



Case Study: Tampa Bay Symphony

Community orchestras have a rich tradition in the United States, and the Tampa Bay Symphony is a standout example. Described as “one of Tampa Bay’s hidden jewels,” this group of over 80 volunteer musicians, under the baton of Music Director Mark Sforzini, share their professional sound, passion for orchestral music and knack for creating accessible experiences for diverse audiences.

Through Catalyst for Good, the Tampa Bay Symphony volunteers embarked on a multi-faceted plan to strengthen their board and their marketing strategy. They also got a new website and ramped up a significant social media presence and e-news following. Ticket sales were climbing when COVID struck and interrupted their 2020 season. It’s been a tough time, but with the thoughtful C4G planning and capacity building work behind them, the group is poised to emerge stronger than ever.

The C4G program was completely tailored to meet the needs of our organization, providing much needed expertise and guidance in areas like social media and fundraising, and providing us with an infrastructure that can be managed and maintained within the constraints of our very limited budget

Susan Rhien, Tampa Bay Symphony President



The Tampa Bay Symphony plays three concerts a year at three venues in Tampa Bay—the Palladium in St. Petersburg, the Straz Center in Tampa and the Arts Auditorium at St. Petersburg College. Tickets are an affordable \$20.

Additionally, the group manages two ambitious musical competitions. The Jack Heller Young Artist Competition awards an aspiring musician a cash award and an opportunity to play with the Symphony. And the Annual Call for Scores Composition Competition receives dozens of submissions from around the world and stages and performs the winning composition each year.

Determining Strategies and Key Deliverables

The main objective of the C4G engagement was to better understand and leverage the Symphony's unique culture, programmatic niche and contributions to the educational and cultural landscape. The C4G team tapped its network of experts to bring the right skills to match the Symphony's needs, including: **Board Governance , Finance and bookkeeping, Marketing and strategy, Web development and Social media training**





C4G Program Outcomes

Marketing

- C4G team built a new website and trained Symphony volunteers how to maintain it
- Provided social media and e-news marketing training and created robust digital presence for the organization
- Engaged audiences with the excitement of the two music competitions. Introduced open-to-the-public rehearsals that tripled audience attendance
- Introduced the backstories of the musicians – everyday people (dentists, accountants, etc.) who come together to make music- via social media storytelling to build rapport
- Bundled these approaches to market the Symphony to audiences seeking a lower cost, more relaxed and educational classical music experience
- Provided refreshed branding and design templates
- Introduced a new tagline developed by the Symphony board that united and inspired the group "Unleashing the Passion of Possibility."





C4G Program Outcomes

Governance

- Board development process helped board members understand their roles and improved fundraising confidence.
- Reinforced culture and kept people aligned and engaged during the pandemic, even though rehearsals and performances were suspended
- Board-led process resulted in a tagline that unified and inspired the group: "Unleashing the Passion of Possibility."

Finance and Operations

- Audited ticketing platform technology and processes
- Introduced a more cost-effective email marketing platform
- Recommended a small fee for attendance at open rehearsals
- Marketing strategies boosted revenues and showed potential for growth post-pandemic.



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