

Merkle RMG Empowers Employees to Serve Causes We Care About



Our work at Merkle Response Management Group (RMG) is so much more than the daily operations of our response management services. It's also about building partnerships and supporting nonprofits in their missions to do good. As an account manager, I've grown close relationships with my clients and have come to be truly invested in their causes. Recently, my work with one nonprofit led to the experience of a lifetime – a chance to take part in a mission trip to the Philippines with [Operation Smile](#).

Embracing the Client Mission

Operation Smile works in over 60 countries to provide free surgeries for individuals with cleft palate, cleft lip, or other facial deformities. On mission trips, teams of international volunteers provide medical, administrative and emotional support to children and adults seeking to improve their quality of life with these surgeries.

When I joined Merkle RMG in 2010, Operation Smile was the first client I learned to serve in my initial operations role. I always knew I wanted to manage their account, and when the opportunity presented itself, I jumped at it.

Merkle RMG has sponsored several Operation Smile trips for donors in recent years. To show appreciation, the client invited a Merkle RMG employee to join this year's trip to Cebu City, Philippines. I was very familiar with their history and mission, so Operation Smile asked our president, Bill Sayre, if I'd be interested. Not only did Bill give me his blessing, but Merkle RMG agreed to sponsor my trip. Of course, I was thrilled!

The Volunteer Experience

I traveled to the Philippines in late February. On this trip, doctors worked tirelessly to perform nearly 30 surgeries a day for five days. As a non-medical volunteer, I provided guidance and moral support to patients and families as they went through the various stages of receiving treatment. On the initial day, we worked 13 hours to screen 187 patients. We helped them navigate the various screening stations for patient evaluation and form completion, kept children calm and entertained as they waited their turn, and brought water and other provisions to the doctors.

On surgery days, we provided emotional support to patients and their families. Specialists would talk families through what would happen during surgery, and I'd keep them company, help take care of their children, and reassure them by sharing pictures of people who had successful outcomes from the surgery.

Of 187 patients screened, 129 received surgery. Those who didn't receive surgery may have not been healthy enough, or may have just been returning for a follow-up visit. Also, some parents bring their children for a wellness visit. They don't get to see a doctor or dentist in their day-to-day lives, and through Operation Smile, they receive a physical. Operation Smile welcomes this and receives them unconditionally. And if a patient requires more intensive surgery than what on-site doctors can provide, Operation Smile will send them to someone who can help them.

A Lasting Bond

The experience was extremely moving and I felt a true bond to the people I was helping. I became especially close to the family of a 6-month-old girl named Mirabella. She was only 10 pounds – very tiny for her age – and her family feared she wouldn't be accepted for surgery. Thankfully, she was. I loved playing with her and keeping her entertained, and I stayed with her mother and grandmother while she was in surgery. I was the one to tell her family that her procedure was successful, and I was by their side when they saw her for the first time after surgery. When I went to check on "Bella" the next day, her family handed her to me, took pictures with me, and told me I was Bella's new "aunt". They saw me as part of their family because I was there for them in their time of need. We stay in touch over Facebook and they continue to send me updates on their little girl.

Inspired by Gratitude

It meant so much to play a role in changing people's lives for the better. So many children with cleft palate or lip have a hard time eating, and babies can't drink from a bottle properly. It's amazing to see Operation Smile surgeons transform these tiny faces, and to know these children will now be able to eat and speak properly and that their whole life is going to change. I cried when I saw what a difference these doctors were making, and thanked them for all that they do. But they didn't accept my thanks! Instead, the doctors thanked *me* for being part of a company that would support their mission and make it possible for them to do this. That's a testament to the selflessness of Operation Smile's volunteers, and also makes me proud to be part of Merkle RMG.

Core Values With Lasting Impact

This experience will have a lasting effect on the work I do for Operation Smile – because now, that mission has a face. When I provide solutions from an account management perspective, it's the child's face I see. That passion now extends to the other nonprofit clients I support as well.

My opportunity to travel with Operation Smile was a genuine reflection of Merkle RMG's commitment to clients and community. Without their support, this life-changing experience – for me, and for the families we served – would never have been possible.

Customer Service News

Dear Valued Client,

I am happy to report to you that we're well under way with our Account Management strategy transformation project. As some of you will recall from our newsletters last year, this project would be the single largest initiative for me in 2017. We are meeting weekly to determine our road map to not only meet your expectations in terms of customer service but exceed them. I am currently choosing an outside firm to assist our team in gaining customer service certifications. We're developing current state and future state mapping, developing tools to help us gauge proper work loads for each Account Manager, and many other initiatives.



Webster's dictionary defines transformation as a thorough or dramatic change in form or appearance. Obviously, a thorough or dramatic change in form takes time and this project will be ongoing. Our goal is to continue to grow just as we want our clients to grow. As we make measurable strides to transform Account Management, I will be sure to keep you updated.

I would also like to hear from you. What can we do better? How can we enhance our service? Your feedback is very important to me and I would love to hear your comments or suggestions as we move through this important project.

Thank you in advance- Kent

New Business



ADVENTIST DEVELOPMENT
AND RELIEF AGENCY



Community
FoodBank
OF NEW JERSEY

FOOD • HELP • HOPE

USPS News

Did you know that RMG tracks the deliverability of our USPS pick up locations by placing seeds in the mail for your organizations? Each month, my team selects clients and we mail from different drop off locations and then track the time it takes to receive the envelopes back at RMG. We not only track first class mail but BRE mail as well. We are compiling months' worth of data on average deliverability time so we can help our clients make informed decisions about the postal facilities they should be working with. We believe as many of you do that the average length of deliverability absolutely has an effect on the donor experience. We want to get the acknowledgment in the mail as quickly as possible and having this type of data at your fingertips can allow us all to make USPS location decisions much easier and less time consuming than testing different locations. After collecting seventeen months of data, the average deliverability time from mail date to receipt date at RMG for the following USPS locations is below:



Baltimore MD – 4.1 days
Brentwood (DC) – 5.7 days
Merrifield VA – 5.4 days
Hagerstown MD – 3.9 days
Greencastle PA – 4.0 days

Merkle RMG Holidays

**Memorial Day -
Monday, May 29th**



Service Spotlight

Everyone expects us to have great relationships with knowledgeable people in the industry and yes, we do! We have many great sources of not only professional industry knowledge but we also have great relationships with our hardware and software providers and even the local tradesmen for building maintenance. In fact, onsite today we have painters, electricians, Dish network and TV installers, food and beverage suppliers, fitness center equipment installers and general contractors replacing countertops. Yes, we have a lot of great relationships.

But there is one relationship that you may not realize—Kaplan University. Since 2010, Kaplan has provided a variety of customized courses both technical (VB, SQL, C#) as well as general management courses such as “Train the Trainer” and most recently “Essentials for HR Management”. Twelve Merkle RMG staff members just completed an intense 2-day course on HR Management at Kaplan University. John Brantley, Director of Workforce Development at Kaplan University, has been a valuable resource in our continuous improvement efforts and develops these specialized courses for our employees skill-set.

John writes, “As one of the top ten employers in our area, Merkle RMG has had a significant economic impact in our community. This is a dynamic organization that has experienced a great deal of growth in recent years. I have had the pleasure of working with Scott Ryan on several training initiatives. His observations have proven to be invaluable when we are tailoring programs to meet their specific needs. It is always very rewarding working with a company who appreciate the strategic, long-term value of quality training. We view this relationship as one of our most important alliances.

Merkle takes talented, highly motivated employees and places them in dynamic training experiences. As a partner in this process, we share a common goal - focusing on real-world solutions, not academic exercises”.

In addition to the immediate benefits of the training, Kaplan provides course credit should employees wish to start or complete their degree! As an alliance partner of Kaplan University, Merkle RMG employees enjoy a substantial tuition discount.



Handling Social Media Misrepresentations

Employee use of social media can be a great way to advance your business agenda, but there can be pitfalls. When an employee is using their personal social media to promote things you and your business care about, it's “free” marketing and shows alignment with your business goals and your employees. When your employees share things that don't reflect well on your business and their association with your business, you may get a feeling of “dread”, that they've gone “rogue” and are damaging your business. You quickly want to look at how you can prevent this from occurring, or how you can get the potentially offending post to be removed, and that's a very challenging process.

What can & can't you do? Based on free speech rights, what the individual posts is their content, and unless it's so egregious from a legal or social standpoint, or unless there are potentially actionable threats being made, you don't have much course of action. In the scenarios above, disciplinary or legal action could be considered, but those are very rare and very tricky to ever resolve “positively” – publicity, cost, and time all factor into whether you think it's a pursuable matter. If you just don't like the post, or it reflects poorly on your organization, you can politely ask the individual to remove the post, explaining why you are asking them to take this action – if they answer “yes”, problem solved, but if they answer “no” that needs to be the end of the discussion...you don't broach the subject again, you don't use it in any future discussions or disciplinary actions, and you don't hold it over them or comment about it.

There are proactive things you can do to make this less of an issue, foremost by not having your organization on social media. OK, so that's not going to happen... so create company-owned social media accounts that are issued to the employees who you want to post related to your business, along with a policy outlining appropriate use and ownership of those accounts, as well as repercussions for misuse. With these accounts, you can maintain control over content, access them as needed at departures or when there is a content issue that you want to resolve, and remove access as issues arise or needs change. These accounts should clearly reflect that they are the company's accounts in the logon/profile name – John A Smith at XYZ Company should be something like XYZcoJASmith. Once you've implemented this, refrain from accepting friend/follow requests from your employee's personal accounts, only accepting (and reciprocating) using the formal business accounts. This may seem “anti-social”, but if your purpose is to market your business thru social media, just like direct mail and advertising, you want to control both how your message is received and what the perception of your business is.

Unless you “own” the content and delivery method, you can't project/protect the message you want. You already have millions and millions of public users that will like/post good and bad content related to your organization without any restraint, so take the reins where you can.