

REPORT ON BUSINESS

S&P/TSX	DJ Ind.	Nasdaq	Dollar	Gold
ON THE WEEK: +0.1% FRIDAY CLOSE: 8,344.42	ON THE WEEK: +0.6% FRIDAY CLOSE: 10,260.20	ON THE WEEK: -0.9% FRIDAY CLOSE: 1,844.48	ON THE WEEK: +1.1% FRIDAY CLOSE: 76.93	ON THE WEEK: -0.6% FRIDAY CLOSE: 401.00

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Charities learn to 'push the envelope'



'We saw that for our audience, fundraising would mean that we had to be savvy marketers,' says Alison Gordon of Rethink Breast Cancer.

MARKETING

Just doing good deeds no longer does it

Charities 'rebrand' to win over leery public

BY KEITH McARTHUR
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At a brand strategy session at a Toronto ad agency, Alison Gordon confesses to her colleagues that she's kept awake at night by fears of what the competition might do.

It's not a rival corporation that has her scared. Ms. Gordon is the marketing director of Rethink Breast Cancer, an edgy charity that

targets young people. Her competition is the more mainstream and better-funded Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation.

"If we don't push the envelope, then we're just the Foundation with less money," Ms. Gordon says, half-jokingly, to the group assembled at Capital C, a downtown Toronto agency.

Ms. Gordon knows the other organizations do great work and she

supports their efforts. But she also recognizes that if Rethink is going to make an impact, it must define how it is distinct and sell that difference to supporters.

It used to be enough for charities to do good deeds. Not any more. Under strain from government cutbacks and competition from a growing number of non-profit organizations, charities are adopting marketing strategies from the corporate world, speaking in terms like "market share" and "target audience."

Above all, they are striving to define a unique brand identity in order to better communicate what they do to a skeptical and media-saturated public.

"In the past, charities focused more on doing good work and creating ideas to raise money. Now they're thinking of themselves as brands," says Marc Stoiber, creative director of Grey Worldwide Canada, which has been involved in rebranding work with Unicef.

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Good marketing a key to fundraising

CHARITIES from page B1

Mr. Stoiber says the Unicef brand had become tired and misunderstood despite six decades of helping children. Research showed that most adults recognized the Unicef name and could associate it with the orange boxes children carry at Halloween to collect coins. But few people knew quite what the charity did.

"Unicef is like the Pillsbury Dough Boy or Tony the Tiger — everybody loves them but they wonder where they are now," Mr. Stoiber says.

The international re-branding involved introducing a simple tagline "For Every Child" to replace the scattered messages that Unicef was putting into the marketplace.

"People are bombarded with so many messages every day. Brands are a tool to help people understand an organization better in a very simple way," says Nicole Ireland, associate director of communications for Unicef. Ms. Ireland says she expects the re-branding to have an impact on donations. She said it is already helping people inside and outside of Unicef to better understand the charity.

The YWCA had a similar problem. While Canadian women knew the name of the organization, they didn't really understand how it was different from the YMCA. And many thought of it as little more



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than a health club.

Toronto ad agency Zig Inc. recently worked with the association on a brand-building ad campaign to communicate that the YWCA helps women at critical turning points in their lives — for instance, when they make a decision to leave an abusive relationship.

"If you don't clearly understand what an organization is about, why would you either give money or

give time to help them succeed?" says Zig founding partner Andy Macaulay.

Back at Rethink's brand strategy session, Capital C president Tony Chapman asks participants what defines Rethink.

"Can we put cool and hip?" Ms. Gordon asks. "Because I think that's why a lot of people get involved in us — because of our brand."

Rethink board member Geoff Siegel isn't convinced. It was Rethink's alternative image that attracted him to the charity, when his 33-year-old wife was first diagnosed with breast cancer two years ago. Now the image ticks him off.

"Cool and hip only gets you so far," he says.

Rethink was founded in 2001 with a very specific understanding of what it wanted to be. Executive director MJ DeCoteau had worked for the Breast Cancer Society of Canada but felt there was a need for a breast cancer charity that spoke to women under 40.

She founded Rethink with a goal of using fashion, art and music to attract donations, and unconventional techniques to raise awareness about breast cancer screening.

From the outset, Rethink understood the importance of branding. Instead of doing what most charities do and hiring a fundraiser as its second employee, Rethink hired Ms. Gordon as director of marketing.

"We saw that for our audience, fundraising would mean that we had to be savvy marketers," Ms. Gordon said.

The charity — best known as Canadian agent for the Fashion Targets Breast Cancer T-shirts — has held a "bra and panty party," put on a bikini fashion show and held a breast-health seminar — complete with free cocktails — in a trendy To-

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ronto furniture store.

While some charities will gratefully accept any fundraising partnership that comes their way, Rethink deliberately rejects some offers in order to preserve its brand.

There are at least two other charities in Canada focusing on breast cancer.

The Breast Cancer Society of Canada says its brand is about being family-based and low-key, with slim administration costs, according to Barbara Bone, the society's vice-president of development. The Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation turned down an opportunity to discuss its brand.

Rethink sees itself as competing not only against these organizations, but against everyone vying for women's attention and dollars, Ms. Gordon says.

"I want women to help with funds for the cause, as well as being aware of their breasts' health..." Ms. Gordon says. "Others want them to buy shoes."