

Judah Symphony Case Study

Background: Serial entrepreneur Franco Olmeda, along with two colleagues, wanted to find out whether a nonprofit serving developmentally challenged public school students in New York City was viable. Mr. Olmeda was willing to seed the company with \$100K if the initial launch showed promise.

Problem: Creating a nonprofit from scratch is hard in the best of times. In 2012, when Mr. Olmeda formed *Juda Symphony*, headlines about NYC's public school's cash woes dominated local news. Fundraising specialists say negative news can depress giving if donors believe the cause is "lost."

Solution: I was hired to write a letter introducing Juda Symphony to a rented mailing list of five thousand. The letter was also copied onto Juda's website.

Results: The fundraising letter generated a 4% response rate, netting \$5,700, with an average gift of \$28. By direct mail standards, a 4% response to a new charity from a rented list is tremendously successful.

Conclusion: Better to run a small-scale test on the viability of a new concept, product, or charity before investing in a larger campaign. The team realized that building Juda Symphony according to their vision would require significant resources. They decided not to proceed, shut the organization down, and returned all donations.

Creative:

[Fundraising letter](#)