

Using Your 990 as a Marketing Tool

February 15, 2017



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Isn't the 990's Purpose Compliance?

- Yes, but...
- IRS says its also public perception
- It's not just a tax return, it's an information return
- It's widely available as a public document
- More people will read it than your annual report



Customers of Your Information

- Current and potential members
- Prospective Board Members and Employees
- Foundations
- Major Donors
- Competitors
- State Agencies
- Reporters
- Watchdog Groups
- Plaintiff's Lawyers



Reasons for Looking at the 990

- Interest in Membership
- Interest in Contributing
- Regulation and Tax Enforcement
- Looking for a Story
- Evaluating Your Organization
- Looking for Benchmarks
- Looking at your Activities
- Looking at your Finances



Public Access

- Public Disclosure Obligations
 - Upon request and without charge
 - Can require payment of reproduction costs (FOIA rate)
 - Only have to be provided for three years from filing
- Widely Available
 - Organization's website
 - Guidestar
 - Hard Copy



Guidestar As a Marketing Outlet

- Your Story
 - Mission
- Programs and Results
- Financial Information
 - Executive or Board Compensation
- Operations

Marketing Info on the 990

Includes but not limited:

- Compensation
- Governance
- Policies
- Related Party Transactions
- Top Programs

Prepare Your 990 Thoughtfully

- Train Your Finance Staff
- Train Your Board Finance or Audit Committee
- Use an Independent Tax Firm
- Use Legal Counsel
- Share With Your Development Staff



Special Attention

- Governance and Corporate Policies
- Independent Contractors/Vendors
- Program Expenses
- Fundraising Expenses
- Lobbying
- Unrelated Business Income Tax



Governance

- Size of Board
- Independent Directors
- Conflicts
- Control
- Changes to Governance



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Corporate Policies

- Disclosures
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Whistleblower Policy
- Document Retention and Destruction Policy
- Compensation Procedures
- Joint Ventures



Independent Contractors

- Value Received Is Reasonable for Dollars Paid
- Sweetheart Deals
- Conflicts with Board or Staff



Program Revenues

Do they fit with the mission?



- Are there any new programs to which you can bring attention?
- Are there any successful programs to which you can bring attention?
- Regardless, know how to explain each program that is listed and its value to the organization's mission.



Fundraising

- Campaigns
- Grants
- Events
- Other Monetary Contributions
- Non-cash Contributions



Lobbying

- Lobbying Myth
- Relation to the Organization's Mission



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Unrelated Business Income Tax

- Mailing Lists
 - Advertising
- Affinity Programs
- Rental Income
- Joint Ventures
- Trade Show

Make Each Year Different

- Major Accomplishments
- New Activities or Programs
- Plans for the Future
- Don't Cut and Paste the Same Information from the Previous Year
- Make the Language Consistent with Your Marketing Material



Federal Tax Exemption Resources

■ Resources

- Publication 557
- IRS Form 990 Instructions
- IRS Web site: www.irs.gov
- Guidestar: www.guidestar.org
- Google
- www.wtplaw.com



Contact Information

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