set of research questions: What online client/donor relationship-building strategies and tactics are being used by non-profit organizations? How are these efforts integrated with their existing relationship-building efforts? Are relationship-building efforts based on the Two-way symmetrical model?

Summary of Theories and Research Questions

As Internet technology advances and disperses it is becoming more important and effective to include online strategies into the communications mix of non-profit organizations. However, trying to figure out which of the various online strategies provides the best communications mix can be both fascinating and confusing: It is fascinating because of the exciting strategies and tactics that are increasingly becoming available, and confusing because there are no standards or “best practices” against which to evaluate the choices. From the discussion of research to date on online strategies and tactics, it is evident that there is a need for academic research in the area. There is a lot of anecdotal information available, on the Internet itself as well, on how to establish an online presence, but there is very little academic research in the area. However, even with the newness of the Web and IMC practices in general, and Integrating online into a non-profit’s communications mix in particular, research evidence, and theoretical models suggest that the strengths of various tools, such as client/donor relationship-building through chat rooms, bulletin boards, and email networking, and branding via Web sites are excellent online strategies and tactics for non-profits to pursue as part of their communications mix. Direct online fundraising, however, does not show any strong positive or negative direction to its effectiveness, according to current research, whereas, the Learning hierarchy model suggests that direct donation strategies will not be very effective online. On the other hand, email marketing to donors would be successful for online fundraising.

Future research may be done on the individual online strategies and tactics to find out their core effectiveness as marketing communications tools. Future research may also compare the difference between non-profits that do not use online strategies to those that do use them. Research may also be done on non-profit organizations that are online, to see what their online practices are and how well integrated they are with the organization's overall communications practices.

This researcher would like to work in the third area of research mentioned above, that is, she would like to do a multiple case study on four non-profit organizations, focusing on non-profits in the Northern California Bay Area, such as the YWCA in Santa Clara Valley, to see how they utilize online as part of their communications mix. In order to get a better understanding of what works and what does not work online, as well as to garner "best practices" for future non-profits who want to establish an online presence, the researcher wants to answer the following sets of research questions:

1. What online fundraising strategies and tactics are being used by non-profits? How integrated are they with the organizations' overall fundraising efforts? Is the Two-way symmetrical model being used for fundraising? Is the Learning hierarchy model used for fundraising?
2. How effectively are the non-profit organizations' Web sites being used in branding the organization: from communicating the organization's mission in their messages to being user-friendly, all of which is a reflection of their brand? How well-integrated are the Web sites into the organization's communications mix according to the IMC model?
3. What online client/donor relationship-building strategies and tactics are being used by non-profit organizations? How are these efforts integrated with their existing relationship-building efforts? Are relationship-building efforts based on the Two-way symmetrical model?

The next chapter discusses the methods needed to answer the research questions posed herein.

Chapter III Methods

This chapter explores why the case study method was used for this study as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the case study method. This section also describes the three data collection methods selected to be used in this study, namely, direct observation of the organizations' Web sites, focused interviews with key individuals involved with the organizations' online communications as well as with the dominant coalitions of the organizations, and organizational documentation relevant to the marketing communication strategies of the organizations. It concludes with an explanation of the data analysis techniques that will be used to study the information gathered as well as a description of the organizations investigated in this study.

The Case Study Approach

This study utilizes the case study method to explore the questions about communications management at the various organizations researched. The case study method is appropriate in this situation because the research questions are of an exploratory "What" and explanatory "How" nature for which the case study method is more appropriate than other methods such as surveys, experiments, archival analysis, and histories (Yin, 1994). For example, to find out what types of online communications practices are used by different non-profit organizations, a case study would provide more current, in-depth, qualitative information than would a survey or archival analysis.

In addition, the case study method is suitable because the study aims to look at organizations in their real-life context and is not dealing with the "dead" past as does the

historical method. Since the researcher cannot “manipulate the behavior directly, precisely, and systematically” (Yin, 1994, p. 8), the experimental method is not appropriate either. Because the study’s purpose is to provide an overview of online communication strategies and their effectiveness, it is appropriate to use both an exploratory and an explanatory case study strategy.

Case study research can include both single- and multiple-case studies. When the same study contains more than a single case, the study has to use a multiple-case design. According to Yin (1994), multiple cases should be considered like multiple experiments, where “the method of generalization is ‘analytic generalization,’ in which a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study. If two or more cases are shown to support the same theory, replication may be claimed” (p.31). Multiple case designs have distinct advantages and disadvantages. The evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust. On the other hand, the unusual or rare cases, the critical case, and the revelatory case are all likely to involve only single cases, by definition (Yin, 1994). Since this study will look at four non-profit organizations in Northern California, it will use the multiple-case design.

Although the case study method is appropriate to study online communication practices at non-profit organizations, the method has its weaknesses. According to Yin (1994), first, there may be a tendency for researchers to allow their personal biases to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions. Second, case studies are not generalizable to populations or universes because they focus on a single case; however

they are generalizable to theory. Third, they are time-consuming and result in data that are difficult to analyze, however, this may be remedied with new approaches to case study design, implementation, and analysis. The case study method utilizes several data collection techniques to gather information. Below are the techniques that will be used in this study.

Data Collection

This study concentrates on gathering data from three sources, namely, organizational documentation, interviews, and direct observation. Other sources not included in this study are archival records, participant-observation, and physical artifacts. Archival records and physical artifacts were not chosen because they were not relevant to the study. Participant observation was not possible for the investigator because she does not work for the organizations being studied and therefore cannot take part in the events being studied. The three data collection methods to be used in this study are discussed below.

Documentation.

According to Yin (1994), documentation provides corroboratory and augmentative evidence for other sources. If documentary evidence is contradictory rather than corroboratory, the investigator has specific reason to inquire further into the topic. Over-reliance on documents as containing unmitigated truth, however, is a mistake because documents are written for a specific audience and for a specific purpose and this must be considered when evaluating information in documents. Any inferences made

from documents should be treated as clues worthy of further investigation rather than as definitive findings. Documents examined in this study may include but not be limited to the following: the original proposal for each Web site, the proposals for other online strategies, such as email networking, online forums, the fundraising plan, the marketing communications plan, server logs, documents stating the mission and vision of the organization, and organizational brochures, business cards, letterheads, direct mailers, and promotional materials.

Interviews.

Interviews are an essential source of evidence because case studies are about human affairs and these should be reported through the eyes of specific interviewees. Well-informed respondents can provide important insights into a situation. However, interviews should always be considered verbal reports only, and as such, they are subject to common problems of bias, poor recall, and poor or inaccurate articulation. It is therefore important to corroborate interview data with information from other sources. There are several forms of interviews, for example, open-ended interviews, focused interviews, and survey interviews (Yin, 1994). This study utilizes focused interviews because they take up a short period of time of the interviewees but are also open-ended and assume a conversational manner. The researcher will conduct interviews with appropriate staff involved in the set-up and maintenance of each organization's online presence, as well as with members of upper management who are involved in the decision making process of what strategies comprise their communications plan.

Direct Observation.

Direct observation allows for some relevant behaviors or environmental conditions to become available to the investigator. It is often useful in providing additional information about the topic being studied. The researcher will observe the various organizations' Web sites to see how well the sites communicate the organizations' mission and vision in their messages, how effective the sites are in branding the organization, how well organized the Web sites are with respect to ease of use and structure.

The goal of choosing three data sources was triangulation of sources, so that data may be effectively corroborated. According to Patton (1987), there are four types of triangulation in doing evaluations, namely:

1. Triangulation of data sources (data triangulation).
2. Triangulation among different evaluators (investigator triangulation).
3. Triangulation of perspectives on the same data set (theory triangulation).
4. Triangulation of methods (methodological triangulation).

This study utilizes data triangulation and theory triangulation in its evaluations to increase reliability of the study. The use of multiple cases also increases the validity of the study.

After collecting all the necessary data, the researcher must synthesize and analyze it to get useful information from it. The next section discusses the data analysis techniques that will be used in this study.

Data Analysis

This study will utilize pattern-matching techniques to analyze the data collected. The data will be compared to the Two-way communications models of public relations and the Learning hierarchy model of marketing to see if the non-profit organizations' communication strategies and tactics use any of these models or some part thereof. The results will confirm whether an organization practices one or both of these models, a variation, or a completely different model of communications management.

Explanation-building strategy will also help in the analysis of data. Through this strategy, the researcher will be able to see whether or not those strategies and tactics that match the communications theories are more effective than those that do not. If the results match theories, then the theories are strengthened. Explanation-building will also help to explain whether or not integration of communications practices using the IMC model makes a difference.

In conclusion, this researcher will utilize all the methods discussed earlier to find out what are the online communication practices of four non-profit organizations, and how well they match the two communications theories in consideration, as well as how well-integrated they are according to the IMC model. She will then analyze the data to see whether or not utilizing the theories makes a difference in the effectiveness of their communications, and whether integration according to the IMC model makes a difference in the effectiveness of their communications. From this the researcher will conclude how effective their online communications are with their publics. The hypotheses for this study are the following:

1. Organizations that utilize online strategies and tactics matching the two communications models, namely the Learning hierarchy model and the Two-way symmetrical model, will be most successful in their online marketing communications with their publics.
2. The more well-integrated the strategies according to the IMC model, the more successful the organizations will be in communicating with their publics. (IMC focuses on promoting the brand image and emphasizes customer loyalty by focusing on long-term relationships with customers and other stakeholders.)

Organizations Investigated in this Study

The following four organizations were investigated in this study:

1. Environmental Volunteers: A service organization that promotes understanding of, and responsibility for, the environment through hands-on science education. <http://www.evols.org>
2. Children Now: A national children's advocacy organization, with a California focus, that brings children's issues related to health, media, poverty, drugs, and so forth, to the attention of the public and policy-makers through research and mass communications. <http://www.childrennow.org>
3. San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce: A membership organization that works for the interest of its member businesses and the business community in general, in the Silicon Valley. <http://www.sjchamber.com>
4. YWCA in Santa Clara Valley: A service organization that works to empower women and their families in the Santa Clara Valley, through various programs, such as child-care and rape crisis counseling. <http://www.ywca-scv.org>

Chapter IV Findings

This chapter contains information found during the course of interviews with staff involved with online communications as well as upper management, for instance the Web content developers, development directors and/or communications directors, as well as the executive directors or presidents at the four non-profits studied, namely Environmental Volunteers, Children Now, San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce, and YWCA in Santa Clara Valley.

This chapter also includes information gathered from documentation obtained from the four organizations, including documents such as the organizations' strategic plans, fundraising plans, public relations plans, direct mailers, pamphlets and promotional items, and so forth, as well as personal observation of the organizations' Web sites. The findings are divided into three main parts: (a) Strategies and tactics for online fundraising, (b) Branding via Web sites, and (c) Strategies and tactics for online relationship-building.

Case 1: Environmental Volunteers

The interviewees for this case were Mr. Allan Berkowitz, Executive Director, Ms. Hillary Lennard, Volunteer & Teacher Services Director, and Ms. Rachael Brent, Office Manager. The researcher was unable to get an interview with the Webmaster, Mr. Mike Kahn, since he is an independent contractor and not staff any longer, which meant that the executive director would have had to pay him to talk to the researcher. The

organization does not have a Web content developer, instead the staff shares the responsibilities to develop the content for the Web site and they feed it to the Webmaster, who uploads it. The specific interview questions used in the research are listed in the Appendix.

Background of the organization.

Environmental Volunteers (EV) is an educational non-profit that teaches children to love and appreciate nature through hands-on natural science education. The EV is committed to exclusively small-group, interactive programs in both the classroom and on field trips. It is fundamentally volunteer-driven, with core programs being delivered solely by well-trained volunteer docents, rather than paid staff. Volunteers go through an intensive training program, provided by the organization and accredited through San Jose State University, after which they are able to go out and perform the specific services they trained for, to various schools in the San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. Its staff consists of six persons, including the executive director, and it is located in a small office in Palo Alto.

Environmental Volunteers was founded in 1972, when awareness of threats to the San Francisco Bay ecosystem began to grow, and a group of women concerned about preserving the estuary for future generations created a small, hands-on program for local children, to teach them to experience nature, enjoy it, and learn to protect it. Karen Nilsson was the original founder. The organization officially gained 501c(3) non-profit status in 1978. They have been online for at least 2 years now.

Online fundraising strategies and tactics.

The first category of the study's research questions asked the following questions: What online fundraising strategies and tactics are being used by non-profits? How integrated are they with the organizations' overall fundraising efforts? Is the Two-way symmetrical model being used for fundraising? Is the Learning hierarchy model used for online fundraising?

By triangulating information from the interviews, documents, and personal observation, the study revealed that the types of fundraising practices at Environmental Volunteers include the following:

- EV products for sale on Web site.
- Online donation capability on Web site.
- Using email as a communication tool with donors.

The organization is not really integrating its online fundraising strategies and tactics with offline ones. The organization uses direct mail and events as their major strategies for fundraising according to their fundraising plan, Environmental Volunteers Fundraising Plan for FY 00-01, and it does not include any online tactics to help accomplish these strategies. According to the same document, the EV had planned a donor thank you brunch and a fall donor drive, but the plan did not include any ways that online could be incorporated into the effort, for example, by having the registration for these events available online. The two major yearly appeals are mailed, and the document gave no indication of including online communications into the effort, such as sending email appeals to consenting donors. According to Berkowitz, Executive

Director, “In some cases we have donors who, it’s efficient for them, that’s how they prefer to do business. . . . And we know this particular donor is comfortable with that. I would say that for most of our donors and possibly most donors in the world, it’s too impersonal.” He said that their strategy is to use their Web site to communicate information, and to use email as a communication tool when it is appropriate, which is very seldom. He also said that they try to identify those people for whom it is not a stumbling block, and use electronic communication with them, and for that reason they have their newsletter in PDF form on their Web site.

The organization seems to utilize one-way practices, and is beginning to include two-way fundraising practices with donors. They use both the publicity and public information practices for fundraising. From documents, such as their newsletters, fundraising appeals, and pieces to local newspapers reviewed by the researcher, it is evident that they utilize publicity for building their donor base. This is corroborated by Berkowitz, who said that he wants “to be more well-known throughout the community and be in touch with more people so that we can introduce what we do and the opportunity for them to donate, the opportunity for them to volunteer.” They heavily rely on public information practices for donor development, and according to Berkowitz

We are absolutely convinced that if we’re given the opportunity to communicate to somebody what we do, and the effect that we have, more times than not, we’re going to win them over. . . . so our donor strategy is to increase contact with prospective donors, to create opportunity to tell somebody about what we do, and to show them.

Answering the question on whether the organization conducts research on what their donors want from them, Berkowitz said that in celebration of their 30th anniversary

next year, they are thinking about having an endowment campaign, to increase their endowment. They will get a fundraising expert to do a survey for them by contacting a sampling of their major donors, to find out a few things:

Number one, would they respond to an endowment campaign, or in our case, will our donors say, well you know what, I don't want to give \$50,000 to have it sit forever when you're only going to get the interest, I'd rather give \$50,000 and know that it's having a direct impact. Or, I'm thrilled to give \$50,000, knowing that forever, every year you're going to get about \$5,000 a year interest. So, one question will be, can we do an endowment campaign? Another question though is, what speaks to our donors, what is it about us that makes them respond so well? And if we can identify that, we can go to the new donors and play on that. And also to find out, are we asking for too little. A donor who gives us \$10,000 a year, maybe they're giving us 10 thousand a year because we keep asking for 10 thousand, and if we asked for 40 thousand, they'd give us 40 thousand a year. Or, maybe they're getting tired of giving us \$10,000 a year and they're about to stop doing that. So, we haven't done this either ever or in many years, I'm too new to know that.

From his response, it seems that the organization is attempting to utilize both two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical practices for future fundraising. They are using the Two-way symmetrical model in that they want to find out donor preferences on whether or not they would respond to or like an endowment campaign, and whether or not they are comfortable with the contributions they are making to the EV, but they are using the Two-way asymmetrical model to find ways to influence their donors by finding out why they give to the EV and play on that. As for online practices for fundraising, their strategy is to use one-way publicity and public information practices through their Web site, but they also use email as a communication tool, which is two-way, however, they seldom utilize it.

They are following the Learning hierarchy model, in that they are not focusing on getting direct donations from the Internet. According to Berkowitz, Executive Director

We don't focus a lot on fundraising over the Internet, and we don't do that because I'm not convinced that it's a winner. I've not come across a single charitable Web site or organization, that is doing significant fundraising off the Internet, and I'm not prepared yet, I haven't been convinced that it's worth putting a whole lot of resources into the Internet for that purpose.

Their online donation capability is very recent, and the reason it is there is, according to Brent, Office Manager, who also handles small individual donations, "Because right now we don't take credit cards, and occasionally somebody will want to donate through a credit card, and that would enable us to do that." When asked if it was a strategic decision by the organization, she replied, "I researched it and I asked if it was all right."

However, they are not fully following the Learning hierarchy model's strategy, that is, they rarely use email to communicate with donors, and they are not doing email marketing with existing donors, which asks them to give but not online. The reason for that might be, as mentioned above, that the executive director does not think email is personal enough, that it does not build the relationship.

Branding via Web site.

The second category of the study's research questions were the following: How effectively are the non-profit organizations' Web sites being used in branding the organization: from communicating the organizations' mission in their messages to being user-friendly, all of which is a reflection of their brand? How are they integrating the Web site into their communications mix?

The EV Web site is basically a static brochure site. However, it does have a link to the "Coast to Coast Discovery Ride," which was, while it lasted, an interactive element, through which students and teachers and other enthusiasts could follow Mike

Kahn, their “ambassador on a bike,” as he made his journey from the West Coast to the East Coast, and emailed reports and scanned photos of the places he visited and the things he saw along the way. The EV sponsorship of the coast to coast bike ride, undertaken by an EV supporter and former staff member, Mike Kahn, not only increased enthusiasm for hands-on natural experience, and raised funds for natural science education, but it also promoted the Environmental Volunteers brand along the way.

From personal observation of the Web site, the researcher was able to discern very quickly after entering their site, the purpose of the organization and the programs they offered. Their homepage consists of their logo, a picture of a child engaged in natural science, and links to the site’s main sections, which includes a link to “About Us,” who they are, and “Programs,” what they do. They have their mission just one click away from the home page, under the “About Us” link, where they also include their vision, so people know what to expect from them. The design is simple and information is easy to find, with an index of the main sections on every page. They also have their logo on every page, which includes the lone cypress tree (a symbol of nature), their name, and their tagline “...teaching kids of all ages to love nature and learning!” There are no broken links, and the site looks good on both Microsoft IE 5.5 and Netscape 4.04, as viewed on the researcher’s home computer. The Web site’s look and feel seems appropriate to the kind of organization it represents.

Answering the question of how the EV is using its Web site for branding, Berkowitz, Executive Director, said

For branding, we use it, again to communicate information about us, and the way we do that is by making sure that we’re on all sorts of search engines. . . .We try

to communicate, what I would call the warm fuzzies about the organization. When you open up our home page, you have that great picture of a kid engaged in science, and it has kind of soft green tones.

The redesign of the Web site, he said, which happened a couple of years ago, was also for the purposes of branding: To ensure its user-friendliness as well as educational value, so that visitors could easily find the information that they needed, as well as for it to be of educational value to them, in learning something about natural science. From personal observation, the researcher found that although there is one activity for each of parents, teachers and kids to do, under the “Learning Features” link, that teaches them a way to experience nature hands-on, there is no interactive activity they can do on the Web site itself.

Also, the site had some outdated material on it, which reflects negatively on the EV brand image. The latest article of news about the organization that was posted on the Web site was from 1998. When asked about that Berkowitz replied

The Web site, I think it’s a great Web site, it’s very attractive, but there are significant pieces that are outdated, such as that, our financials that we really like to have public and up there, are a year behind, and the main reason for that is that I’m new and we had a really difficult year. . . . So, something like the Web site, which is important, but when it’s a difference between brand new staff and 470 services to make sure they happen, or updating the Web site, the Web site gets bumped to the B list.

However, he also said that he has recently started turning his attention back to the Web site, and there have been some updates in the last few weeks.

The organization does integrate the Web site into their communications mix. Under the strategic plan, said Berkowitz, “The Web site is a tool for our vision element, which states that we want to continue to reach out to new venues, new groups, new

people. One way to do that would be to update the Web site, and get it on to search engines.” Besides putting it on search engines, they personally promote the site as well, says Brent, Office Manager: “Almost all of our literature has the Web site on it. When people do call and want general information, the first thing I’ll usually ask, rather than try to explain it over the phone, is ask if they have access to the Web and give them the Web site. That way they can browse it at their own pace and it can explain it better than I could on the phone.”

However, there was no Web site plan for the researcher to view, and there are no means employed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Web site in their communications mix, by looking at, for example, statistics from server logs or client/donor opinion surveys. As for long-term goals for the Web site, Brent said, “Other than hopefully I’ll be able to do some of the web-mastering in-house. No major changes or anything, but just updating dates and that sort of thing.” Long-term goals as seen by Lennard, Volunteer & Teacher Services Director, are geared towards getting some of her forms online:

To see some more of the forms, surveys, even a bulletin board, ways that volunteers can access us and more information, and then have it come back to feed into my database, that would be so nice. And I just dealt with 1500 teacher applications that I just mailed out, I would love to see those be able to be done electronically. Have teachers just jump onto our Web site, be able to fill out their applications for their next year’s services and have that get imported to my file maker database. But I don’t do that yet, and I would love to see it go to that level.

Although their public relations plan, Public Relations Plan, Environmental Volunteers, November 2000, has as its objective, to “Increase visibility and awareness of Environmental Volunteers in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties, resulting in a new

pool of volunteers and increased donor opportunities,” it specifies newspapers, radio, and local as well as EV special events as a means to achieve that objective, but does not specify plans for how its Web site will contribute to it. With the coming 30th Anniversary of the EV, the plan, according to the same document, is to brand EV as the “premier and long-standing environmental education organization in the Bay Area.” To make this statement real, however, the organization’s face on the Web must also reflect this image.

Strategies and tactics for online relationship-building.

The third category of research questions were the following: What online client/donor relationship-building strategies and tactics are being used by non-profit organizations? How are these efforts integrated with their existing relationship-building efforts? Are relationship-building efforts based on the Two-way symmetrical model?

EV does some online relationship-building with the section of its donor public who are its volunteers, the people who donate their time to the organization’s efforts, but there is very little online relationship-building with the people who donate money to the organization. This may in part be due to the executive director’s opinion that “Fundraising is all about relationships. . . The Internet breaks that, it makes it impersonal.” The only online relationship-building strategy they use for donors is online recognition of donors, through the PDF version of their newsletter on their Web site, which has an entire thank you section recognizing all donors.

The online newsletter is a carbon copy of their print newsletter, available for anyone who might want to download it from the EV Web site, but donors receive it in

print anyway. When asked why the organization does not send out email newsletters instead, Berkowitz, Executive Director, said

As an environmental organization, we would love to not waste paper. We would love to use electronic newsletters, and to save more trees, on the one hand. On the other hand, again, most donors, that's off-putting to them. It's not that they would say I don't want that, it's that, in fact, it doesn't build the relationship. It's not personal enough; it's not personal attention.

According to him, most of his donors want a tangible hardcopy, that looks nice, and his compromise is that he targets it to people who he knows will appreciate it instead of sending it to a bought mailing list. At the same time, Berkowitz does admit that it is a challenge for them, and they do not know what to do about it.

From personal observation of their Web site, the researcher found that besides the feedback link on their Web site, there seems to be no other electronic way for donors to let the organization know what they want or think, for instance, through writing comments in an online guest book, or through a donor bulletin board.

As for the clients, the organization does little online relationship-building with the teachers and the parents of kids it serves and there is no kids section on the site at all, who are their primary audience under their mission statement. There are links on the home page called "Parents" and "Teachers," however, these sections are small, have no feedback or suggestions area, and no online chats or bulletin boards for the respective audience. The "General Questions" under the site's FAQ do address some teacher questions, but that is as far as the customer support goes for teachers. And these are not linked from under the "Teachers" section. Recently they have added a mailing list feature on their Web site for teachers, which the researcher observed when she visited the

site again on September 20th. The addition, under their new “Environmental Education for K-6 teachers” section, provides teachers with updates on what courses are being offered each term in their newly established Teacher Certificate program.

They do have offline means of relationship-building with the teachers and kids.

According to Berkowitz, Executive Director

About two years ago, we conducted a major major study of our teachers, we did this major survey of about 2,000 teachers, and that kept us in touch with what their interests and needs are. We do, through our programs, we touch base with students all the time. Our volunteers at the end of a field trip will very often ask the kids, tell me three things that you learned today that you didn't know, or tell me one thing that was your favorite thing on the field trip. And that's an informal survey of finding out what's important to kids.

The researcher reviewed their 2000 student survey, Environmental Volunteers – Student Survey – 2000, and found that the organization also gathers formal feedback from the children's experiences with their programs to further enhance program effectiveness. In reviewing their teacher evaluation form, The Environmental Volunteers need your help!, which teachers complete after receiving a service, the researcher noted that the form did not ask any questions regarding the usefulness of the EV Web site to the teachers, or what teachers would like to see in the teachers section of the Web site.

The organization uses email and its Web site for online relationship-building with volunteers, and the tactics for its online relationship-building with its volunteers are the following:

- Communicate reminders of EV events, the volunteer schedule, and community programs that may be of interest to volunteers via the All-EV mailing list.
- Provide a Frequently Asked Questions list for the volunteers.

- Provide an email address dedicated to volunteer questions.

According to Berkowitz, Executive Director, they have an all-EV list on their computers, which they use to send out messages to most of their volunteers. However, he said they use only email for things that are not critical, such as an EV organized outing for volunteers. Lennard, Volunteer & Teacher Services Director, added to this and said

We send out email reminders for getting folks to sign up for services and to remind them of enrichment activities, and events, things going on that we think may be of interest to them. There's a fine line, I don't want to bombard them with email, but I use it mainly as a tool, just to kind of provide them with information and keep them in the loop, and to let them know what's going on with the schedule.

The FAQ list on the Web site for the volunteers, although it is hard to find, provides a way volunteers can get answers to some of their questions. The FAQ list resides under the "About Us" link, and is linked back from the very bottom of the "Volunteer Opportunities" page, a sub-link under the "Volunteers" page on the Web site. There is also an email address dedicated for volunteer questions at the bottom of the "Volunteer Opportunities" page.

The organization's overall relationship-building strategy for volunteers is basically volunteer satisfaction. They do this in various ways, according to Lennard, Volunteer & Teacher Services Director. They try to offer them something that they will find gratifying and rewarding in terms of the programs they want to train for. Then they offer them a real thorough training, so they gain out of being educated even before they are sent out into the classrooms. Once they are out in the classrooms, they get to see the children get inspired and are rewarded by the knowledge they are passing on. And then

the kids send thank yous and art work and letters, which Lennard passes on to them. They also try and offer volunteers what they call enrichments, throughout the year, and try to have one every month. An enrichment is an event of some sort, either an educational event, for example they had a mushroom expert come in to talk about all the mushrooms in the area, or a fun event, like setting up tours for volunteers at the botanical gardens, or a talk about tips in nature photography. And these are done to remind volunteers also about why they do what they do. According to Berkowitz, Executive Director, half of Ms. Lennard's job is "making sure that our volunteers feel appreciated, making sure that they don't feel burdened and all of us are incredibly focused on that because we know that as a volunteer driven organization, if we [annoy] our volunteers, if we do something to burden them, if we alienate them, we're out of business." Berkowitz thinks of this as their first priority:

When I interview staff positions I say, it's 10 minutes to five, you've got 10 minutes to call payroll, and the phone is ringing, and a volunteer walks in, what do you do? And the right answer is to say, could somebody get the phone?, turn to the volunteer and politely say, I really want to give you the time that you need, can you give me two minutes?, and then call the payroll. Or ask a different staff member to help the volunteer. The wrong answer, which I've also gotten from prospective candidates is, in fact one person in the last round actually said this: Well hopefully someone else would answer the phone, okay, I can deal with that answer, and then payroll is really important, so I would tell the volunteer I am in the middle of doing something you're just going to have to wait. And that was completely the wrong answer. The right answer is, because payroll is so important and I only have 10 minutes, I would attend to the volunteer and get them settled for a few minutes but it's that little, it's that edge, it's that little bit of attention which is incredibly important.

However, very few online tactics as mentioned above, are used towards the relationship-building effort for volunteers. The volunteer newsletter is also always mailed and not

emailed. When asked why that was the case, Lennard, Volunteer & Teacher Services Director, said that they have talked about it but have not taken steps to implement it:

It would be great just to email it out to folks who wanted it. But we haven't yet, because a lot of our population of volunteers are retired folks, an older community, not all of them have computers in the home, not all of them are computer literate or friendly, and because we have been doing things for thirty years this way.

When asked whether some volunteers might prefer emailed newsletters with all the stuff that comes in through the mail already, she replied, "I bet the newer volunteers for sure would prefer it, so that's something we'll hopefully be able to offer."

At this point the organization does not provide any discussion boards or chat rooms for volunteers, but according to Lennard, "It would be a good idea. I think we should. It would be pretty basic to set up and it would be nice to offer our volunteers a way to communicate with each other." As for having online surveys for volunteer feedback, she said that there are plans for that:

The ways to participate form, this master survey that we send out every year, has always been sent in the mail hardcopy. And I want that to exist on our Web site so that people can constantly amend it. It doesn't have to happen once a year, but that you can go to our Web site, fill it out, make any changes, when they're available, let us know what their schedules are, if there are changes in their address, whatever it is, that form will live on our Web site and then it will shoot back to me and I can instantly put it in my database, and not have to get it in the mail, and sit through and enter it all in.

When asked how that would accommodate those volunteers who she said were mostly from the retired community, she replied, "We'll have to do both and see how it goes for a while, but I want to make that option available. At least to the folks who do have access to computers."

As far as two-way symmetrical approach to relationship-building is concerned, the organization utilizes mostly two-way symmetrical practices with volunteers, according to Lennard:

We have evaluations that they fill out after every training. So anyone who's come through our training program, fills out an anonymous evaluation. We definitely always ask for feedback, and we're really open to hearing volunteer ideas. I actually hear people say, you know for a volunteer organization, it's nice that we get asked what we think and how we feel about it, because a lot of times people don't want to hear it.

She also has a database containing volunteer information and input:

We print out a form called Ways to Participate, every year, and we ask them to evaluate their experience, and it also provides us with a ton of information about when they're available, what they like to do, other ways they want to volunteer, and all of that is entered in our file to make a database.

With that information she makes various reports, and can query the database for who is interested in what. There is also a volunteer resource committee, made up of volunteers and Lennard, and they use that forum to talk about volunteer issues:

One of the criticisms we had was that our single subject training, the one in the evening, didn't seem to the same quality as the multi-subject training. So we really looked at the ideas and comments and talked about it and then we really tried to change it and make it better. We brought in speakers and outside guests like we do in the multi-subject training, to really bring it up to par to the other one. So we do really try and hear people's comments, and talk about them and make changes.

However, they don't utilize two-way communications practices to find out the effectiveness of their online efforts. From the documents the researcher examined, she came across two volunteer surveys, the How's It Going Survey and the Volunteer Survey 1999, both of which asked for all kinds of volunteer-related feedback and satisfaction ratings, and so forth, but neither of which asked any question regarding the success of

their online presence, or what volunteers would like to see in the volunteers section of the Web site. The Volunteer Survey 1999 had a question regarding the volunteer newsletter, but did not ask whether volunteers would like to have the newsletter emailed to them.

Case 2: Children Now

The interviewees for this case were Ms. Lois Salisbury, President, Ms. Kristie Wang, Director of Communications, Ms. Lynn Cerda Price, Senior Development Associate, and Ms. Colette Washington, Internet Coordinator. The specific interview questions used in the research are listed in the Appendix.

Background of the organization.

Children Now (CN) is a national children's advocacy organization, geared towards improving the conditions for America's children, with a special focus on children in California. Their programs focus on three broad areas: health, both access to healthcare and the quality of healthcare; media and its affects on children, and its affects on shaping public attitudes about children; and family economics, the needs of working families.

Children Now was founded in 1988 by Jim Steyer. The landscape at that time was one where there were very few organizations nationally and none in California who were raising issues around children in an integrated and holistic way. There were a lot of issue-specific children's organizations, but nobody was looking at the big picture. And there was nobody who was integrating research in communications to achieve action for kids. So the communications void and the need to really get information and messages

out about kids to a broader audience, who use media as an integral tool, were the opportunities and the void that they filled. Lois Salisbury succeeded Steyer in 1993. They became a national organization in 1995. They have been online since 1995. Their main office is in Oakland, with two staff members in Los Angeles.

Online fundraising strategies and tactics.

The first category of the study's research questions asked the following questions: What online fundraising strategies and tactics are being used by non-profits? How integrated are they with the organizations' overall fundraising efforts? Is the Two-way symmetrical model being used for fundraising? Is the Learning hierarchy model used for online fundraising?

By triangulating information from the interviews, documents, and personal observation, the study revealed that the types of online fundraising practices at Children Now include the following:

- Online donations on the Web site through the "Support Us" page.
- Online donations through charity shopping malls on the web, namely iGive.com and CharityMall.com, linked from the "Support Us" page.
- Online donations through special holiday promotions.
- Being listed on all the major fundraising portals, such as GuideStar and America Online's fundraising portal.
- Emailing donors to help them in their decision-making process.
- Sending a standard email appeal to the recipients of the general Children Now mailing list.

- Including a donation appeal on the “Publications” page where they provide free online PDF and HTML versions of the organization’s research reports on children’s welfare issues.

The organization does integrate its online fundraising strategies and tactics with offline ones. The organization uses direct mail as their major strategy for fundraising, according to Salisbury, President: “We basically reach out to them at least twice a year, with materials and an appeal for them to give. There’s a mid-year, which we just did, and an end of year. And in between them, we sometimes send them information about the organization, if not combined with an ask, just to keep them in the loop.” In their direct mail strategy, they integrate the option to donate online. According to a mid-year appeal to a donor, dated May 4, 2001, in a post script to the president’s appeal letter, the president urged the donor to visit their Web site to sign up for one or more of their informational bulletins and in bold type, she also stated, “You can also give easily and securely online by clicking on the *Support Us* button.” In a further post script she urged the donor to view their latest report regarding one of their programs, namely children & the media, from their Web site.

According to Salisbury, President, CN also uses email to assist prospective donors in their decision to give, but they do not use email for solicitation: “90% of our money comes from large philanthropies. So, yes, of course we use online communication, email, to communicate with the Rockefeller foundation or the Ford foundation, or whatever, because that’s how business gets done these days. But it’s not solicitation that occurs online.” When asked if any efforts have been made to find out which donors might prefer email contact for solicitation, Salisbury replied

We've definitely begun to build email into every feedback response we get from donors. In other words, what their preferences would be, would you like to be added to these list serves, and so forth. I don't know if we've asked anybody would you rather get a solicitation by email as opposed to a hard copy, I don't know that we've asked that question.

However, they have not reached the stage where they have started to integrate their Internet fundraising process via database management. When asked whether the organization has donor emails on a database, Salisbury replied, "When they've chosen to give it to us. And that's only been a fairly recent outreach on our part, I don't know that we've gathered that many. I mean, we've started systematically asking for it, as everybody is doing."

They have traditionally used one-way practices for fundraising with donors, and have recently started incorporating two-way practices with donors. They use both publicity and public information practices for fundraising, as evidenced by the statement made by Cerda Price, Senior Development Associate

A lot of what we do is meet with people and share our publications, and try and engage them in some of our work. We invite them to events that we have, such as our press workshops at college campuses, or board events where we invite a select group to attend a meeting with the board, or to attend a dinner at a board member's home.

Of the two-way practices, they use both two-way asymmetrical practices and two-way symmetrical practices for fundraising. According to Salisbury

When we do donor cultivation, either I, or someone from the development department engaged in a conversation with a donor, it's usually about trying to possibly increase their gift or to refer us to other people, and a standard approach on that is to learn their feedback on the organization. Why do they give, what works for them, what are the particular interests to them, or the things they would like us to do differently. That's a good way to connect with the donors.

Of the four questions mentioned above, two are two-way symmetrical questions, that is, what interests donors, and what donors would like to see the organization do differently. The use of this technique was also corroborated by Cerda Price, who said that they do an interview, or feedback session with donors to find out “how they feel about Children Now . . . what other organizations they support, and to ask for their advice if appropriate, or ask for their feedback primarily about our programs and our work.” However, they have not really started to use such feedback strategically. According to Salisbury

It’s fairly new, it’s something we’ve been starting to do in the past year, and I don’t think there’s enough information to be systematic about it. Maybe there are three or four such contacts a month with donors, by one person or another in the organization. We do take the feedback and listen to it and share it, but we’re not actually compiling it or being systematic about it, because it’s premature, we’re not at that level of volume.

They do not utilize the Internet to gather donor feedback. Hence their online fundraising efforts involve mainly one-way practices, except for email, which is two-way.

They are partially following the Learning hierarchy model in that they use email to connect with the donors during their decision-making process. However, they do not use email appeals with their existing donors, because, as Salisbury said, they have not yet made the decision to ask donors “would you rather get a solicitation by email rather than a hard copy?” This was corroborated by Cerda Price, Senior Development Associate, who said

We don’t have a program in place or a direction in place as to whether we are going to solicit our donors via email. We have just recently emailed to our donors notice of an appearance that our president was making on the Today Show, so we emailed them notification of that. But we don’t have a proactive approach to solicit donors via email. Especially the donors that we have right now, we already have a solid relationship with them through regular mail. We haven’t made a

decision to say, okay, instead of sending these people a letter, we're going to send them email.

Answering the same question about using email appeals with donors, Washington, Internet Coordinator, who also used to work in CN's development department previously, replied, "I think we should but we don't. There is, like I said, this database sitting over in development, that has all the email addresses, and they know their donors, they can easily extract a list from that." Discussing the effectiveness of their email appeals to the mailing list recipients of the general Children Now update, Washington said, "The email outreach . . . it's a standard piece that we always have included in our general update. . . . Typically we've had the best response rate when there's a major report released, or something they can download."

However, they are also focusing on getting direct donations online, which goes against the Learning hierarchy model's strategy for marketing communications using the Internet. They have both a direct credit card donation area on their Web site, they have invested in their own secure server for that, and they encourage all donors in their mailed solicitations to use it as an easy and secure way to give to CN. According to a mid-year appeal to a donor, dated May 4, 2001, in a post script to the president's mid-year appeal letter, and in bold type, are the words "You can also give easily and securely online by clicking on the *Support Us* button." According to Cerda Price, Senior Development Associate, they are utilizing other web channels to get online donations as well:

We have a secure server, and we have affiliations with iGive and Charity Mall, . . . we're listed on various online giving sites, like Helping.org, . . . and we get a small amount of money through organizations like that. But our ultimate goal is to get more donors who give directly to us through our secure server.

Washington, Internet Coordinator, added to this by saying that they also do a lot of specialty fundraising online:

We just did a Mother's Day promotion and we got a fair number of gifts, five or six gifts from that. . . . we put buttons on all the top level pages, saying honor your mother, give a gift on behalf of a child. And they click on that and it would take them to our support page and then we just had a little explanation that if you give by this date, we'll send your mother a card and in lieu of a tangible gift, you're giving the greater gift of helping children on her behalf.

She also said that they did the same for Valentine's Day and the Holidays. However, Washington also pointed out that this method of fundraising was not getting them a lot of funds: "We're just barely scratching the surface with response rates and stuff. As skeptical as we are about putting stuff up there, people on the other side are skeptical about putting their credit card numbers in." Furthermore, their server log, Children Now Internet Program, 1st Quarter Snapshot, January-March 2001, reveals that although their Holiday fundraising effort in 2000, which was promoted through the year-end appeal and email newsletters, accounted for \$2,450 in gifts via their secure server, that amount included a \$2000 board gift, and the Valentine's Day promotion for online donations did not yield any gifts. Their online donation appeal on their "Publications" page, has not been very effective either, as Washington points out: "And then we say, can you support our work, you're downloading this stuff, and that's not all that successful." They are also listed on major fundraising portals, such as GuideStar and America Online's fundraising portal, but the researcher did not have any information to report their success.

The fact that direct donations is not contributing much to their fundraising effort at all, was also corroborated by Salisbury, President, who said, "We certainly encourage all of our donors to do it, we like every body else, are working to try to get people to give

online, but as you probably know that's a pretty underutilized action for people so far. Online giving is still a pretty small world." Both Salisbury and Cerda Price, Senior Development Associate, affirmed that their online donor base was very minimal. One of their finance goals, under their three-year strategic plan, Strategic Plan: 2001-2003, is to explore options to diversify their funding base, which includes exploring e-fundraising, and from the direction the organization has taken so far, it seems they are focusing more on the direct donation strategy for fundraising via the Internet.

Branding via Web site.

The second category of the study's research questions asked: How effectively are the non-profit organizations' Web sites being used in branding the organization: from communicating the organization's mission in their messages to being user-friendly, all of which is a reflection of their brand? How are they integrating the Web site into their communications mix?

From personal observation, the researcher found that the site does have some interactive features, including registration capability for subscribing to email list serves, and a site search capability, so it is not a static site. However, according to Salisbury, President, since its inception, its main purpose has been information dissemination: "What we knew we wanted to have available then, was particularly to make our various programs and research and publications widely available. It's mostly seen as a dissemination opportunity." The site is very information-heavy from its home page, and that is okay, being an advocacy Web site, with lots of information and reports and action items for the various programs the organization advocates for, and it is helpful that the

site provides a “Search” box, so visitors can search for their topic of interest and view only that information, and avoid information overload. The site also allows visitors to register on one or more of its four email mailing lists to get regular updates on various programs that interest them, and in the process also bond with the CN brand. However, there are no discussion boards on the main site, although on one of its program sites, namely the talkingwithkids.org site, there is a link to a discussion board for parents to go to, to talk about children’s issues such as kids and sex, kids and violence, and so forth.

From personal observation, the researcher found that the site looked very professional, and up to date, with advanced features, such as scrolling text and audio/video files. However, on the researcher’s Netscape 4.04 browser, the homepage did not appear properly (the researcher could only view the scrolling text and sidebar and not the main text on the page), but on her Microsoft IE 5.5, the site looked fine. From their server log for May 2001, Children Now Monthly Log Analysis, it is evident that most used browsers for visitors coming to the Children Now Web site are Microsoft IE 72%, and Netscape 25%, all others making the remaining 3%. Of the Microsoft explorer browsers, 91% of the visitors are using Explorer 5.x version, and of the Netscape browsers, 97% are using Netscape 4.x version and only 2% Netscape 5.x version. This means that up to 25% of the Children Now audience might possibly be having trouble viewing their site. There were no broken links, and navigation was made easy with the consistent logo and main sections on every page.

Although the site looks and feels appropriate to the kind of organization it is for, it was difficult for the researcher to quickly grasp the full scope of what the organization

did, by observing the Web site. Their tagline on the home page helps to differentiate them from other children's non-profits, "we use research and mass communication to make children's well-being top priority nationwide," and this is related by Salisbury, President, as well: "Anybody who knows the organizations, would tell you that the unique characteristic of Children Now, among all children's advocacy organizations, because there are others obviously as well, is our integral use of communications strategies." But this does not define the scope and breadth of the organization. The site has a list of the programs the organization advocates for, which helps to define its scope, but not fully. Their long description about their mission, available on their Web site, is not easy to grasp either:

Children Now is a nonpartisan, independent voice for America's children. Using innovative research and communications strategies, Children Now promotes pioneering solutions to problems facing America's children. Recognized nationally for its policy expertise, up-to-date information on the status of children, and leading work with the media, Children Now focuses particular attention on the needs of children who are poor or at risk, while working to improve conditions for all children by making them a top priority across the nation.

The fact that their mission statement has so many clauses also makes it difficult for people to understand exactly what the scope and breadth of the organization is.

Not being able to communicate a clear and easy to grasp mission for the organization, is a real problem from the IMC perspective, which says that defining a clear brand identity for an organization is key to its success. The problem of the organization's brand identity was identified earlier as well, as reported in their September 1999 report, CHILDREN NOW: An Evaluation of Organizational Impact, a study commissioned by CN to find out the effectiveness of the organization, which was conducted by an independent research

company Harder+Company Community Research. The report revealed that CN suffered from a lack of success in being able to express a clear sense of its mission. According to the report, people had trouble defining what CN does, and understanding how the organization's different projects link with each other and back to the organization. Besides uncertainty about what CN focuses on and why, there was also a lack of understanding of what Children Now's function as a national organization was, and what it was doing on a national platform. People were unaware of the full scope of what the organization did and wanted to learn more. This brand identity problem is reflected in its Web site as well.

The Web site is not being fully utilized as a branding tool for the organization according to the IMC model, also because branding is not the focus of the Web site. According to the same report, CHILDREN NOW: An Evaluation of Organizational Impact, which also included an analysis of the effectiveness of the Children Now Internet project, increasing the visibility of Children Now is only a secondary objective of the Web site. The primary purpose of the Web site is to support the work of the organization's programs. Hence the Web site talks about its various programs in great depth, without linking them back to the organization's central mission and purpose.

Wang, Director of Communications, is acutely aware of the brand identity problem and is trying to rectify it by making the organization's main public relations goal to be branding:

[Our] main goal is to really brand our self as an organization. First of all let people know we're Children Now, and secondly when they hear the name they know what that means. It's clear who we are and what we do. That's what Lois and I are currently struggling with right now, to figure out what that image is that

we want to project to the public. . . .Our main goal is to give people a clear sense of who we are and what we do and what we don't do, because we have a clear agenda and there are some things we don't do.

Salisbury, President, corroborated this by saying that the public relations goals for the organization are in the process of being developed, and that “we know we want something that is clear in terms of branding the organization, that is really in line with our programmatic goals.”

Their three-year strategic plan, Strategic Plan: 2001-2003, revealed that the branding goals for the organization were to provide through word and image, a variety of audiences and organizational messengers with an easy, effective and synthesized explanation of what the organization is and does, as well as to determine how and where it is important to be known nationally and in California over the next three years. The plan also calls for implementing a marketing plan to promote these goals, and to integrate all the plans into the activities of the organization, including products, Web sites, presentations, convenings and external activities. The organization has also revisited its mission, and although still subject to improvements from the marketing plan, their new mission statement from their three-year strategic plan, Strategic Plan: 2001-2003, is the following: “Children Now employs the power of information, analysis and alliances to improve the lives of America’s children and families. We target decision-makers from media, business, civic and community organizations who share our passion for positive change.” Hence the organization is taking the steps to help develop a strong brand identity for itself.

The long-term goals for the Web site, as described by Salisbury, President, are the following:

To continue to increase its traffic, its use, its connection to action, that's why we're going to this next phase of this ASP provider, where we're going to be able to use online activism. We hope very much to grow that part of the Web site. We certainly would like it to become a basis of fundraising and giving, but we think the field is moving very slowly and we can't move any faster than the field on that. . . . So there's thinking about how to push it out there, how to connect it, how to link it, how to promote it, to the different target audiences that exist and then overall to have it continue to be a very growing concern, if you will, in terms of the overall visibility and marketing of the organization.

According to their three-year strategic plan, Strategic Plan: 2001-2003, the overall goal for the Web site(s) is to keep them and related activities such as list serves, fresh, innovative, effective, and also to develop relevant online applications which go beyond information dissemination for every program goal. And to ensure that online visitors can easily find a way to take action that works for them. Specifically they want to dramatically increase other places where Children Now's content is viewed on the web, and to build a robust site for online activism around children's issues. Hence, for the future there is a lot of thinking about using the Web site as a key advocacy platform for the organization, as well as using it to establish a brand identity for the organization.

They are doing a lot to integrate the Web site into their communications mix, by promoting it in all their publications and much of their promotional materials. Their Children Now Internet Program Annual Highlights 2000 document also reveals many other ways the organization promotes its organizational Web site, as well as its program Web sites, through, for example utilizing an online marketing firm for "Talking with Kids" banner placement, through adding audio/video elements to the site, through link-

backs and logos on sites featuring CN content, and through looking for online outlets to pitch press releases for their reports. Their three-year strategic plan, Strategic Plan: 2001-2003, also includes plans for their Internet program as part of their communications mix.

Integrating their online presence into their communications mix was part of the plan from the start, stated in their original Web proposal, Children Now On-Line, integration of the Internet into all Children Now programs would be accomplished by establishing procedures to assess how each program can use online activities, and then monitoring and refining those efforts, and by convening an Advisory Committee of individuals with expertise in computer technology, communications, business and the public sector, who will advise on how to maximize the Internet's potential.

They also keep lots of server data to evaluate the success of the Web site, said Washington, Internet Coordinator:

Number of visitors, number of pages viewed, number of downloads, those are our three big ones. But we also look at where the traffic is coming from, the time of day, the time of week, when the peaks are. We try to target people then. So we do a lot of strategic planning around these statistics and evaluations. We've been looking at them for three years now. There's been consistent growth.

According to Salisbury, President, one of the reasons they are moving to the ASP activism applications, is also to track how many people are taking action and which action items are getting a response and which are not:

One of the biggest reasons why we're doing this is that we really want that feedback to go in, so that we would know when someone took action. I don't know how it works technically, but the bottom line is that we'd actually learn when someone actually communicated with a lawmaker or decision-maker, because by using our system, we'll be able to keep track of data and know. We

may ask them and encourage people, but they may not cc us or bcc us and we never know.

Strategies and tactics for online relationship-building.

The third category of research questions asked the following questions: What online client/donor relationship-building strategies and tactics are being used by non-profit organizations? How are these efforts integrated with their existing relationship-building efforts? Are relationship-building efforts based on the Two-way symmetrical model?

CN uses some online relationship-building with donors and other media and business influentials, which consist of

- Email and email mailing lists, providing email updates via list serves, of various programs to those who decide to subscribe.
- Its feedback link.
- Its live Web cast and chat last year.

According to their server log for May 2001, Children Now Monthly Log Analysis, of their dynamic pages and forms, the most popular dynamic pages/forms included the search page, www.childrennow.org/queryall.idq, with 30% of the hits, and the subscribe to an email list form, www.childrennow.org/subscribe3.cfm, with 21% of the hits. Also, their server log, Children Now Internet Program 1st Quarter Snapshot, January-March, 2001, shows a continual increase in subscriptions for the CN email mailing list, from 3, 989 email subscriptions in March 2000, to 5, 821 in March, 2001. According to Cerda Price, Senior Development Associate, CN uses email to keep their donors in the loop by encouraging them to subscribe to the email list serves. According

to their sever log, Children Now Internet Program, 1st Quarter Snapshot, January-March 2001, they have upwards of 16,000 subscribers from just two of their email list serves.

Children Now also hosted a live Web cast and chat on July 25, 2000 with key influentials and decision-makers, on the topic of “Supporting Children in the Digital Village.” The event was held at Stanford University, and was shown on the CN main Web site. It was promoted on all of the organization’s email mailing lists, which reached 14,000 email subscribers, according to the Children Now Internet Program Annual Highlights 2000 document. However, the researcher did not have any data to report the success of the event.

The original proposal for its online presence, Children Now On-Line, did contain ways to cultivate relations with decision-makers to make a change, via bulletin boards, such as having a bulletin board where physicians and staff members could share frustrations and success stories in overcoming clinic-based barriers to immunization rates, which could have a positive impact on immunization rates. They had also identified that there was no other bulletin board where physicians could post immunization practices and management techniques. However, such a relationship-building tool has not yet become a reality at Children Now. According to Wang, Director of Communications, “Most of our interactions with policymakers, the opinion leaders that we work with, are direct, you know, by phone or letters and things.”

The original proposal also had other interactive relationship-building elements, such as a password protected asynchronous bulletin board for donors, where online donors could get exclusive previews of upcoming programs, ask questions of Children

Now program directors, give their feedback on programs. It would have been the online equivalent to the targeted letters from the director or invitation-only social occasions that non-profit organizations traditionally use to cultivate donors. This did not become a reality either.

However, their commitment to two-way symmetrical relationship-building efforts with donors and decision-makers is shown in their effort to get an independent appraisal of their organization. CN hired the independent group, Harder+Company Community Research, to conduct an analysis of the effectiveness of their organization, which was provided in the report, CHILDREN NOW: An Evaluation Of Organizational Impact, prepared in September 1999. That report looked at several of the organization's key programs and analyzed how effective CN was in bringing them forward into the public discourse and thereby making a change for the kids. It also looked at how others, namely other children's advocacy organizations, the media, business leaders and legislators, viewed them and their work as a children's advocacy organization. The report made suggestions for improving the organization's effectiveness, by providing recommendations by the people who they are trying to influence to make a change for the kids, as well as by the independent research company itself.

One online two-way symmetrical tool, according to Wang, Director of Communications, having online opinion surveys of their Web sites, is in the works:

We've been talking about, I don't know if they've done this before, but we've been talking about doing some kind of survey of people who visit the site to get a sense of what they're doing there, what they do with the information, what they would like to see on the sites.

Since it is not an organization on the ground level, but deals mostly with change in policy, it does not do much online relationship-building with its clients. The one program that does deal directly with the parents of kids, does utilize online relationship-building tactics through

- A link to a discussion board on “Talking with kids on tough issues” (however, it is not moderated by CN itself).
- An email newsletter, which the parents can subscribe to for regular updates on the issue.
- An email address dedicated to questions from parents on the talkingwithkids.org site.

When asked if online forums for kids, for parents, or for decision-makers were in the works, Wang replied

We’re constantly talking about that kind of thing. I mean right now people can always email us through any of our Web sites and we can interact that way. And people frequently do, especially the Talking with Kids campaign. We have a lot of parents who write and say, well I’m having this problem, or this is happening, so that’s one way.

Their offline relationship-building efforts for the Talking with Kids (TWK) program include having parent seminars and also a hotline for parents. According to their three-year strategic plan, Strategic Plan: 2001-2003, their talkingwithkids.org Web site has been a key vehicle for distributing the campaign’s messages. Since its launch in Spring 1999, over 50,000 visitors have turned to the site each month, making it Children Now’s most successful site. The three-year goals for the site are to reach more people by online syndication of its content and expanding the interactive features of the site by working with the entertainment media industry to incorporate the TWK message into popular programming.

They also have a Web site called, youthvoices.org, which is comprised of an online survey for kids to voice their opinions about issues that concern them. Wang, Director of Communications, said about the program

It's a way for kids to go online and be surveyed about their views on issues that affect them. And that's mainly because we feel like we're working on all these public policy issues on behalf of children, but do we really know what they want, do we know what they think. And we know that in public discourse about these issues we almost never hear about what kids think, how they feel about it. We talk about education, we talk about child care, after school programs, what do kids think about this? And that's the main impetus behind starting this, is whenever there's some kind of big children's issue in the media, this is the plan, that we would be able to say, 79% of kids think this or 23% want that.

It was a pilot program until now, which, according to their three-year strategic plan, Strategic Plan 2001-2003, Children Now is working to scale, both for relevant California and national issues. According to the strategic plan, its advantages over other methods is that it overcomes the digital divide by recruiting partners who are representative of the national youth demographics, as well as providing everyone involved the benefits of online technology, including flexibility, rapid turnarounds, and youth insight on issues that affect them.

Their offline relationship-building strategy with their clients consists of mainly two-way symmetrical practices. According to Salisbury, President, CN conducts opinion polls, focus groups, and uses secondary resources to find out what issues parents and children are most concerned about. For example, concerning the after-school program in California, they were part of a coalition effort that held six regional meetings around the state, and with a total audience of about 1200 people, consisting of direct service providers of after-school programs in the community and parents, they were able to make

a real outreach effort to the people directly concerned with the issue. They also work in coalition with other organizations who are more on the ground than they are. For example, on their health and quality initiative they worked very closely with organizations who made it their business to really learn what parents want, and have conducted very complex and continuing research in that area. Another way they work, which, according to Salisbury is really important, is that they always have advisory committees on all their programs, which include a mixture of people who are academics, and sometimes people who are more on the ground. And the academics are often those who are directly learning from their own research and apply it to see that what they are advocating is really working, that it is really viable, it is what parents want, and what has worked with parents and families.

They have also made relationship-building with clients, as far as their needs are concerned, a part of their three-year strategic plan, Strategic Plan: 2001-2003, which says that although their capacity to work with grassroots organization is limited, they will continue to invest in processes that keep them in touch with the perspectives of children and families, as well as community-based organizations, which includes coalition work, advisory councils, focus groups and polls.

Their online relationship-building strategies also follow the Two-way symmetrical model in that they use the feedback they get to improve themselves, which is evident in the following statement made by Salisbury, President

We get all sorts of feedback on our online communication all the time. Although it's not systematic, it's quite constant and quite positive. But we also get feedback about things we can do better, and we route it to Colette, and she takes into account whatever it is that we're lacking.

Case 3: San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce

The interviewees for this case were Mr. James Tucker, Executive Director Economic Development/Communications, Mr. Dick Bartholomew, Director of Membership Development, and Mr. Kenneth Heiman, Associate Director of Communications. The researcher had also intended to interview Ms. Debbie Hayes, Change Agent, who is responsible for special events fundraising, but she was not available at the time the researcher conducted the interviews. Later the researcher tried to get her views on some questions via email but was unable to do so. The specific interview questions used in the research are listed in the Appendix.

Background of the organization.

The San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit organization representing a broad-based coalition of businesses from throughout Santa Clara County. It comprises around 2,000 member businesses, and serves to provide direct services to help its members succeed, and to advocate public policy that protects and enhances the economic climate. It is the largest organization serving business interests in the Silicon Valley.

The San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce began in 1874 as the Board of Trade, formed by concerned business people who believed that problems common to all businesses could be solved only by concerted action. Soon the board was taking on tasks too ambitious for such a loosely-organized body. Business leaders decided to

enlarge and re-organize the board and the name “Chamber of Commerce” was officially adopted. The new Chamber was incorporated on July 24, 1890. Chamber programs today focus on leadership in maintaining the Silicon Valley’s legendary economy, and providing expertise and opportunity to help individual businesses grow and prosper. The Chamber is now in its 123rd year of service to business and the community. It is based in downtown San Jose. It has been online at least since 1999, which is when they started using the Chamber Weblink software and service, which specifically serves the online needs of Chambers of Commerce with features such as a searchable events calendar and broadcast email.

Online fundraising strategies and tactics.

The first category of the study’s research questions asked the following questions: What online fundraising strategies and tactics are being used by non-profits? How integrated are they with the organizations’ overall fundraising efforts? Is the Two-way symmetrical model being used for fundraising? Is the Learning hierarchy model used for online fundraising?

By triangulating information from the interviews, documents, and personal observation, the study revealed that the types of online fundraising practices at the San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce include the following:

- Sending email reminders of events.
- Having online registration for events.
- Initiating the membership process via the “Join the Chamber” page.
- Selling Chamber products from the Chamber Store.

Their main strategy for fundraising is collecting membership dues and special events revenues. Talking about events, Tucker, Executive Director Economic Development/Communications, said

We do a lot of events that generate revenue back to the organization; the trade show we had recently, did that. But the specific fundraiser, the legends and leaders event is the classic example, and certainly the major one and the main one that we do.

He also said that selling publications produces a minor income for the Chamber. They do integrate online tactics to help their fundraising efforts, in that they have online registration of their events, and their events calendar, Chamber Dateline, which is mailed out to members, helps to integrate their online registration option into their overall communications mix by constantly reminding members of the option to register online for events. They also encourage members to give them their emails and receive email reminders of events.

They certainly use publicity and public information practices for maintaining their membership dues. Even their motto, the EARN acronym (which stands for Education, Advocacy, Resources, & Networking), is designed to publicize the earning potential from investing in the Chamber. New members are invited to attend what is called a Member Briefing, where, according to the Chamber Sponsorships brochure, they get information about the Chamber, its history and the benefits of membership. They also have an Ambassador Committee made up of volunteers that meets monthly to discuss how to promote the Chamber and its members. However, they do not seem to utilize any two-way practices to find out from members what benefits they want from the Chamber.

In the future also, according to their communications plan, Visibility Task Force, 2001 Plan, they plan to use publicity tactics for membership development, and their first objective is to increase awareness of the benefits of the Chamber to members and prospective members through various avenues, such as producing materials that “sell” Chamber benefits, utilizing a PSA campaign to highlight Chamber accomplishments and benefits, and looking for ways to generate media coverage of Chamber events, which are all publicity tactics. Their third and final objective, under the same plan, however, is to facilitate a major member survey, which is a two-way symmetrical practice, but it is limited to gathering data about member concerns on what issues the Chamber should advocate for, not to find out member ideas and concerns about what benefits the Chamber should offer them. According to their 2000 Annual Report, they achieved a 78% membership retention rate in the year 2000.

They are following the Learning hierarchy model in that they utilize email to connect with members, as well as to help them in their decision-making process to join the Chamber, as is evident from Tucker’s, Executive Director Economic Development/Communications, following statement: “If they send in something from the Web site, we follow up with them, and talk to them about the Chamber, what the membership dues are, and invite them to join.” They do not try to sell memberships online, which is in accordance with the Learning hierarchy model, and the reason is explained by Tucker:

Membership is more of a person to person kind of a thing. People don’t just necessarily join. Well, part of the reason is that the fees are relatively high. I mean the minimum membership is \$300/year, for example. So it isn’t like joining the American Association for Retired People, which is \$8/year.

According to Tucker, the thought behind the “Join the Chamber” page is to encourage people to use that as a starting point for discussion.

Branding via Web site.

The second category of the study’s research questions asked the following: How effectively are the non-profit organizations’ Web sites being used in branding the organization: from communicating the organization’s mission in their messages to being user-friendly, all of which is a reflection of their brand? How are they integrating the Web site into their communications mix?

From personal observation, the researcher found that their Web site has some interactive features, so it is not a static brochure site. The site has a searchable member directory on the “Member Services” page, where people can do a search to find a particular company, product, or service. For example, if they are looking for restaurants in San Jose, they can do a search for “restaurants” and get names and addresses of restaurants in San Jose that are part of the Chamber membership. The site also has an events calendar, which includes an online registration feature, so visitors can not only see what events are up and coming but also register for whichever ones they want to attend. Under the online registration feature, payment for the event can be made via online secure credit card transaction, or may be billed later. Visitors can also type in their email address to get an email reminder prior to an event.

The researcher also found that the site has a look and feel that is appropriate to the organization it represents. It has a business-site look, which seems appropriate since the

Chamber represents businesses, with a three-column format: it has an index of main sections on the left, mission and program categories in the center, and Chamber news, and so forth, on the right. The Chamber has a clear mission, which is right there on the home page, and its programs reflect that mission. However, there was some outdated material on the Web site. For instance, they had their old mission statement on the site as well under “About the Chamber>About” section, and their old name San Jose Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, was also still being used on some of the pages. The site looked good on both Netscape 4.04 and Microsoft IE 5.5.

The site, however, is going to be redesigned shortly, and the plan for the redesign is currently under development. The new version will have, in addition to a more e-commerce-heavy front, a member’s only page that may incorporate chat rooms for members to talk to one another on issues, as well as obtain other member-only information and benefits, according to Tucker, Executive Director Economic Development/Communications.

As the Web site stands right now, Tucker does not think it is doing much branding for the organization: “No, right now we’re not doing that to any great extent, and we need to.” To make the task more challenging, they also have a brand identity problem. Tucker said this about their brand identity:

The Chamber of Commerce has a very powerful brand, in the United States in particular. Every body knows about a Chamber of Commerce. They know it’s a place to go to get a map. They know that Chambers of Commerce by and large represent business. . . .But then when you begin to ask them what Chambers of Commerce do, they get real fuzzy, because they don’t really understand. Maps, tourist information, and so on, but beyond that it’s a little bit tricky.

The fact that the Chamber is mostly viewed as a tourist resource is also confirmed by their server logs, which, says Tucker, show that they get more hits for hotel reservations and the like than anything else: "Hotels, motels, and restaurants get more hits on our Web site than any other group."

Answering the question about how they are going to use their Web site for branding under the revise, Tucker, Executive Director Economic Development/Communications, said

Well, through some of the things that we do. I mean if we promote our advocacy efforts, our efforts to protect and maintain the business climate. If we actively participate in solving community problems, and use our Web site to facilitate that and promote that. You know, those are the kinds of things, I think, that will tell people who we are, if they go to our Web site.

When asked the same question, Bartholomew, Director of Membership Development, replied

We are going to become more politically active on issues in a more timely basis which is going to make us more visible to the community because we will get more news coverage, and we are going to provide new services that have everything to do with exposure and credibility and add value to the bottom line of people's membership investments at the smaller business level.

For the Web site, this means, according to Bartholomew, that all of the advocacy and committee issues discussed in committee in the Chamber will be put right on to the Web site, so visitors will be able to read the minutes or read a report of what happened at, for example, the aviation committee meeting, probably within a day. This will make what the Chamber of Commerce does very visible, and will keep people up to date on what the Chamber really is doing. The site will also have a large e-commerce component, according to Bartholomew:

Our vision for San Jose is to change our Web site to what is a destination portal, so that we can facilitate business in San Jose through our Web site. And give small business people and individuals a way to go through our Web site. . . . It will have a large e-commerce component. When you get into our Web site, within three clicks you can be at Nordstrom's, you can be at the plumbers, you can be getting an electrician, you can contact an architect, you can do all these things right through the Chamber site."

The expansion of the e-commerce section of the Web site, however, is disconcerting to Tucker, Executive Director Economic Development/Communications, who thinks it has the potential to dilute their brand identity by making them appear similar to e-commerce sites rather than what they are, a Chamber of Commerce site:

I think the challenge is to keep to your core business. My concern about the Web site is that we don't begin to look like 800 other sites out there that offer opportunities for people to buy products from other businesses. And that's going to be tough . . . you can go to Yahoo! and they've got hotels and motels, and traveling agents, and that's potentially the kind of thing that we're going to wind up doing too. I'm concerned, again, that we wind up looking more like a Yahoo! or something else, rather than who we are, the Chamber of Commerce, what we stand for, and what we're trying to do in this community.

According to Tucker, their primary audience for their Web site should be their membership. He said, "My concern is that we're able to develop more of a community within our membership." Through the members-only sections, he wants to make the site much more useful to the members, as well as entice other businesses that come to the Web site into saying "Gosh, this is terrific. I need to be part of that."

According to their communications plan, Visibility Task Force, 2001 Plan, their public relations goal is "To position the San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce as a major player in the growth and development of the region and in efforts to strengthen the business community." This is explained by Tucker, Executive Director Economic Development/Communications, who said

Our objective here is to try and increase everybody's understanding about the Chamber of Commerce. That we do represent business. We're potentially an organization that can help resolve local issues. We are an organization that can develop tremendous ideas to help the community, while at the same time serving our constituency, making sure that the business climate continues to thrive and prosper.

Towards this goal, their plan is to change their look by developing and redesigning their logo, publications, and Web site, as outlined in the Creative Brief document, which states that this will help brand the Chamber as "the authoritative voice of business in the Silicon Valley."

The Chamber integrates the Web site into its communications mix by promoting it in all its publications, and by registering it on search engines. They also have reciprocal links with other sites. According to Tucker, Executive Director Economic Development/Communications, they also check the server logs to check number of visits and page hits, and so forth, to evaluate the effectiveness of their site. However, the researcher was not afforded the opportunity to view these documents herself.

Strategies and tactics for online relationship-building.

The third category of research questions asked the following questions: What online client/donor relationship-building strategies and tactics are being used by non-profit organizations? How are these efforts integrated with their existing relationship-building efforts? Are relationship-building efforts based on the Two-way symmetrical model?

By and large, the Chamber's clients are their donors as well, because they are a membership organization, and they utilize some online relationship-building strategies with them. They use

- Email to keep members in the loop and for providing action alerts and event reminders.
- E-polls to see where their members stand on an issue.
- A feedback form on the "Contact Us" page, which members can fill out and send to the Chamber.
- Recognizing member sponsors of events on their Web site.

They use email extensively to communicate with their members. They have 900 emails from a membership base of about 2,000, according to Tucker, Executive Director Economic Development/Communications. However, according to their 2000 Annual Report this number is even higher, which states that they "increased the Chamber's member e-mail list from 600 to 1,601" in 2000. This means they are able to use email to communicate with at least half and up to around three-quarters of their constituency.

According to Tucker

Chamber Weblink gives us a utility that it's real easy just to send out a mass email to our members, or emails by specific categories, and so we do legislative alerts, if there's a special issue out there, we'd like our members to write letters to our elected officials, and so on, we do a lot of emailing like that. We also do e-polls, on topical things, like energy.

From a news release of one of their e-polls regarding energy, News Release: Despite energy crisis, chamber poll shows majority of businesses unwilling to move out of the area, state, it is evident that they use such polls as member feedback to help guide their policy and advocacy efforts on various issues: "The Chamber is interested in your

opinion regarding the ongoing energy crisis. Your responses will help us further define our energy policy and drive our advocacy efforts in the weeks and months to come.”

They also use email feedback from members to improve the Chamber. According to Heiman, Associate Director of Communications, “We take the feedback and we try to meet the needs of our members, when they have a suggestion. . . .if we get enough suggestions, we usually react to it and make a change that will benefit of the greater membership of the Chamber.” He also mentioned that members use both email and phone to provide them with feedback. Their Web site has some answers to a couple of frequently asked questions members might have under the “About” page, which is a sub-heading under the “About the Chamber” page; however, there is no dedicated member support page or FAQ page, where members can go to get answers to their questions.

For the future, they are looking into discussion boards and chat rooms as a means of online relationship-building with members, and Tucker, Executive Director Economic Development/Communications, said, “Yes. That’s part of a new proposal. That we might do that.” Answering why they do not have their Chamber newspaper online, which is a publication that goes out via direct mail to about 5,000 people, Tucker said

The newspaper tends to be to members only. And if a non-member gets it occasionally, it’s no big deal, but if it was online, it would a public thing, and we would lose some of the impact. So we’re thinking of doing this in the members-only section too.

Their offline relationship-building efforts include publicity and public information practices, via direct mail of their mid-month events calendar, Chamber Dateline and monthly member newspaper, Commerce Advocate. However, they also use two-way symmetrical practices as part of their relationship-building. Towards that effort, they

have member discussions and feedback on key issues in committees. Bartholomew, Director of Membership Development, explained how the democratic process works at the Chamber:

What happens in a Chamber of Commerce is that you have different committees that deal with different issues. The committees study those issues, and the committee can be made up of members at large. Anybody who is a member of the Chamber can become a member of a committee. So that committee studies an issue. Lets use the Metcalf energy project as an issue. So then that committee studies the issue, they make a recommendation, they bring it before the board, the board discusses it and votes whether to support the issue or not support the issue. So it's a very democratic process.

They integrate online efforts, such as e-polls, to help in that process, as mentioned above. Their e-poll results are also placed in their newspaper, as part of integrating them into their relationship-building effort, as evidenced in the Commerce Advocate, June 2001, Vol. 72, No. 6 issue, which has reports from the energy e-poll on its front page.

Case 4: YWCA in Santa Clara Valley

The interviewees for this case were Ms. Keri McLain, CEO, Ms. Teresa Wolf, Director of Development (in charge of both donor development and marketing/PR for the YWCA-SCV), and Mr. Michael Snider, Chief Financial Officer. The researcher was unable to get an interview with the Webmaster, as he is an outside contractor, not staff. The specific interview questions used in the research are listed in the Appendix.

Background of the organization.

The YWCA in Santa Clara Valley (YWCA-SCV) is a non-profit service organization for women and their families in Santa Clara County. The YWCA in Santa

Clara Valley has served the needs of women and their families in transition for more than 95 years. Now they primarily serve the unmet social needs of the community, like child-care, parent education, career counseling, and rape-crisis counseling.

The YWCA-SCV was founded in 1905 but was incorporated in the state of California in 1914. It is basically an organization unto itself, but pays dues to the national to use their name. It is a large organization, serving the entire community in Santa Clara County. It has a staff of about 120, and it is located in downtown San Jose. They have been online for around 2 ½ years now, and their new revised Web site will be up and running in July, 2001.

Online fundraising strategies and tactics.

The first category of the study's research questions asked the following questions: What online fundraising strategies and tactics are being used by non-profits? How integrated are they with the organizations' overall fundraising efforts? Is the Two-way symmetrical model being used for fundraising? Is the Learning hierarchy model used for online fundraising?

By triangulating information from the interviews, documents, and personal observation, the study revealed that the types of online fundraising practices at the YWCA include the following:

- Online registration for one of their two major fundraising events called TWIN (Tribute To Women In Industry).
- A "How to Donate" page on the Web site, which lists various ways by which someone can help the YWCA-SCV.
- Communicating with donors via email.

Their online registration is part of the TWIN event, and is the main way people register their company's nominated women for the TWIN event. Although online registration for TWIN is in its second year, it still requires a paper backup to work. According to Wolf, Director of Development, seeing that last year most organizations registered their TWIN nominees online, this year the YWCA-SCV tried just sending them a reminder letter asking them to do it online, but it did not work. They had to send in the packet of forms and only when the organizations had the hard copy of the nomination packet, did they do the nominations online:

We weren't getting any response basically, very little response through online registration, so we hurried up and did it the way its always been done. When we sent out the packets and all the forms, then they went online and registered. But not until they had the reminder piece of paper, that they could hand off to their admin. or whatever, and say take care of this for me but you can do it online. Then they went online and did it.

However, email communication is extensive and a vital part of the TWIN event, according to Wolf:

Throughout the whole tribute to women in industry process it's online communication. Which is why we were surprised the online registration didn't work this past year. It did work but they had to be reminded with paper first. . . . But from that moment on, . . . everything basically is communicated via online.

In the revised Web site, Wolf is hoping not only to have online registration for their Tribute to Women in Industry event, but also to integrate online registration into other programs, such as honoring special women, and professional women's luncheon.

Their offline fundraising strategies rely mainly on events, and more recently on direct mail. When asked if the researcher could review their fundraising plan, McLain, CEO, replied that there was no formal one:

We work through the fund development committee structure. We base out our two events and then we do mailings, and our mail, then the committee decides whether they are going to do mailings. We are fairly new at this, other than the events, fairly new in this whole area of mailing out, using lists and stuff. Because we were in a financial problem when I came here two years ago, we're probably not as sophisticated as some of the other non-profits, although it may appear to look that way, but we are not there yet.

Their fundraising practices focus on publicity and public information practices. They try to build their donor base through brochures, their newsletter, and recently through donor cultivation events in small groups. Wolf, Director of Development, explained the donor cultivation events in the following way:

The way that we've been doing that, we've done this twice so far this year, is that one of our board members hosted a reception in her home, where she invited community leaders that she had contact with, to come and we gave them food and drink . . .and we talked about our programs and gave them these packets and asked them to support us.

According to McLain, CEO, their goals for fundraising are to collect funds for the organization and to publicize and market the organization:

Certainly the money is important but also the public relations, the marketing angle of it. The more people who start to know about us, they either are going to know somebody they can help refer to us, or maybe they'll give us a check some day. You know, there are so many valuable things that can come from it.

They have just recently started to use two-way practices for fundraising through interviewing donors, which is explained by Wolf:

We have a consultant who's been conducting interviews in the committee, to see what their feeling is about the YWCA, what their perception is about the YWCA, why do they give to the YWCA, why do they not give . . . and we're using that through our strategic planning process. This is what we are in their eyes, how can we change that if we need to, or enhance it.

Since the information they will gather about donors is going to be used to persuade them to give more, it is a two-way asymmetrical practice. This is confirmed by their

developing three-year strategic plan, YWCA Strategic Plan Draft #10, which states that donor interviews are meant to help launch a campaign to expand the YWCA-SCV's endowment fund. According to the same plan, their strategies for increasing income are to increase funding from individual, corporate, and grant writing contributions by 15% each year, increase 1st time contributions by 10% in numbers and total amount, increase donor renewal rate by 10%. Under the table that explains the tactics for doing that, it says that they will increase marketing and have an annual campaign to increase 1st time contributions and will utilize marketing solely for increasing donor renewal rate. Hence, for individual donors, they plan to utilize mainly publicity and public information practices for fundraising. Their marketing/PR strategies under the same plan include building a media campaign to promote the YWCA-SCV, participating in special events, meetings, social service and trade shows, and so forth, to inform community members of available programs, and developing a Speaker Program to educate the public regarding current and emerging issues in the community and in the YWCA-SCV, which are all one-way practices.

However, they do utilize some two-way symmetrical practices for fundraising in that they try to understand donor needs in terms of where the donors want to give and see if the YWCA can offer them a match. Regarding this, Wolf, Director of Development, said, "I try to do a little research prior, to see if I can judge by what they've given to other people, what they're interested in giving to. If they have community giving programs, I go on their Web site, I use the Internet a lot to research donors." Hence, similar to their

offline fundraising strategies and tactics, their online fundraising strategies and tactics are mainly one-way as well, except for email, which is two-way.

They apparently follow the Learning hierarchy model in that they do not utilize any online donations as part of their fundraising. However, in their revised Web site, according to all three interviewees, one of the first changes they want to see is an online donation capability. Said the CEO, "I'd like people to be able to donate through credit cards. We have some alliances, like if you buy through Amazon.com, if you use YWCA, it will get us a 2% kickback. I'd like to see us move in that direction, of gaining more of those kind of purchases that are appropriate." Their developing three-year strategic plan, YWCA Strategic Plan, Draft #10, also states that one of the first things they want to do with regards to use of technology is to "initiate on-line donation capability" starting the first quarter of year one, commencing July 1, 2001. Furthermore, when the researcher revisited the site on September 20th, their online donation capability was active. Hence, there was no conscious attempt not to utilize online donations, they did not utilize it because they did not have the capability. And they utilized other online direct donations tactics even before, according to Wolf, Director of Development, who said that they had an Amazon.com link from their site which visitors could use to purchase merchandise and the YWCA-SCV would get some part of it. When the researcher explained that she did not see any such link on their Web site, she explained that it may have been removed while the Web site was being revised. In any case the tactic has not been very successful according to Wolf: "I've bought books through Amazon.com by going through our link on the Web site, currently, that was there before I ever got here. I think I'm the only one

that's ever bought books through our link on the Web site to Amazon.com." Part of the reason might also be that the association had not been promoted that much by the YWCA-SCV, and Wolf agreed:

I think too that once you have the capability, and you're really proud of the site, you want to direct people to that site and use it. Then, whenever you do a direct mail piece, I'm thinking that as a footnote, please remember, you know, if you're going to buy online, so and so, go to our site first, we get a percentage, another way you can help the YWCA. Those are the ways I think we can utilize that. We haven't yet.

They, however, do follow the Learning hierarchy model in that they use email to keep a constant communication loop with their donors, as mentioned above, throughout the TWIN event. However, they do not do any email solicitation. When asked about emailing appeals instead of sending them by mail, McLain, CEO, replied, "No, we haven't done. We certainly have the email addresses and we have the capacity of doing some of that, but these would be to people we already have on board." When asked if they had done any research on which donors might prefer it, she replied in the negative. Wolf, Director of Development, said she would want to explore all fundraising options, but had not looked into email solicitation as yet. The reason she gave was too many other things to do and not enough staff.

Branding via Web site.

The second category of the study's research questions were the following: How effectively are the non-profit organizations' Web sites being used in branding the organization: from communicating the organization's mission in their messages to being

user-friendly, all of which is a reflection of their brand? How are they integrating the Web site into their communications mix?

From personal observation, the researcher found that the site was a static brochure site, with no interactive features. However, the site did have the look and feel of the organization it represented. It looked good on both I.E. 5.5 and Netscape 4.04 browsers. The homepage was simple, and divided into two parts, programs and services, and events and donation. Their mission statement was there on the Web site but buried under a lot of stuff. Their Web site was used as an information dissemination tool. This was corroborated by Wolf, who said, "We give information via our Web site about all of our programs and events. Ways to help the community and ways that the community can help us." Information dissemination is going to continue as their strategy under their developing three-year strategic plan, YWCA Strategic Plan Draft #10, which states that the site will be monitored and updated at least once a week to disseminate pertinent information to the community.

The YWCA-SCV has a brand identity problem, which is explained by the CEO:

I think that when you say YWCA, people know it very well, but they don't really know what it is. They will misinterpret it as the YMCA, and they will look for our swimming pool and our workout gym, or our camp. And so we're recognizable, very unlike some other non-profits who's names might go, what are you talking about?, but they'll recognize us. Oh yeah, we know the YWCA, and then you say, what do they do?, and they say, oh, well, they've got gyms and camps. There's confusion about what we do.

This brand identity problem was corroborated by Snider, Chief Financial Officer, who said

I'd like to think it's really well known. Unfortunately, whenever you mention that you work for the YWCA they always say, oh, well you have a pool and your

sports programs. No, that's the YMCA. So we do get confused with the YM, but I think a lot of people do know the YM, the YW. It's fairly well known, and we're trying our hardest to get ourselves out there and known and distinguished from the YM.

The brand identity problem was voiced by Wolf, Director of Development, as well:

We're often confused, and so from a PR/marketing standpoint, I'd like for our name to be as recognizable as the YM. They do great things, they're a wonderful organization, but they are separate and different from us, and always have been. . . . Most people think that either we're very closely affiliated or that we're one organization. One is just the men's side, and one is the women's side. And we're not, and never have been. . . . One of our board members said, they do the fun stuff, we do the blood and gut stuff. And that's kind of a quick way of saying what we do.

Part of their problem with brand identity is also related to the fact that different YWCA's offer different programs, so people get confused about what programs any single YWCA does offer, and this is explained by Wolf:

It's a little confusing too, for people who move in from other parts of the country, because YWCA reflects the needs of the community, and not every, there's not one single program, well rape crisis comes close to being the one single program that all YWCAs do across the country. But still that's not a hard and fast rule, it's not every single one of them. There's one in the Midwest that has an ice rink, the one in Oakland does have a pool, the one in Palo Alto runs dance classes, in addition to childcare and rape crisis and things like that. So I can understand their difficulty in defining what we do.

Hence, their public relations goal is branding. This is explained by McLain, CEO, who said that the public relations goal for the organization was, "to become clear about who we are and what we do." This is corroborated by Wolf, Director of Development, as well, who, when asked what their public relations goal was, said

Branding, more than anything else. We work constantly to get our name out there. I mean we had our name on pharmacy bags at Safeway for a while. I look at every direct mail piece or newsletter that goes out as helping to brand us in the community. Basically getting the name out there. We're here, we're alive, look

at our Web site, check us out. Come to us if you need us, but support us even if you don't.

Towards the goal of differentiating themselves from the YMCA, McLain said that they are going to make their mission statement and their vision more prominent on the Web site: "I think that when we give our mission statement and our vision, and then they look at our service, I think it's going to start to become clear . . . At least that might differentiate, even in the quickest form." This strategy is also part of their developing three-year strategic plan, YWCA Strategic Plan Draft #10, which states that they will "develop and implement an ongoing image and branding marketing strategy to distinguish themselves from other organizations by increasing awareness of the YWCA mission." When the researcher revisited the site on September 20th, their mission statement was prominently placed on the Web site under the "About" page, which is one click away from the home page.

Although they are integrating the Web site by promoting it on all their publications, Wolf, Director of Development, said she secretly hopes no one goes to it, because she is not proud of it yet:

Frankly I don't direct very many people to our Web site. We put it on everything but its like, ugh, I hope they don't look at it yet. As soon as our Web site is up and running. Then, when we have capability for them for donating online, which this will include, and we have all the information that we want them to get, not just the old stuff that's in there now, . . . [then it will be] something we are really proud of.

Answering why they do not just shut it down till it is ready, she said

No, because there is still some information on there that they can get. We promised our honorary special women people that they would be on our Web site. I didn't feel comfortable saying that and then completely shutting down the Web site. So we had them add those kinds of things, and frankly break the links that

are just completely in error. So that, yes, right now we have links that don't work. Having some of the site is better than none of the site, I think. That's been the decision that we've made so far, but only for a couple of more weeks and then we'll be up and running and proud of it. Then we can do some pushing.

At this point there is no tracking of the effectiveness of their Web site, however, under the redesign, that is something that will be taken care of, according to Wolf: "I'd like to know how many people visit our site and what pages they go to, what they're interested in. I'd like some tracking, and Connie is working on that."

Long-term goals for the Web site, according to Wolf, Director of Development, "would be online donation, online registration. I'd like it to be used as a recognition piece for our donors. For the pr part of it, I'd like to put stories on there, good things that have happened to the people that we've served, and for the donors, so they can see how their money is really making a difference. It's an information dissemination medium."

Long-term goals, according to McLain, CEO, are to "Keep it up, get it going, sustain it."

In another instance she said

I just want to get something there that's meaningful, that meets the needs of the viewers. It gives them an idea of what our programs are, what services we offer, what events we have coming up. Even if they just look at us briefly, they can clear up the misnomer that we're not the YMCA.

Strategies and tactics for online relationship-building.

The third category of research questions asked the following: What online client/donor relationship-building strategies and tactics are being used by non-profit organizations? How are these efforts integrated with their existing relationship-building efforts? Are relationship-building efforts based on the Two-way symmetrical model?

The YWCA has little online relationship-building strategies and tactics with donors. These include

- Their feedback link on their Web site.
- Using email to connect with donors.
- Recognizing donors on their Web site.

They have an annual newsletter that they mail out to about 4,000 people, but it is not emailed, according to Snider, Chief Financial Officer. When asked why they do not email it, he replied

Probably something they're thinking about, but haven't really developed it yet. We've had the Web site for a while, but internally we've only got email or Internet access on everybody's desk only about six months ago. Prior to that we had few individuals who could dial out and use email and stuff, but we just got that and we're redesigning the Web site currently.

With regards to the newsletter, Wolf, Director of Development, said that it will be online as part of their new Web site: "A part of our Web site will be that they can download in an Acrobat file our newsletter." When the researcher revisited the site on September 20th, it did have a PDF version of their newsletter, downloadable from the home page. They also incorporate recognizing donors from their honoring women fundraising tactic, by not only recognizing them in their annual report, but on their Web site as well. They also recognize sponsors of their fundraising events on their Web site. As such, they utilize one-way online relationship-building tactics with donors, with the exception of email, which is two-way.

As for online tactics for relationship-building with their clients, the only thing they use is the feedback link on the Web site. They do, however, utilize several two-way

symmetrical practices in offline relationship-building efforts with clients. Answering whether they gather feedback from their clients and donors, McLain, CEO, replied

From clients it is done in each program. And they will do informal surveys and put together some ways in which they felt the course, such as in parent ed., or rape crisis group, and they will fill those anonymously at the time, for the supervisor to look at ways she can refine the program. But in a sense we're still probably in the 20th century.

According to McLain, they, however, are not large enough to do their own primary research:

Because of the size of our organization, we're not large enough to do our own. We do focus groups occasionally, but we do not do that to find out what they need. We rely on what the Chamber of Commerce's report for the Valley says, we rely on the Mercury News's surveys that they have done on what the Valley needs, the Manufacturing Association's survey of the Valley joint-venture reports. And any other agencies such as those, who have done studies, and then we look at those, target our geographical areas and see how that works with the programs we have.

When asked if she thought online forums and chat rooms would be helpful to the organization in understanding the needs of its clients, McLain said, "Yes, we're all for that kind of stuff, if we could get it going and maintain it too." And she also explained what she would like to see on those forums: "I'd like to see, in particular trying to talk to community members in need. In that way they might be more open in what they need, particularly in different languages."

In their developing three-year strategic plan, YWCA Strategic Plan Draft #10, one of their strategies is to utilize the Internet technology to develop new and more efficient means for communicating with their internal and external publics. Hence, globally stated, it seems that they plan to integrate new communications practices with their clients and donors into their online efforts. Under the same plan, their efforts to utilize

two-way symmetrical relationship-building efforts with clients is also evident, because one of their strategies for ensuring their clients are satisfied with their programs is to “implement a comprehensive outcome-based evaluation system to consistently monitor and improve the quality and effectiveness of programs and departments.” The other strategy for client satisfaction is to determine unmet needs in the community using available resources, such as United Way report, as well as to explore collaborative measures to fill some of the needs gaps in the community. From their annual report, 2000 Annual Report YWCA Santa Clara Valley, it is evident that almost half of their income comes from program fees, and only about 1/5th comes from special events fundraisers and contributions from the general public. Hence, the need to focus proportionately on developing relationships with clients and donors must also be taken into consideration.

Chapter V

Results & Discussion

This chapter contains the patterns revealed from the four organizations studied and what these patterns say about the practices of the four organizations. This chapter then follows with an analysis and conclusion of how the practices of the organizations relate to the theories under consideration, and ends with limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

Through the interviews with key staff members of the four organizations studied, document analysis, and personal observation, the study compared the practices of the four organizations and then examined the information gathered with the theories to see whether or not the results strengthen the theories.

The questions focusing on fundraising strategies were examined from the viewpoint of the Learning hierarchy model, which emphasizes focusing on learning and attitudinal responses over behavioral responses as the best marketing strategies in a condition where there is high user involvement. The questions focusing on fundraising strategies were also examined from the viewpoint of the Two-way symmetrical model of public relations, which emphasizes two-way symmetrical practices for fundraising, as well as the IMC model, which emphasizes synergy through integration.

The questions focusing on branding via Web sites were examined from the viewpoint of the IMC model, which focuses on branding as key to all communications practices.

The questions focusing on relationship-building strategies were examined from the viewpoint of the Two-way symmetrical model of public relations, which emphasizes two-way symmetrical practices of communication, as well as the IMC model, which emphasizes synergy through integration.

Uses of the Internet for Fundraising

As demonstrated in Table 1, the most popular tool for fundraising via the Internet is the use of email as a communications tool with donors, which is a two-way symmetrical communication practice. And, as a fundraising practice, it matches the Learning hierarchy model's approach to fundraising, which suggests using the Internet for learning and attitudinal responses rather than behavioral responses. According to Salisbury, President of CN, "90% of our money comes from large philanthropies. So, yes, of course we use online communication, email, to communicate with the Rockefeller foundation or the Ford foundation, or whatever, because that's how business gets done these days." Hence, using email as a communications tool in fundraising is successful and strengthens both the Learning hierarchy model and the Two-way symmetrical model. However, how effective a tool email is also depends on how effectively it is integrated into the organization's practices, according to the IMC model. The CN president's statement above shows that email communication is a well-integrated part of the fundraising process at CN, which makes it very effective. At the EV, however, email is used "when appropriate, which is not often" according to Berkowitz, Executive Director.

Table 1
Primary Tools Used For Fundraising On The Internet

Tool	Organization	N
Online donations on Web site	EV, CN	2
Online store on Web site	EV, SJ Chamber	2
Online donations using charity malls	CN, YWCA-SCV	2
Email solicitation	--	0
Email as a communication tool	EV, CN, SJ Chamber, YWCA-SCV	4

Because, according to him, “Fundraising is all about relationships. . . .The internet breaks that, it makes it impersonal,” which means email is not effectively integrated into their communication process with donors, and so its use is also limited.

None of the organizations used email solicitation as a fundraising tool. Since the researcher was unable to find out its effectiveness, she cannot build a pattern that either strengthens or weakens the Learning hierarchy model. Two of the organizations, CN and YWCA-SCV, although they did not use email solicitation, were not opposed to the idea. According to Cerda Price, Senior Development Associate at CN, they just had not made a decision regarding email solicitation with donors. Wolf, Director of Development at YWCA-SCV, said that she would like to explore all fundraising options, but had not looked into email solicitation as yet because she had too many other things to do and not

enough staff. For the SJ Chamber, using email solicitation did not apply, because they are a membership organization.

On the other hand, Berkowitz, Executive Director of EV, did oppose the use of email solicitation and said, "I would say that for most of our donors and possibly most donors in the world, it's too impersonal." Future research should look into the effectiveness of email solicitation as a tool for fundraising via the Internet, because the Learning hierarchy model suggests that it would be effective. Although it asks for a behavioral response, is it not aimed at the information-seeking netizen, nor does it require Internet funneling.

Of the four organizations, two, CN and EV, utilize online donations strategy on their Web site. (The YWCA-SCV has also established online donations capability on its revised Web site.) Although the EV has online donation capability, it does not consider it as a key online fundraising tool. According to Berkowitz, Executive Director of EV, "We don't focus a lot on fundraising over the Internet, and we don't do that because I'm not convinced that it's a winner. I've not come across a single charitable Web site or organization, that is doing significant fundraising off the Internet." As for CN, its use of direct donations as a fundraising tool is not contributing much to its fundraising effort. Both Salisbury, President, and Cerda Price, Senior Development Associate at CN, said that their online donor base was minimal. CN also utilizes other avenues of online donations, other than the secure server donation on their Web site, which are also not very successful. Although the lack of success of this may in part be due to the fact that people just are not comfortable giving their credit card numbers over the Internet yet, as

voiced by Salisbury, President of CN, “We like every body else, are working to try to get people to give online, but as you probably know that’s a pretty underutilized action for people so far,” the results do support the Learning hierarchy model and hence strengthen that model’s application to Internet fundraising. The Learning hierarchy model is also strengthened by the fact that even though online donations via their Web site is well-integrated into the communications practices at CN, it is still not successful.

Uses of the Web Site

All of the organizations studied used the Web site for the purpose of information dissemination (See Table 2), which is in line with the Learning hierarchy model because it satisfies the learning and attitudinal response needs of highly involved netizens. Beyond that, however, from the IMC perspective, branding should be the primary function of an organization’s Web site, but creating brand awareness has been a secondary function of the CN Web site, its primary function being program support. Because the Web site is focused on supporting the work of their programs it talks about their various programs in great depth, without linking them back to the organization’s central mission and purpose. Although CN’s Web site is the most advanced site among those studied, and provides a lot of useful information, it leaves the visitor confused about who they are and how their various programs link together. It follows the IMC model in creating synergy through integration, by not only promoting its Web site in all its publications and through word of mouth, and so forth, but also by consistently evaluating the success of its Web site through Web server statistics. However, it suffers

Table 2
Primary Purposes For Which Web site Is Used

Purpose	Organization	N
Information dissemination	EV, CN, SJ Chamber, YWCA-SCV	4
Brand awareness	EV, YWCA-SCV	2
Special events publicity	SJ Chamber, YWCA-SCV	2
Fundraising	CN, EV	2
Customer support	EV, SJ Chamber	2
Web casting	CN	1
Chat rooms or bulletin boards	--	0

from a brand awareness problem, which strengthens the IMC model's claim that branding should be the primary focus of an organization for it to be successful. The organization realizes that to achieve its full potential, it needs to focus on branding itself and that is what Wang, Director of Communications, is working on: "[Our] main goal is to really brand our self as an organization. First of all let people know we're Children Now, and secondly when they hear the name they know what that means. It's clear who we are and what we do."

According to their September 1999 report, CHILDREN NOW: An Evaluation of Organizational Impact, which was an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of their Web site, CN's most important problem in branding itself was the organization's inability

to express a clear sense of its mission. This also supports the IMC model's approach to branding, in which developing a core identity is central to developing a successful brand identity. The core identity is central to both the meaning and success of the brand. It contains the associations that are most likely to remain constant as the brand travels to new markets and products (Aaker, 1996). However, just having a clear mission and promoting it on the organization's Web site, which establishes its core identity, is not enough. According to Aaker (1996), an extended brand identity, which includes elements that provide texture and completeness, that fill in the picture so to speak, adding details that portray what the brand stands for, is also necessary for an effective brand identity.

Three out of four of the Web sites studied had some outdated material on them, which takes away from their extended brand identity. One key factor in not having a current Web site, which was evident in the organizations that had the problem, was that they did not have someone dedicated to maintaining the Web site. So, when the organization came under a strain, the Web site got bumped to the side. This is explained by Berkowitz, Executive Director of EV, in the following way: "Something like the Web site, which is important, but when it's a difference between brand new staff and 470 services to make sure they happen, or updating the Web site, the Web site gets bumped to the B list." According to McLain, CEO of YWCA-SCV, having someone dedicated to maintaining a non-profit's online presence is a real need of the day:

I think it's one of the greatest needs in non-profits now. Everyone wants to give us computers and donate this and that, and there's no expertise to keep them going. Somebody who ends up being the MIS person is the person that at the point you hired him knew the most about it, that's all.

Although CN does have a Webmaster dedicated to keeping their site current, they are still having brand awareness problems because, according to the IMC model, the core identity needs to be established first, the extended identity alone cannot make the organization successful.

Interactive elements on a Web site, such as chat rooms, email, customer support, would also develop loyalty to the brand by building long-term relationships, and the IMC model emphasizes customer loyalty by focusing on long-term relationships with customers and other stakeholders. Since none of the organizations utilized chat rooms or bulletin boards, the researcher was unable to determine their roles as branding tools. The SJ Chamber site, however, had a searchable member database, and registration and reminder capability for its events. The CN Web site had a site search capability and registration capability for its list serves. Although these mechanical interactive elements help facilitate a user's experience with the brand, the researcher did not find any evidence that they do much to build brand loyalty because they do not focus on building long-term relationships. Although CN once hosted a live Web cast and chat on its site, the researcher did not have information regarding its effectiveness to be able to determine its role as a branding tool. The four Children Now list serves, however, their email updates/newsletters, work to build customer loyalty with the brand, as evidenced by the fact that their subscriptions have only increased since their inception and they have a very large subscriber base. According to their sever log, Children Now Internet Program, 1st Quarter Snapshot, January-March 2001, they have upwards of 16,000 subscribers from just two of their email list serves.

Neither of the two organizations that are using their Web sites for customer support are putting much effort into the function. The FAQ list on the EV Web site for its volunteers is hard to find, and has only a limited number of questions volunteers can get answers to from it. The SJ Chamber Web site provides answers to only a couple of frequently asked questions on its site. Although customer support would be an excellent interactive branding tool on an organizations Web site according to the IMC model, the researcher does not have enough information to evaluate its effectiveness as a branding tool from the organizations studied.

The fact that the EV does have brand awareness and it also has a clear mission and vision, which it promotes on its site, strengthens the IMC model. In order to broaden its reach to more people, which is one of its strategic goals, the IMC model would suggest that it use its Web site to help in that by building on its extended brand identity: through keeping the site current and building interactive elements into it. It would be interesting to find out whether or not, if the organization followed these suggestions, the results would support the IMC model.

The YWCA-SCV is also suffering from a brand awareness problem, and although its recent step, to promote its mission on its Web site to help achieve brand awareness, is in accordance with the IMC model, it is too soon to say that it strengthens the IMC model. The fact that there is also a big confusion with the YMCA, may affect how effective the use of the core identity will be on its own, to create a brand identity for the YWCA-SCV. There is another factor to consider as well, the problem of different YWCAs offering different services, which confuses the public about what any YWCA

should offer. The IMC model would suggest that to utilize the Web site effectively for branding, an extended identity is also needed, and here, the use of a customer support page on the Web site may be very helpful, even in the form of a simple FAQ on their Web site, to counter the confusion and answer the questions people have.

The SJ Chamber is also suffering from a brand awareness problem, even though it promotes its core identity on its site, so is following the IMC model in that. Again the fact that its Web site statistics show that it gets more hits for restaurants and hotels, and so forth, indicates that it needs to change the reasons people are coming to its site in order for the site to be effective as a branding tool. The fact that they are going to enhance their e-commerce section is only going to perpetuate the misnomer that the SJ Chamber is a tourist resource, and create more problems for brand awareness. The interactive elements in the members-only section of the site should help build brand loyalty within the membership, according to the IMC model. But they also want to promote themselves to the general public, and according to Tucker, Executive Director Economic Development/Communications, their pr objective is the following:

To try and increase everybody's understanding about the Chamber of Commerce. That we do represent business. We're potentially an organization that can help resolve local issues. We are an organization that can develop tremendous ideas to help the community, while at the same time serving our constituency, making sure that the business climate continues to thrive and prosper.

In view of the above they need to utilize their Web site to accentuate these same objectives on their Web site, through for instance chat rooms, or Web casts, involving the public in discourses concerning the business community and the community at large.

Hence, all the organizations studied can benefit from the IMC model in developing brand awareness for themselves. The fact that the IMC model can successfully explain why they are faltering where they are, and why they are successful where they are, strengthens the model's efficacy as a marketing communications model.

Uses of the Internet for Relationship-building

As Table 3 shows, the most popular tool for relationship-building via the Internet is email, used both for feedback and for the organization to communicate with its constituency. Email being a two-way symmetrical tool, strengthens the Two-way symmetrical model of communications. According to Wang, Director of Communications at CN, "People can always email us through any of our Web sites and we can interact that way. And people frequently do, especially the Talking with Kids campaign. We have a lot of parents who write and say well I'm having this problem or this is happening." Email is also the most well-integrated tool in all of the organizations, and so the fact that it is the most popular also strengthens the IMC model. According to Lennard, Volunteer & Teacher Services Director at EV, she uses email as a tool to communicate with her volunteers all the time:

We send out email reminders for getting folks to sign up for services and to remind them of enrichment activities, and events, things going on that we think may be of interest to them. There's a fine line, I don't want to bombard them with email, but I use it mainly as a tool, just to kind of provide them with information and keep them in the loop, and to let them know what's going on with the schedule.

Table 3
Primary Tools Used for Relationship-building on the Internet

Tool	Organization	N
Email/online newsletter	EV, CN	2
Chat rooms	--	0
Bulletin boards	--	0
Web casting	CN	1
Email feedback	EV, CN, SJ Chamber, YWCA-SCV	4
Email contact	EV, CN, SJ Chamber, YWCA-SCV	4
Client/Donor opinion research	SJ Chamber	1
Customer support	EV, SJ Chamber	2
Donor recognition	YWCA-SCV, EV	2

Although chat rooms and bulletin boards are two-way symmetrical tools, and would be supported by the Two-way symmetrical communications model as excellent tools for relationship-building, none of the organizations studied utilized them, so the researcher is unable to say how effective these tools are for relationship-building with donors and clients. The fact that none of the organizations used them, may be seen as evidence that they do not work, however, according to the interviewees, the reason their organizations do not use them is not because they do not think they are good relationship-building tools. In fact, in the original proposal for CN's Web site, Children Now On-Line, they

did have a plan to have a password protected asynchronous bulletin board, where online donors could get exclusive previews of upcoming programs, ask question of Children Now program directors, and give their feedback on programs. According to Lennard, Volunteer & Teacher Services Director at the EV, “ [A Volunteer bulletin board] would be a good idea, I think we should. It would be pretty basic to set up and it would be nice to offer our volunteers a way to communicate with each other.”

As shown in Table 3, two of the organizations provide either an online newsletter or an emailed newsletter as part of their relationship-building via the Internet. However, for the EV, their online newsletter is not an integrated part of their communications mix, they send their newsletter in print, and have it online just in case someone wants to view it online. When asked why the organization does not send out email newsletters instead, Berkowitz, Executive Director of EV, said

As an environmental organization, we would love to not waste paper. We would love to use electronic newsletters, and to save more trees, on the one hand. On the other hand, again, most donors, that’s off-putting to them. It’s not that they would say I don’t want that, it’s that, in fact, it doesn’t build the relationship. It’s not personal enough, it’s not personal attention.”

According to him, most of his donors want a tangible hardcopy, that looks nice, and his compromise is that he targets it to people who he knows will appreciate it instead of sending it to a bought mailing list. At the same time, the executive director does admit that it is a challenge for them, and they do not know what to do about it. On the other hand, the email newsletters that CN sends out seem to be very successful. One reason might be the target audience; the EV’s target audience for their newsletters is mostly retired people, whereas the target audience for the CN newsletters are lawmakers and

opinion leaders, who would generally be more comfortable using the Internet and email. Another reason might be that the CN audience do not have a choice between a print and an email version, the CN newsletters are available only via email, so the researcher cannot say how it would play out for their email subscriptions if they started doing those in print as well. However they do seem to build a relationship, as seen in the continual increase in the subscription of these email newsletters/updates and their large subscriber base. According to their sever log, Children Now Internet Program, 1st Quarter Snapshot, January-March 2001, they have upwards of 16,000 subscribers from just two of their email list serves. The email list serves are also a well-integrated part of CN's communications mix, so that acts as another factor in their success.

Neither of the organizations (see Table 3) that are using their Web sites for customer support are really putting an effort into it, so the researcher does not have enough evidence to find out how effective it is as a strategy for relationship-building on the Internet.

Conclusions

This study revealed a number of patterns common among the organizations studied. Relating these patterns back to theory revealed that the theories do help to explain how organizations should conduct Internet practices, and none of the patterns weakened a theory. The IMC model points out areas of improvement in the use of Web sites for branding in all the organizations. The two-way symmetrical model confirms the efficacy of two-way symmetrical forms of communications. The Learning hierarchy

model is strengthened by the effectiveness of email and the ineffectiveness of online donations as online fundraising tools.

One surprise in the study was brought out by the fact that one organization considered email solicitation as being detrimental to a non-profits fundraising efforts, although the Learning hierarchy model suggests that it would be an effective means of fundraising. Since none of the organizations utilized email solicitation as a tool for fundraising on the Internet, this study was unable to look further into that question. Future studies may look at organizations that do utilize this tool to find how effective a tool it is.

Another important question that came up was the efficacy of email newsletters, in that do they build relationships? One organization studied did not think email was personal enough to build a relationship, although they would love to be able to use it. The advantage of lower costs, and so forth, make it a very appealing alternative to print newsletters, especially for non-profits. This study points in the direction that they do build relationships, but future studies need to be done to look further into this question to find out the effectiveness of email newsletters in building a relationship between an organization and its constituency.

Limitations of Study

This study was limited in that the researcher was not able to get all the necessary documents for examination from all the organizations, some did not have some and others did not permit the researcher to view some of them. The researcher was not able

to interview Webmasters in two of the organizations, namely EV and YWCA-SCV, because of problems of monetary compensation. Two of the organizations were in the middle of a major revise of their Web site, namely YWCA-SCV and SJ Chamber, so the information gathered by the researcher became obsolete almost as soon as she gathered it.

The study was also limited in its scope because it studied Internet communications use in non-profit organizations only. It was also limited in that it focused on effectiveness of Internet communications from the organization's viewpoint, and not from the user's viewpoint.

Future Research

One question that was raised in the study was whether or not email newsletters build a relationship. Although part of the answer may lie in the audience one is targeting and their comfort level with using technology, part of the answer may also lie in the medium itself, and the way it presents written material. This researcher would like to see future research look into the Internet's mechanical shortcomings as a communications medium, of production and presentation, in terms of pixel density, browser capability, and its locomotive shortcoming, it is not as easy to take with you as print, as a factor in determining how effective email newsletters would be in building relationships. Furthermore, studies have shown that computers put a strain on the eyes, so the physical discomfort online viewing puts on human eyes should also be studied and considered in their desirability as a reading medium.

Future research could also look at the ways for-profits are using the Internet for communications, to determine where non-profits may be lagging behind. Another interesting study would be to look at non-profit Internet communication practices from the consumer's viewpoint. Finding out from netizens what they like or use or would like to see when they go to a non-profit's site would yield a better understanding of the effectiveness of a non-profit's Internet communications.

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Appendix

Questions for the Research

- Q1. What is the name, mission and purpose of this organization? What are the long-term goals of your organization?**
- Q2. Who runs this organization? How, why and when was it founded?**
- Q3. Who does it serve? What other stakeholders are you concerned about?**
- Q4. Is this a well-known organization? Does it serve the community at large, like United Way or just a small part of the community, e.g. youth at risk?**
- Q5. What public relations goals does the organization have? Who determines these goals? Who is the administrator for public relations? What part do they play in the organization?**
- Q6. What client and donor relationship-building strategies do you utilize? How do you integrate your relationship-building efforts?**
- Q7. Do you have online forums, such as discussion boards, chat rooms? Do you utilize email networking, such as email newsletters, email mailing lists? Why or why not? How do you measure the effectiveness of your online relationship-building efforts?**
- Q8. Explain two-way models of communication. Are you familiar with these models? Do you conduct any research on what your various publics want from your organization and how do you utilize this information?**
- Q9. Does your organization have any means of measuring client/donor satisfaction with the organization?**
- Q10. Do you do fundraising? Why? Where do you get funding? Who is responsible for developing and administering fundraising?**
- Q11. Who is responsible for developing online fundraising? How and who handles response?**
- Q12. What methods do you use for fundraising online? How do you measure each method's effectiveness? How are your fundraising efforts integrated?**

- Q13. What percentage of your donors is online? Did you or do you plan to recruit new donors via your online fundraising efforts? How?**
- Q14. What were your considerations in planning your Web site? Did what you want change as you were getting into this? How do you use the Web site for branding? How long have you been online?**
- Q15. What are the long-term goals for your Web site?**
- Q16. Who is in charge of designing, maintaining and developing your online presence? How often is the information updated and who is responsible for gathering new material?**
- Q17. Do you have an evaluation process to regularly assess your online effort?**
- Q18. Who is your primary audience for your Web site? Does your core audience use older browsers/computers or the latest browsers/computers? What type of connection would they typically have?**
- Q19. How are you promoting your site?**
- Q20. Any suggestions for aspiring non-profits? Any examples from personal experience of what worked and what didn't?**