



Ken Baur



Marc Bluestone



Steve Dodd



Randy Nipper



Jim Parrie



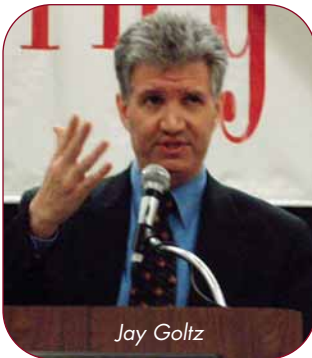
Robert Sher

# Successful Retailing: The Battle for Market Share

## Part Five: Giving to Charity

### Question:

How can you maximize the effect of charitable donations on promoting your business?



Jay Goltz

This is the fifth, and last, installment in a series of articles transcribed from the National Conference Annual Business Breakfast Panel at the 2004 West Coast Art & Frame Show in Las Vegas. Look for information about the upcoming 2005 Breakfast Panel Event at the end of this article.

#### MODERATOR

**Jay Goltz**

president and founder of Goltz Group, Inc.

#### PANELISTS:

**Ken Baur:**

president of Framing Concepts

**Marc Bluestone:**

president and owner of FrameGroup, Inc.

**Steve Dodd:**

president of Northwest Framing

**Randy Nipper:**

senior vice president of sales at Crescent

**Jim Parrie:**

owner of Millennial Technologies & Consulting International

**Robert Sher:**

president of Bentley Publishing Group

**Jay Goltz:** I get hit up constantly by charities, and I give gift certificates to most of them. Has anyone [else on the panel] been successful with charitable giving for business?

**Robert Sher:** The Art & Framing Council has done that with Starlight [Children's Foundation], and right now we're tied in with the Alliance for Young Artists and Writers, which [celebrity] Jane Seymour is involved in. *(Editor's Note: At the time of this discussion, Sher was chairman of the Art & Framing Council.)* One of the things we're grappling with is how to get broad-based industry participation that is workable for the charitable organization. We have talked with the Alliance about ways of getting custom framers to put in, say, \$100 and then be authorized to use the name of the celebrity and the charitable organization. That is a way we might be

able to tie that whole marketing effort through the entire industry.

A number of people who have tried to get efforts like this going thought it would be very difficult to get enough custom framers to cut a check for \$100

to be in the program so that it would be large enough to make a difference on a national scale for the charity. A lot of people in this industry feel that working directly with a charity in their own area is more effective than doing something across the board as an industry. I'm not sure that that's true,



*The panel discussion, which took place at the 2004 West Coast Art & Frame Show, was attended by more than 300 industry members.*

because a lot of independent business people think they can do that even though they never find the time for it.

**Steve Dodd:** We've had a lot of success—and a ton of failure—in trying to work out those kinds of arrangements because you really

do get hit from all sides. Most of your customers are in an area three to five miles of your store. If there are associations that are personally important to you in your community, those are good ones to start with. You should have very clear rules for yourself on giving, however, because you can

spend a lot of money and not get any return on it.

One thing we've had success with in Seattle is donating custom framing gift certificates at education and arts related auctions. We were able to give \$100 custom framing gift certificates with a minimum purchase amount to attendees of a few premier auctions in Seattle. The people at the events felt great about us and it brought in considerable business. It was much more effective than donating \$5,000 worth of framed artwork.

You need to create guidelines and simple materials for handling requests because store managers get asked to support on a regular basis. You don't like to say no or disappoint people, but you have to have a budget and know when to say no.

**Jay Goltz:** I might add that it's one thing to give a number of gift certificates to an auction, but you do have to put a minimum on them when they are to be given as door prizes. What happened to me is that certificates that I had given were handed out by the charity, and someone came in and ordered \$800 worth of framing and then

peeled off eight \$100 certificates. I had to call the organizer [of the event] about that, and he was embarrassed. So I will never give out quantities of gift certificates without putting a minimum on them. It's still a good strategy, but you do have to qualify it.

**Marc Bluestone:** We all have things we support personally and have no need for recognition. But when you're donating from your business, you need to make sure that you have visibility at the event. Visibility could include having your logo displayed, having your name announced, having a presence in the event program, or having materials distributed. That's an important part of the value you get from your donation. Support your own personal causes anonymously if you want, but when

you're giving money, services, or gift certificates from your business, make sure people know where it comes from. Also, if it's a significant amount—say \$250 or more—see if you can have a press release published in your local newspaper including a picture of you presenting a gift certificate to a local charity or a news item about how you participated in some way. Papers will run it a lot of times, and it's like free advertising.

**Ken Baur:** We've been very successful, too, with finding organizations that represent our client base and getting involved in things they care about. We'll raise money through raffles or art auctions and donate to what they're interested in, and it helps a lot in building a relationship with our clients. ■

*The upcoming National Conference panel discussion, "Successful Retailing: The Battle for Market Share," will take place at the 2005 West Coast Art & Frame Show on Wednesday, January 26th from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Led by PFM business editor, Jay Goltz, a select panel representing different perspectives from diverse segments of the market will participate in this breakfast event. The panel will explore a timely question: "What strategies do framers need to survive in today's competitive marketplace?" They will examine three main points: the state of the industry and the marketplace; where and how you fit in; and where do we go from here. This event is free, compliments of PFM. Register early because seats are limited.*