



Case Study

THE PRIME MINISTER'S
COMMUNITY
BUSINESS
PARTNERSHIP



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Community and Business Partnerships Brokerage Service

Name of Community Group	Name of Business
Ted Noffs Foundation (TNF)	Mallesons Stephen Jaques (Mallesons)

Partnership Description
<p>TNF and Mallesons have developed an exciting and fruitful partnership. ASK! A Legal Service for Youth, launched in November 2001, is the headline project for the partnership. ASK! provides free legal advice and referrals to young people aged 14 - 21 years. ASK! operates every Tuesday afternoon between 4:00pm and 6:00pm, alternating between premises at Randwick and Parramatta.</p> <p>The partnership is multifaceted and continually evolves as the organisations become more closely linked at different levels. By sharing information, experience, networks and resources, the partnership has enhanced the internal capacity of TNF to provide a wide range of services to young people. The partnership has also enabled Mallesons to create a more enriched work experience for its employees by providing opportunities that are not usually within Mallesons' commercial business environment. Mallesons' involvement in TNF's corporate community initiatives such as the <i>Corporate Challenge for Youth</i> has been a significant boost to the success of these events. Furthermore, TNF is a beneficiary of Mallesons' Workplace Giving program.</p>

Tell us about Your Community Group	Tell us about Your Business
<p>TNF was founded over 30 years ago by Reverend Ted Noffs. TNF implement programs, services and activities based on good practice, which will facilitate the capacity of young people who are experiencing drug related harm to manage their lives more effectively. TNF services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential "Programs for Adolescent Life Management" (PALM) in East and West Sydney, Coffs Harbour, Dubbo and the ACT An early intervention "Schools Program" in participating secondary schools in Sydney, Wollongong and the Central Coast. Out-client counselling/support for individuals and families in all our service regions. <p>TNF is committed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being a source of information and advice to Government and care providers. Leading research and evaluating new 	<p>Mallesons is one of Australia's leading law firms, and is proud of its innovative and comprehensive community program, called <i>Mallesons in the Community</i>. It is a program of focused pro bono legal work, volunteering and workplace giving, all of which are coordinated across the firm's five Australian offices.</p> <p>The focus of <i>Mallesons in the Community</i> is two fold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> community welfare and poverty alleviation; children and young people at risk. <p>A cornerstone of the program is developing strategic partnerships with community organisations. In conjunction with community organisations, Mallesons aims to develop key initiatives in these priority areas.</p>

The Community and Business Partnerships Brokerage Service is an initiative of the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership administered through the Australian Government's Department of Family and Community Services.



This project is managed and sustained through Our Community, with its associate partners – the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Municipal Association of Victoria.

programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being an advocate for best practice in drug and alcohol provision, prevention and treatment services. 	
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Why did you want to become involved in a Partnership?

Recognizing a need for free legal advice for young people was the initial impetus behind our collaboration with Mallesons. The partnership has however exceeded the ASK! project and encompasses a variety of collaborative initiatives utilizing the respective expertise of TNF and Mallesons. As a mutually cooperative and beneficial partnership, the key focus has been to significantly benefit young people in need.	One of the central features of Mallesons' commercial practice is the development of long-term relationships with key clients. Mallesons has taken a similar approach in its relations with community organisations. Mallesons recognises the important role that TNF plays in the community and has made a commitment to help the organisation achieve its goals. The success of this relationship is reflected in the ASK! project.
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What were you attracted to when choosing your partner?

TNF were impressed with Mallesons' innovative and comprehensive <i>Mallesons in the Community</i> program. Focusing on pro bono legal work, volunteering and workplace giving – TNF were attracted to Mallesons' professionalism and coordinated approach. The partnership was attractive to both organisations that have identified objectives of assisting young people at risk.	Mallesons staff identified youth problems as an area of concern in which they would like to be involved. Mallesons was attracted to TNF because it is a smaller organisation with dedicated, passionate people. Further, its programs appeared to be run efficiently and successfully. Both organisations having matching aims has contributed significantly to the success of the partnership.
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Detail the first steps of the process of developing your partnership. Where did you start?

TNF's General Manager, Amanda Noffs, gained an understanding of problems associated with teenagers and the law through her work at TNF and became acutely aware of the need for them to be supported legally. This inspired her to commit to law degree from which she graduated in 2001. Not satisfied with this feat, Amanda then negotiated with Mallesons to provide free legal services to these young people.	The most important first step in developing the partnership was clearly identifying the aims of both organisations for entering into the partnership. Once these aims were established, TNF and Mallesons both had a clear goal to work towards.
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What have been the benefits – both short-term and long-term?

<p>Improved services to young people: ASK! provides a service which complements the existing youth services provided by TNF in an area of real need. By capitalizing on Mallesons' legal expertise, ASK! improves TNF's capacity to provide a comprehensive service to disadvantaged young people. In particular, it increases TNF's ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • refer young people to appropriate legal services; • find appropriate and practical solutions to address common financial and legal 	<p>Skills building for staff: ASK! provides an opportunity for Mallesons' legal staff to practise areas of law and work with clients not usually within the scope of the firm's commercial work, giving them the opportunity to personally apply their skills to benefit those less advantaged. Training provided by TNF has also increased the awareness of Mallesons' staff of youth issues, and enhanced their communication skills.</p> <p>Staff engagement and improved morale: The range of volunteering opportunities open to</p>
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- problems experienced by young people;
- identify and reach young people needing help.

Improved profile and strengthened reputation: Improving TNF's range of services has increased our profile in the community and reaffirms our reputation as a leading service provider to disadvantaged and at-risk youth.

Improved community networks: In developing the referral opportunities between **ASK!** and other community service providers, we have strengthened our links with those community service providers, and have increased the efficiency of the network in general.

Improved Fundraising: Mallesons' involvement in our corporate community initiatives such as the *Corporate Challenge for Youth* has been a significant boost to the success of these events. Furthermore, we are a beneficiary of Mallesons' workplace giving program.

Mallesons' people through TNF provides an eagerly sought forum for them to engage in community activities through the workplace. This avenue for staff to show social responsibility and community involvement helps Mallesons promote its healthy workplace and work-life balance initiatives.

Increased profile and community engagement: The partnership has enabled Mallesons to demonstrate its commitment to pro bono legal service, and drive to engage with the community in supporting young people.

Relationships: Mallesons' involvement in TNF's corporate fundraising activities helps the firm strengthen its business relationships with other corporate supporters. Events such as the *Corporate Challenge for Youth* offer Mallesons a chance to engage with clients in an informal and community-spirited atmosphere.

What contributions does your organization make to the partnership? (e.g. in-kind support, volunteers, membership on Boards etc)

Counseling expertise - TNF support and complement Mallesons' legal advice at **ASK!**. A TNF Adolescent Family Counselor is available at all **ASK!** sessions to provide advice and counseling to the young people.

Youth services expertise - where appropriate, TNF counselors accompany young people to their **ASK!** appointment. This provides an important 'bridge' between our support / welfare services and the legal advice provided at **ASK!**

Training - TNF provides extensive training to Mallesons staff involved with **ASK!**. This training prepares Mallesons staff for their interaction with young people and increases awareness of youth issues.

Administrative support and referral service - TNF provide administrative support for appointments made with **ASK!** Further, TNF provides the Randwick venue for **ASK!**.

Management - the General Manager of TNF is a member of the **ASK!** Management Committee. This reflects the mutual sharing of expertise and the philosophy of equal commitment underlying the partnership.

Legal expertise - Solicitors from Mallesons provide the legal expertise that is the essence of **ASK!**. This work is supervised by former Children's Court Magistrate Helen Larcombe. Mallesons also has a dedicated relationship partner - Jamie Prell - to help manage the relationship and projects. Through the legal expertise that Mallesons has provided, 68 young people received legal advice in 2003. 60% of the matters that these young people brought to **ASK!** were ones which Mallesons staff were well equipped to handle. The remainder were referred to other experts.

Financial assistance - Mallesons' partners and staff, through the Workplace Giving Program, donate monthly to TNF. Staff donations are matched by the firm. Mallesons staff also recently participated in the TNF *Corporate Challenge for Youth*, a corporate touch football challenge, with the participating staff personally raising the money to meet the \$5,000 entry fee.

Administrative support - Mallesons' administrative staff provide services to **ASK!**, also part of their role is to ensure that knowledge gained through the **ASK!** program is adequately captured for the benefit of both TNF and Mallesons.



	<p>Management expertise - Reflective of the mutual commitment, one of Mallesons' partners - Jamie Prell - is now a board member of TNF.</p> <p>Management Committee - Eight lawyers and two administrative staff volunteers (as well as TNF General Manager) meet regularly on the ASK! Management Committee to coordinate the service, develop and conduct staff training, promote the program by visiting schools and liaise with community legal organisations, local courts, and arrange promotion of the service.</p>
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What have been the challenges?

<p>Promoting the service to the wider community. Even though the service is free, it has been very difficult in spreading the word. In the last six months, though, there has been a significant improvement in the number of calls to ASK! There has also been has made a number of new links to other free services, most notable being the Law Access.</p> <p>Consistency with the intake. Although the intake and referrals do not take up a great deal of the time it is a vital part of the service. Finding the most appropriate person to do intake has been a real challenge, trial and error. The intake officer is the first port of call for a young person needing help with a legal problem. Therefore a person who is empathetic, without getting over involved, is required to establish a link and trust of the young person in order for the service to not only grow and survive, but also for it to be a meaningful service which addresses real issues.</p>	<p>The key challenge in making this community partnership a success was ensuring clear communication of the aspirations of each partner leading to a solid understanding of the common goals for the partnerships and the role of each partner. One of the main challenges in setting up ASK! was working through issues relating to IT and file management. ASK! is held off-site at the premises of TNF and The Smith Family, as such Mallesons' staff working at ASK! were initially unable to access the firm's IT services. This adversely affected how effectively files were managed. This problem, however, was overcome by establishing an on-line electronic file management system.</p> <p>Another challenge for Mallesons was training staff about youth problems and the law. This challenge has been overcome through the implementation of on-going training programs run by both TNF and external sources, such as barristers who train Mallesons staff in criminal law and youth issues.</p>
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What have been the lessons?

<p>Finding appropriate premises that are accessible by public transport. Making appointment times 'youth friendly', i.e. not too late in the evening.</p> <p>Establishing a web presence for ASK! sooner. TNF have received emails from all over the world. Even though we are not able to help young people outside NSW and the ACT (TNF clients) at present, it is pleasing to know that the word is spreading.</p>	<p>The main lesson learnt from establishing a relationship with TNF is the amount of time it takes to implement projects and develop relationships. It took one year, for example, from the inception of the ASK! program to its launch. During these initial stages it is also important to gain a deep understanding of each organisation's aims and abilities.</p>
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What advice could you offer to others thinking of forming a partnership?

<p>Investigate working with businesses that align themselves with similar community objectives, with staff that actively support their communities.</p>	<p>It is important that there is a good understanding of each organisation's aims and that both parties have a common strategy for achieving these</p>
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goals.

What plans do you have for future partnerships – with either your current partner or with other organisations ?

<p>TNF recently received funding for a partnership initiative with the Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Educational Centre (DAMEC) to assist in providing better practice in dealing with diversity of backgrounds. The collaborative project between TNF and DAMEC aims to address culturally and linguistically diverse parents and carers' barriers and needs in relation to alcohol and other drug use, and related issues.</p>	<p>Details of the <i>Mallesons in the Community</i> program itself and associated partnerships can be obtained via this link: www.mallesons.com/community.</p> <p>Additionally, try this National Pro Bono Resource Centre website link to view a paper on Building Pro Bono Partnerships, Examples from Practice - Mallesons Stephen Jaques: www.nationalprobono.org.au/conference/pdf/2003_papers/2a_farnsworth.pdf.</p>
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If you are willing to assist other businesses or community groups in advice on partnerships would you provide your contact details for others to talk through any questions they may have?

<p>Amanda Noffs General Manager Ted Noffs Foundation PO Box 120 Randwick, NSW 2031 noffsm@noffs.org.au ph: 83836617 direct line</p> <p>Please visit our website at www.noffs.org.au</p>	<p>Jane Farnsworth National Pro Bono Coordinator Mallesons Stephen Jaques Level 60 Governor Phillip Tower 1 Farrer Place Sydney NSW 2000 ph: +61 2 9296 2139 jane.farnsworth@mallesons.com</p> <p>Details on how to develop community partnerships are available in a paper on Building Pro Bono Partnerships, Examples from Practice - Mallesons Stephen Jaques via this National Pro Bono Resource Centre website link: www.nationalprobono.org.au/conference/pdf/2003_papers/2a_farnsworth.pdf.</p>
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