



HIGHLIGHTS

Individual giving up 30% over target in only 4 months of using film

Film paid for itself the first time it was screened in terms of additional giving to FLY

Highlighted FLY's impact so much that foundations unfamiliar with their work asked them to apply for grants

Powerful outreach and cultivation tool for organization

THE DEPARTMENT OF
EXPANSION

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Case Study:

FRESH LIFELINES FOR YOUTH (FLY)

Building awareness and charitable giving for a premier California youth program

In 2010, Fresh Lifelines for Youth (FLY) celebrated 10 years of groundbreaking work helping at risk youth avoid the criminal justice system. FLY was focused on transforming their funding model and increasing their base of personal donors for greater organizational stability. Additionally, they embarked on a branding campaign to formalize messaging to key constituents. FLY approached the Department of Expansion to support these efforts by creating a signature marketing and outreach film and three shorter films about their specific programs.

Objectives

- Commemorate FLY's 10 year milestone
- Help raise funds for FLY programming by engaging potential funders
- Help strengthen and widen partnerships with key constituents of the juvenile justice system to expand access to clients
- Provide short virtual tours to illustrate the specific FLY programs and further engage funders and partners

Approach

We began our work with FLY by conducting research interviews with youth, staff and probation partners. We asked them to share their personal stories of how FLY has impacted their lives and why they believe FLY is more successful than many of their counterparts working in juvenile justice. This research process is key to our approach.

What we learned is that the essence of FLY's success can be reduced down to one simple sentence: "We love them to death but we hold them accountable."

Our challenge as filmmakers was to communicate this simple emotional essence while at the same time doing justice to FLY's comprehensive, evidence based approach.

We recommended a non-scripted documentary approach to put the audience squarely inside the emotional relationships between youth and staff where they could witness the process of change first hand. We carefully chose stories from our research that not only had emotional resonance but also could represent key aspects of the FLY process at work.

Like any organization, FLY had a number of branding messages they wanted to communicate to new audiences. We worked closely with their executive and development team to determine which messages were best served through the language of film and which would be more effective as website content and other marketing collateral.

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Results

The film went viral and took on a life of its own immediately. It became such a sensation that people who barely knew FLY were sharing it in a really authentic way, as something they loved. It galvanized existing fans of the program, and gave them a powerful tool to evangelize on behalf of the organization. Grassroots campaigns led by supporters formed around screenings of the film, and the knock-on reach of the film expanded exponentially.

From Skye DeLano, FLY Director of Development:

Department of Expansion's work captured FLY's essence and impact in a way that has inspired and invigorated our supporters. The films now play a critical role in our ongoing efforts to transform our funding model. Equally importantly, the film continues to be a powerful and effective tool for us in our outreach and cultivation strategies.

We "launched" the film at our annual breakfast event in December 2010, and four months later we have raised 30% more than our total annual goal this year. One longtime donor who attended the event met with our Executive Director and handed her a check for 15x his annual gift; he said it was the film that inspired him to increase his gift.

Four months after launching the film, we have raised 30% more than our total annual goal this year.

In short, we could not be more thrilled with their team and cannot recommend them highly enough. The Department of Expansion has done incredible work for us and we look forward to working with them again. Their films are well worth the investment.

From Christa Gannon, FLY Founder and Executive Director:

We had a lot of concerns embarking on a video project, including cost, measurable ROI and how intrusive and time consuming the project might be for our very busy team.

From the first meeting we were blown away by how deeply Marj and Kristina "got" us. In fact, they were often able to see us more clearly than we could see ourselves. The quality of the films they produced were tremendous, and the process was not only painless, but truly enjoyable. Their insights on what makes FLY unique and special and how best to tell our story had so much value to me as the CEO and to FLY's entire Executive Team. Plus, EVERY stakeholder that we asked to be a part of the project raved about Marj and Kristina's professionalism, passion, and approach to the process.

I couldn't recommend this team more highly for any non-profits who need a fresh marketing tool.

The impact the film has had for our organization is already significant, only four months after launch, not only has it paid for itself in this short time through an increase in individual giving to FLY, but the tangible impact on staff morale and funder understanding of our work has increased far beyond what we imagined. I couldn't recommend this team more highly for any non-profits who need a fresh marketing tool.