

Marketing News

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AMA Foundation, Taproot encourage pro bono programs

Since 2003, the San Francisco Chapter of the American Marketing Association (SFAMA) and the Taproot Foundation have partnered to make pro bono work for Bay Area charities an integrated part of the chapter's programs. Based on the success of this partnership, the American Marketing Association (AMA) Foundation and the Taproot Foundation are exploring ways to support all AMA members in building pro bono programs.

The San Francisco Chapter is finding that pro bono work is an excellent extension of its regular programming and a good way to remain relevant to a new generation of members who want to be more involved in the community.

"It just makes sense to make pro bono work part of the AMA formula," says SFAMA chapter president Jean McKenzie. "Pro bono work not only raised the profile of the marketing profession, it directly enhances the value of the AMA to our members."

The Taproot Foundation, founded in 2001, works to make pro bono work an integrated part of the marketing profession. The organization has offices in San Francisco and New York with plans to open a Chicago office in 2006. Taproot partners with top marketing agencies, screens potential nonprofit clients, scopes the projects, staffs the volunteer teams, provides project management oversight and distributes toolkits for each project to make it easier for busy marketing professionals to do pro bono work.

"I have been a marketing professional in the

Bay Area for more than five years and I have volunteered for various charities during that time, but AMA's involvement with Taproot allowed me to combine my marketing expertise with a great networking opportunity, while giving back to the community," explains Annie Weinberger, a SFAMA Taproot volunteer.

The Taproot Foundation infrastructure has enabled pro bono teams to complete all projects and keep 90% of projects on schedule – something few paid consulting jobs can boast, and 97% of Taproot volunteers report that they would like to continue to do pro bono work.

The SFAMA awarded the Taproot Foundation the 2004 Excellence in Nonprofit Marketing Award. Also, *CMO Magazine* donated \$40,000 in advertising to promote pro bono work in the marketing community.

"The response by SFAMA members has been amazing," McKenzie remarks. "In the coming years, we hope to build on this early success and really integrate pro bono work into our programs. We want to set an example that will eventually make pro bono work part of the careers of the 750,000 marketing professionals in the country." ■

For more information about how your AMA chapter can create a pro bono program or apply for an AMA professional chapter community service grant, please contact Dana Hall, program manager, AMA Foundation, at 843/216-1962 or foundation@ama.org.