

Send Your Sales Tax to School Campaign

Overview: In 2006 the Florida Legislature approved a law that allows sales and use tax dealers (retailers) who are entitled to a collection allowance (rebate) for calculating the sales tax they must transmit to the state to donate these funds to the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund. The money collected will go to the local school district to support technology purchased for classrooms and the teacher training needed to insure effective use of the technology. In 2005-2006, approximately \$61 million in collection allowances were retained by Florida businesses. Using the pro-rata share of the population as a guide, Broward County could potentially receive about \$6 million to support instructional use of technology.

The state has taken a low-key approach to promoting the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund legislation and business awareness is minimal. A preliminary appeal was mounted in 2006 using mass media (letters to the editor) and business organizations as the conduit. It did not accomplish revenue objectives.

Needs Assessment: Budget shortfalls have impacted Education funding. Currently, the school district is seeking ways to reduce spending that will counteract a projected \$100+ million shortfall.

Marketing Plan

Goal: The purpose of this campaign is to increase the level of support for the "Educational Enhancement Trust Fund for Classroom Technology."

Objective: To increase participation among eligible businesses by 25% within the first 6 months of the campaign and to maintain an ongoing participating and revenue stream. As of 12/31/10 there were approximately 839 businesses in Broward participating at an average of \$10 per month. That is less than 2% of Broward businesses that are eligible. (There are 46,000+ businesses in Broward that are eligible to participate.)

If we can get 25% participation at \$10 per month we will raise \$1,380,000 annually. At an average of only \$10 each and a 50% participation rate we could raise \$2,750,000 a year.

Audience:

Broward-based Businesses that file their sales tax online.

Strategies:

1. Use business organizations and professional associations as leaders for the campaign. The "Send Your Sales Tax To School," campaign was kicked off in Broward County in 2007. District staff developed and implemented the

campaign without a significant number of community partners. By engaging business groups to lead the charge, better results will be achieved.

2. Use Influencers such as City and County Government to aid in communication. Ask the County and League of Cities to join with us in creating a resource via their sales tax dollars.
3. Market directly to education oriented consumers through schools. Parents of students in public schools are also small business owners, or work in businesses that are based in Broward County. They will be effective ambassadors for the campaign because they have personal experiences with what the shortages mean to their child's school.
4. Provide employees with information. When it comes to Education, employees are perceived as credible sources of information. Make sure that Employees know all about the program and have the ability to access additional information to share with family and friends/neighbors. when it comes to the school system.

Tactics:

Business Groups:

1. Develop a template resolution that each organization can approve and distribute to members.
2. Create articles for association newsletters
3. Give presentations at monthly business meetings of such groups as The Fort Lauderdale Alliance, Broward workshop, Chambers of Commerce, etc.
4. Increase the awareness of the opportunity among individuals involved in helping businesses prepare and transmit their taxes. Use professional associations such as the Broward Chapter of the FICPA to provide education and leadership in this area.
5. Prepare Op-ed pieces from business leaders about this program and submit to the local media¹.
6. Provide recognition for active businesses with signage for use in places of business (decals, stickers).
7. Send information to every vendor that does business with Broward County Public Schools.

Influencers:

1. Ask The County and Individual Cities to pass the resolution and feature information about the program in their ongoing communication; websites, newsletters, public representations, signs.

¹ Local media includes weekly publications, business publications (eg; Florida Trend, and minority publications, as well as Spanish language publications and radio/TV stations.

2. Provide influencers with information about shortfalls in technology and how this can help enhance resources in the community.
3. Provide recognition for local businesses that participate in the program.

Consumers:

1. Prepare Radio and TV PSAs and release to major Cable and Satellite stations and all major radio stations to present information about the program.
2. Develop programming for community affairs programs on radio, Comcast, and BECON.
3. Create flyers that can be sent home in the backpack to parents.
4. Ask each principal to present information at parent meetings and open houses.
5. Please a link to information about the program on school and district websites.
6. Develop feature stories for local media about how the technology funds are being used.
7. Schedule an editorial board meeting with local newspapers and television stations to discuss the program.
8. Create a giant "United Way Campaign" style thermometer in the shape of a computer to measure progress and post outside of major education facilities.

Employees:

1. Feature the program in website postings, electronic newsletters, staff meetings.
2. Develop information that can be displayed at worksites.
3. Engage employee unions and management associations in developing communication pieces. Show what the impact will be on members; how the additional funds will enhance jobs and job performance.
4. Tie to Harness the Power campaign to help employees see the opportunity to enhance revenue as well as cut costs.

Resources already available:

1. Stickers for businesses
2. Press Release Template (needs to be updated)
3. Samples of the mailing card

Resources needed:

1. PSA (including script, and production)
2. Resolution Template
3. Op Ed Pieces
4. Recognition Plan