



# Open Baskets

Filling the hearts, minds, and souls of our neighbors who live with a mental illness

## 2011 Initiatives

Open Baskets creates and distributes gift baskets for our neighbors who live with a mental illness. Open Baskets has many interesting opportunities as we try to grow from an all-volunteer group to an organization with a staff of 1-2 and serve our entire population (2,600+) twice a year. We are proud of our growth (from ten baskets in 2005 to 1,000+ baskets in 2010); however there are initiatives that can help us move to the next level. We need to generate an estimated \$150k-\$200k per year to support our initial vision and goals (*See document: Goals & Context*). Open Baskets understands that it needs to build infrastructure in order to reach our financial goals. What follows is a prioritized outline of initiatives for 2011.

### INITIATIVE #1 – Marketing Plan

*GOAL: Create a 2011 marketing plan that can be implemented this year and easily updated in future years. The plan should begin in January and include monthly activities leading to November 18 & 19; the final two-three months may break out into weekly activities. December might include any wrap-up or end-of-year fundraising campaigns. (It is understood the plan will not be completed and implemented until this summer; January-June activities will be updated and implemented in 2012.)*

The following areas of focus are specifically desired for the plan ...

1. **Competitive analysis**  
Different from many charitable groups, our product is not on the basic needs level of the Maslow Hierarchy of Needs. We possibly straddle the safety and love/belonging stages; our baskets are typically the only gifts the recipients receive each year. We are interested to find other groups that serve a similar psychographic (Toys for Tots comes to mind) and try to understand how they operate and communicate their message. (Open to calling this element something other than a competitive analysis.)
2. **Communications/Public Relations plan**  
Create a plan with Key Messages that informs donors, sponsors, and volunteers of how they can affect our work and help our neighbors who live with a mental illness feel like a part of the community. Awareness is key. Our November volunteer event would work well on video. We would like a plan to engage media outlets by inviting them to tape our event or conduct live interviews.
3. **Database**  
The plan should include 2-3 database recommendations, along with financial costs associated with each, and an implementation plan. Currently, this is Open Baskets' weakest area. We do not have a way to capture, track, slice, and dice donors, sponsors, and volunteers. We work remotely, so an added layer here is consideration that access needs to occur from a 'cloud.'
4. **Other possible topics for plan**  
Executive Summary; Introduction; Objectives/Goals; Background; Current Marketing Situation; Market Description; Opportunity Assessment; Political Trends; Legal and Regulatory Issues; Perceptual Map; SWOT Analysis/Core Competencies; Demographic Research; Objectives, Issues and Keys to Success; Target Markets; Marketing Analysis and Positioning; Business & Organizational Partnerships; Branding; Collateral Material; Web Based Media; Financial Considerations; Conclusions and Recommendations; etc.



# Open Baskets

Filling the hearts, minds, and souls of our neighbors who live with a mental illness

## INITIATIVE #2 – ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

*GOAL: Provide structure around the organization by analyzing several main decision points and recommending alternatives.*

1. Annual Report  
Create an Annual Report for 2010. This report will be a template for future years. Research and analyze similar organizations to uncover key areas to be addressed within the report. The report will be used as a communication tool for funders, sponsors, and volunteers. Transparency is important. Manage project and guide Open Baskets officials in providing their contributions.

Possible topics for annual report:  
Letter from Executive Director; Letter from Board Chair; Marketing; Funding; 5 Year Summary of Financial Figures; Letter/Opinion Letter from Mental Health Resources Treasurer (Open Baskets' Fiscal Agent); Financial Statements; List of Directors; Purpose of the Organization; Highlights of the Year; etc.
2. Earned income  
Present 3-4 earned income solutions. Open Baskets presently has no earned income; the 2010 budget of \$25k was raised entirely from corporate sponsors and individual donors. We have acquired 4,000 hats and 1,300 collectible action figures from one of our sponsors, with an indication that more overstock items may be coming our way shortly. We are trying to figure out (a) can we sell these legally; (b) if so, what are the best sales channels; and (c) how can we sell them efficiently without taxing the volunteers (i.e. probably not one at a time on eBay, too time-consuming).
3. Financial growth plan  
Present a plan that builds upon the marketing plan and outlines how Open Baskets can grow from \$25k a year to \$200k annually. Include timeframes and investments necessary for growth. Include multiple sources of income, including (but not limited to) individual donors; sponsors; in-kind; earned income; grants; etc.
4. Minnesota common grant template  
Create a template for the Minnesota Common Grant application by collaborating with and organizing Open Baskets representatives to provide responses to the 25+ standard questions and 10 attachments.

*Note: Several items within this section overlap. For example, the Financial Statements provided in the Annual Report are also requested in the Minnesota Common Grant application; another example is that Earned Income is its own category and a sub-category of the Financial Growth Plan.*