

Slaying Sacred Cows

Creative Budgeting for Associations & Non-profits



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What is a Sacred Cow?

A process or product that you use because:

“That’s the way we’ve always done things?”



Time to *Get Creative*

The Good News: The economic environment is ripe for making big changes!

Now is the time to propose new money saving ideas & create new energy for your organization...In turn, you can energize your membership/supporters by giving them new tools and information to use that will support your industry or cause.

The Bad News: The economic environment is embracing technology to make most of these big changes.

Are you and your organization ahead of the tech curve? Are your members?



Signs that a Sacred Cow May Need to be Slayed

1. Member participation, support or interest drops or stops.
2. You inherited an ongoing project crafted by a previous staff member.
3. A project/program no longer meets your organization's goals or mission
4. The ROI is less than its cost.
5. It can be done better, faster and cheaper some other way.



What is Creative Budgeting?

Creative Budgeting is NOT just about spending hours over a decision to save \$15 on postage.

Creative Budgeting IS about value and ROI.

It's also about efficiency.

How can you save time and money? How can you make money?



Identifying **Sacred Cows**

Value = Funding

Determining the value of a project/program to your members or public is essential in deciding whether to continue fund it, modify it or cut it.

Make a list of your expenses and determine their value

1. List each individual expense item (*publications, web site, wire services, ads, etc.*)
2. Project the expense for each item over a twelve-month period (*consider annual expenses, include monthly/weekly fees*)
3. Measure the feedback (*increased ink, member poll, change in revenue...*)
4. Review the expense vs. ROI for each item
5. Evaluate how well it meets your organization's mission and goals AND budget



Cut by Considering...

Get to know your invoices

Are you overpaying for services you don't use?

Do your research & be prepared

Know your budget and timing when working with vendors. Have your materials ready to go to cut down on wasted time. Knowing what you want ahead of time will save thousands in unnecessary costs.

Raise the bar on quality

Evaluate the quality and value of your projects/programs through member surveys – then modify or cut.

Optimizing output

Strategize news wire services & put the Web to work for you (social media, SEO, multimedia releases)

To print or not to print...

Ditch the press kit, take your magazine online, streamline your publications, be your own media outlet, “webify” your conference materials

Increase awareness by enhancing partnerships

Partner with other related organizations to reach new audiences, allow media to be your sponsor



Nothing is Sacred

Be **RUTHLESS** about abandoning things that don't work or have lost their value.

Continue to Ask Yourself:

“Will this process help us to continue to reach our annual goal/s?”

“Is there a new, or better, tactic to achieve the same, or better, results for a lower cost?”

“Would I want this if I was a member?”



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