

## Fresh Edge Services

Fresh Edge can collaborate with you to develop and execute public relations and marketing strategies that will build relationships with your key stakeholders and enhance the reputation, effectiveness, and performance of your company in the communities in which you operate. The services that Fresh Edge can offer are both *strategic* (for example, helping you develop your brand image) and *tactical* (creating a communication vehicle or executing a marketing campaign).

### CORPORATE IDENTITY

Your company's "license to operate" will depend on its reputation and brand image. Fresh Edge can help create and execute a strategy to strengthen brand awareness through effective public relations, marketing and stakeholder engagement. We take a holistic approach to these activities, and believe they should be integrated to help "close the knowledge gap", increase awareness and favorability, develop relationships through dialog, and hopefully move your stakeholders beyond buying your products and services to advocacy on your behalf. Specific services can include

- Developing your brand image, logo and branding guidelines and supporting activities and materials.
- Creating the messages that communicate your core values, vision and purpose.
- Identifying your stakeholders and the best means to reach them.
- Creating or upgrading your Internet site and introducing new email-based vehicles.
- Organizing activities in a variety of venues to engage with stakeholders, including press conferences, face-to-face meetings with stakeholders, and community activities
- Creating and implementing high-impact stakeholder and media engagement plans aimed at building a supportive constituency.
- Developing a crisis communications strategy and plan and train your managers in its use.
- Advising senior management/executives on communication issues, strategy planning and execution along with providing remarks, scripts, briefings and media training.

### BRANDING AND MARKETING

Whether you're a new company or well established, you may have new products and services that you want to ensure are launched successfully. We can help with the "eight Ps": *Product, Pricing, Promotion, Placement, People, Process, Physical Evidence and Packaging*. Our input may help you determine your product mix, appropriate pricing, ways to promote through advertising, public relations and sales, and appropriate placement, or distribution. We can also help you determine or modify your people requirements, establish or correct processes, capture the evidence of value delivered, and develop the best packaging for your products or services.

You may have established brands, but are running into problems because of acquisitions or mergers with upgrading or repositioning brands. Fresh Edge can help you understand stakeholder awareness and perceptions of your brand and sub-brands, and develop an appropriate brand architecture.

### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

In addition to having effective marketing campaign, your company needs to reach out to stakeholders with a campaign that describes the way in which it intends to do business, taking into consideration the stakeholders' business, environmental and social concerns. Your top priority should be to engage stakeholders on issues that matter to them in a candid, forthright and transparent manner.

Fresh Edge can develop a stakeholder engagement plan that positions your company as a committed corporate citizen willing to talk about issues of importance to the company and its stakeholders. We can conduct a proactive campaign on your behalf through email, web, and face-to-face meetings with local leaders.

For example, let's say your company wants to develop or reinforce its image as a responsible corporate citizen that engages in sustainable business practices, but has some adverse industry perceptions to overcome. Fresh Edge may recommend that you

- *Find and/or create opportunities to engage with stakeholders on the tough issues.* There is high value in bringing stakeholders together, acknowledging the problems, and working together to devise better strategies.
- *Form partnerships.* Partnerships with local government, industry leaders, communities, nonprofits and individuals can help build relationships that are needed when times are tough.
- *Find practical ways to demonstrate commitment.* Sustainability must be grounded in efforts that prove useful and practical to all. The challenge is finding concrete activities, projects, and initiatives that increase environmental, social, and economic value simultaneously.
- *Focus on the company's use of sustainable practices.* Sustainability could potentially serve as the basis on which cross-sector interest groups can work together.

The stakeholder engagement plan can include opportunities for your company to participate in

- Events that show your commitment to local communities and issues like sustainability
- Radio talk or call-in shows
- Email campaigns or a blog that initiates a dialog with stakeholders
- Speaking engagements
- Conferences or fairs
- Open houses
- Speaking engagements

## **MEDIA ENGAGEMENT**

Arguably the most important and influential stakeholder group will be media and will require special focus to identify key venues and media outlets. Media will not respond to standard marketing messages as they will to clarity, consistency and credibility in "walking the talk." Given that we face considerable media cynicism, we need to identify and pursue opportunities that enable us to get our message across, largely unfiltered.

Fresh Edge can develop a media engagement plan that includes

- Editorial board meetings at newspapers
- News conferences
- Opportunities for reporters to experience the interaction between your company and its "stakeholders"
- Op-eds and bylined articles

## **CRISIS RESPONSE**

No business plans for, or expects to experience a PR crisis, but most companies do, unfortunately. As such, it is critical to be prepared ahead of time. Fresh Edge can develop a crisis response plan that details what your company and its management will do what in the event of a crisis due to employee misconduct, product liability claims, manufacturing or design mistakes, accidents, or a simple community misunderstanding. In addition, Fresh Edge can conduct crisis response drills so that your management has the opportunity to practice the plan for most conceivable events.

## **IDENTIFICATION OF INFLUENTIALS, POWER BROKERS, STAKEHOLDERS**

It's essential to know who are the "influentials" in your target areas -- in addition to the broad range of stakeholders that may have an interest in what your company is planning, and may include homeowners, chambers of commerce, business organizations, educational institutions and potential suppliers. Fresh Edge can conduct this research and gather this information for use in email campaigns, stakeholder town halls, or other opportunities.

## **POSITIONING AND KEY MESSAGES**

Critical to building reputation and brand is to feel confident that you're sending the right messages. We can help develop your positioning (for example: that you are a company that delivers on its promises), and create the key messages that describe how your company does business, its vision and strategy, its goals and objectives, and why. These key messages should

- Be clear – to ensure understanding and limit inappropriate response from stakeholders.
- Be consistent – so the stakeholder perceives the company as upholding the same standards over time.
- Have the right tone – so the stakeholder is willing to hear the message and the desired impact is achieved.
- Be credible – so the company and spokesperson is perceived as believable and trustworthy.

## **COMMUNICATIONS VEHICLES AND SERVICES**

### **A. WEBSITE**

Several recent studies on influentials and the Internet have found that almost all online influentials visit company Web sites to gather corporate information. In fact, influentials tend to use the Internet more to gather information than noninfluentials, and they also tend to share this information more often with others. Unfortunately, these studies also found that only one in five influentials find sites credible.

Web sites are an essential part of marketing communications and stakeholder relations, but must get beyond a sales pitch in which the stakeholder has no voice.

If your company is going to build relationships with its most influential stakeholders, it will have to deliver accurate and compelling information on its website, or the opportunity will be lost to win "hearts and minds." Your goal for your web presence should be to provide the content that become "word of mouth." If your current site does not convey adequately the company's purpose, strategy or commitments, your credibility will suffer. Focusing on substance and greater clarity in messaging will be more critical for your site than any technical "bells and whistles." Fresh Edge can be of help in bringing a new level of professionalism to your web presence.

At the same time, your site must incorporate ways to listen to what its stakeholders are saying (two-way communication) so that you can begin to develop relationships and build support among local influentials before you need them. This may be a simple email function that allows viewers to send in their questions, or a blog where one-on-one interaction can occur.

Fresh Edge can work within your existing site structure and hosting environment or recommend other hosting and design options.

Specifically, Fresh Edge can

- Recommend web hosting solutions, software
- Set up functionality, design site

- Work with your IT or other internal staff
- Participate in editorial meetings
- Write content; coordinate interviews and review rounds
- Coordinate with photographers; other information or service providers
- Update content and keep the site “evergreen”

## **B. E-MARKETING TOOL**

The use of e-newsletters and email communications has skyrocketed, and for good reason: emails are 65 percent more cost effective than direct mail (Yankee Group); they’re easier to customize for target audiences, and easier to track effectiveness over other methods. They’re also very cost-effective. Your company would benefit greatly from use of email tools in its outreach to stakeholders.

Fresh Edge can

- Recommend the appropriate email tool and set up functionality
- Develop content that talks about (but is not limited to)
  - The mission/purpose of your company
  - Stakeholder, consumer and business-related developments
  - New developments, progress with projects
  - Business-related topics and issues
  - Trends and other useful information
- Design/modify the email tool for each issue, once frequency determined
- Execute the email
- Prepare and maintain the distribution lists
- Ensure Opt-in, out functions operate properly to comply with federal regulations
- Measure readership habits
- Pull statistical reports on subscribers

## **C. COLLATERAL (PRINT) MATERIAL**

Collateral materials are especially effective for face-to-face engagement and when your company is participating in local events and activities. All collaterals — mailers, brochures, flyers – should deliver the same brand message and link to known stakeholder interests and needs. They also should include a commitment to open communication and an invitation to share feedback via the Internet site.

Fresh Edge can design and develop collateral materials that you can use for direct engagement or in targeted mailings. Distribution lists can be developed together. Fresh Edge can write the copy, design the collateral material and coordinate printing and distribution, or deliver the finished artwork to you for coordination of printing and distribution.

## **C. OTHER MEDIA**

Fresh Edge can create and execute marketing or advertizing campaigns at the national, regional and local level. We may recommend, for example, that your campaign include billboards, or newspaper and magazine ads. We can produce innovative ways to attract customers, such as creating vehicle wraps, multimedia shows, trade show booths and just about anything imaginable.

## **About Fresh Edge**

**Fresh Edge** is a consortium of successful and experienced professionals who work together to develop and execute marketing, public relations and communications strategies, programs and analysis for large and small clients across a range of industries. We have years of experience in corporate, private, government and education sectors and in energy, IT, public transportation and healthcare businesses.

Fresh Edge was founded by people who believe that trust and integrity still count in business and in life. We've assembled a team of experts that we trust to be exemplary in their skills and attitude, and that enjoy working hard and collaboratively.

Client work is not a training opportunity, so your project will be done by the professionals you meet and contract with, not staff behind the scenes. We don't just supervise the project – we roll up our sleeves and get it done.

Fresh Edge will offer you fresh perspectives on your project from people with knowledge and experience in breaking new ground. We've tried it all...and we know what works, and what is hype.

We move fast because we're focused on your job, not running a company. You pay only for the skills and resources you need. There's no overhead that's not committed to your project; no office space, marketing campaigns, or energy spent drumming up new business.