The Power to Make a Difference

As Congress and state legislatures struggle with today’s slow economy and high unemployment rates, a real solution seems to be out of reach.

However, everyday people are making a difference, by choosing to buy American. When consumers choose American-manufactured products, they support American jobs; and the more they purchase, the more jobs are created. According to Moody’s Economy.com, if every American spent an extra $3.33 on U.S.-made goods every year, it would create nearly 10,000 new jobs. Thanks in part to the Alliance for American Manufacturing (AAM), the ‘Buy American’ movement is growing and shows there are opportunities to buy U.S.-made quality products. The movement is gaining national attention and millions of people are refocusing their purchasing needs and taking a second look at the skilled crafts and workers that are the heart of the American workforce.

Strengthening American manufacturing and growing manufacturing jobs will lay a solid foundation for a new middle class and economic security for the next generation. At the end of the day, consumers have the power to control the marketplace and create change.

CHALLENGE

BUY AMERICAN, GIVE AMERICAN

The Alliance for American Manufacturing (AAM) is a non-partisan, nonprofit partnership forged to strengthen manufacturing in the United States. AAM believes that an innovative and growing manufacturing base is vital to America’s economic and national security, as well as to providing good jobs for future generations. Their mission is achieved through research, public education, advocacy, strategic communications, and coalition building around the issues that matter most to America’s manufacturing sector.
“Don’t be afraid to try things. That’s the beauty of social media. If it doesn’t work, change it up... usually what sticks is very successful.”

– Alison Burke
Manager of Services, AAM

Their latest challenge is to promote strong Buy American provisions at the federal and state levels, advocating for fair trade, and promoting revitalization through a long-term national manufacturing strategy.

AAM is a major driver of information and they were starting to formalize a new outreach strategy that would change things up enough to continue to engage current advocates as well as capture new support.

“We needed to make sure we were using all the communications tools available to us to continue to reach and educate our supporters in the most effective way possible,” said Alison Burke, manager of services, AAM. “I was brought in to formalize a strategy around the use of our blogs, Facebook, Twitter, press releases and emails. My first focus was to streamline our online presence. We needed to look at our tools and start using them together to create more effective campaigns and ultimately, more advocates.”

AAM’s management team welcomed opportunities to try new technologies and was willing to support the efforts of a new streamlined campaign. The nonprofit was a big proponent of social media tools.

Alison added, “It was an easy sell because AAM has seen the successes of those tools. We have grown our fan base and we have made a big difference already with the town hall meetings. But we can do more. To launch a successful campaign, you need to integrate your methods: twitter rally, streaming video, press releases, and of course, email campaigning.”

The manufacturing industry is typically a higher age bracket and AAM continues to maintain a large fan base from that group who prefer to receive their information via email. AAM needed to make sure they continued to reach and build that audience and the Salsa email platform was an effective tool to push its messages out and engage supporters.

According to the 2012 Nonprofit Communications Trends Report, nonprofits have more communications tools available to them than ever before. Of the 14 different tools listed on the survey, participants identified websites (68%) and email marketing (67%) as the top two most important. When the ‘very important’ and ‘somewhat important’ rankings were combined, it was instantly clear how online marketing tools continue to dominate, with 93% of participants identifying their website as being a very or somewhat important tool, and 89% identifying email marketing the same way.

Salsa’s email marketing and outreach features enable AAM to send action alerts and monthly...
newsletters, build targeted lists and track performance. The nonprofit uses the Salsa platform to send an average of one email blast per week to more than 16,000 supporters.

AAM can create consistently branded emails with Salsa’s feature-rich email builder. In a few simple steps, users can incorporate content, link a call to action back to their website and add personal touches from key executives.

“When using Salsa’s email platform, we try to tell a story that we’ve been telling through the week,” said Alison. “It’s a great place to combine all the content that we’ve been pushing from all these other avenues into one supporter email blast. The email goes out to a list that might not otherwise see this content through social media.”

**RECENT SUCCESSES**

**CHINA’S CURRENCY MANIPULATION**

Through AAM’s grass roots lobbying campaign, and its press and social media campaigns, the nonprofit was able to get a bill passed through the House relating to China’s currency manipulation.

The House voted to ensure that the United States could impose duties on subsidized goods from China and Vietnam, overwhelmingly rejecting a conservative group’s attempt to portray it as a tax increase. Supporters say current duties protect 80,000 American jobs.

“This was a major barrier to a successful American industrial base,” said Alison. “It was a big win for us. With the help of Salsa, we made a huge push through multiple emails taking us from the initial building of the bill’s momentum all the way through to when the bill was in the House.”

**BLACK FRIDAY**

AAM launched another successful campaign after Black Friday in advance of the holiday season. Buy American, Give American was a highly integrated campaign. Throughout the month of December, AAM asked its supporters what their favorite American made gifts were and incorporated those messages into FB posts, Tweets, blogs, emails and press outreach trying to draw attention to the campaign.

Much of AAM’s traffic comes from their email initiatives. “We try all different things, splits, different content, etc.” said Alison. “Email is extremely important to us.”

Buy American works. According to AAM Executive Director Scott Paul, “Buy American provisions enhance the job-creating effect of our limited taxpayer dollars. Studies show that 33 percent more manufacturing jobs are created when domestic content is maximized.”
Alison added, “There has been a huge upswing in the popularity of American made goods. Many journalists across the country picked up on the made in America theme including ABC news anchor, Diane Sawyer. We’d like to think we played a part in that. We are going to push Buy American, Give American every way we can.”

When asked what advice Alison would give other nonprofits looking to make an impact with their communications efforts, she was quick to add, “Don’t be afraid to try things. That’s the beauty of social media. If it doesn’t work, change it up. We’ve tried all sorts of things. Different messages, different tweets, Facebook posts, we throw everything up against the wall and see what sticks. And usually what sticks is very successful. And we try to replicate it over and over again.

“AAM had never tried Buy American, Give American before. It’s kind of light and it doesn’t get to our deeper issues, but it is a gateway to our broader message. They see our logo, click though our site and learn more about our other issues. Be adventurous.”

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– Alison Burke
Manager of Services, AAM

The Alliance for American Manufacturing is a unique nonprofit forged to strengthen U.S. Manufacturing.

Mission
AAM brings together a select group of America’s leading manufacturers and the United Steelworkers. Our mission is to promote creative policy solutions on priorities such as international trade, energy security, health care, retirement security, currency manipulation, and other issues of mutual concern.