

How Will You Spend Your Tax Rebate?

Economic Stimulus Shows Us A Good Thing About Recession

Now -- How To Make A Good Thing Even Better. . .

-- By Joseph Riden, www.jriden.com

Introduction

According to theories about recession, it turns out to be financial stagnation. Money stops flowing as it must to make our economy healthy. Then folks get scared. Fears spread to others. We stop spending. Everyone waits for someone else to start spending again. The media capitalize on our fears and punch them up. Money flow drops further. Cash gets scarce. People freeze up. The economy slows.

But there is one good thing about economic recession. It reminds us how interconnected we are.

In some economic theories, the antidote is government injection of cash to prime our economic pump. That's what the current Economic Stimulus Payment program is attempting. The idea is to trigger a spending spree in America, to fight a form of fear with a form of greed. America is the land of "me first." This could be a reason to get cynical. But we can choose not to go there.

Many Americans are deciding what they'll do with their ESP money. Much of it seems destined to flow straight into the coffers of already-rich big companies. But the pump doesn't care how it gets primed. The cash injection theory will be tested once again however the money is spent. Historically, cash injection sometimes works, temporarily. Sometimes not. So let's get our minds out of this little money box. Isn't it really more about our fear than about money?

What would happen if large numbers of people had the courage to spend some of their ESP on a worthy cause rather than blowing it all on some consumerism binge, or even on meeting their legitimate self-centered needs? Economic recovery would then be about renewing our connection to others or maybe about the health of a planet we depend on. It wouldn't just be about our scared selves anymore and about what we might lose. It would become helping people and making things better where we live.

Then we would answer fear not with greed, but with an opening of the heart.

A Practical Response

This is a professionally designed event production plan that anyone can use to produce a brief publicity event which will stimulate donations to worthy causes from recipients of the US Government's Economic Stimulus Payments. If you follow this plan faithfully, your event will have quality, professionalism, and effect equivalent to commercial grade, agency-designed publicity.

An independent marketing professional developed this event model as a public service, following a carefully devised approach. The scope and cost have been minimized to eliminate barriers. This event

can be produced repeatedly, as often as desired, in any suitable location and conditions, for any audience within the intended market niche.

Everything required to produce the donation event is contained within this document, which is available as a FREE download online. The download link is listed at the end.

Vision

To end the ESP payout period with a significant portion of the total funds routed to worthy causes.

Mission

- To raise awareness of donation to worthy causes as a worthwhile and personally rewarding response to the ESP.
- To position ESP donation as a desirable, positive action that helps make the world a better place however the donor's beliefs and choices may be aligned.
- To stimulate immediate ESP donations and also champion repetitions of this event as a public service.

Objectives

First, to seed a nationwide, event-based, social trend to redirect ESP funds into worthy causes. Second, to stimulate individual donations on a small scale each time the event is staged.

Market Niche

Everyone receiving Economic Stimulus Payments from the US Government.

Method

A group of peers stands together in a meeting and puts money where their hearts are. This action makes an impression, gives an example, and inspires imitation. Witnessing donations from peers stimulates an audience to consider responding with similar actions. Producing this event is easy, simple, tangible, immediate, and cost-free. It has potential to 'go viral,' in a low-tech, interpersonal way, through long-established networks of business people who are committed to community service almost beyond belief.

Discussion

People can be opinionated, emotional, and even downright touchy about money in general and donation in particular. Therefore, it's just as important to *not do* the wrong things as it is *to do* the right things -- if this event is to produce the intended effect. It's essential to follow a non-sectarian and non-partisan protocol. It's critical to manage the event to avoid any hint of negativity around the audience's possible generosity.

Most folks in the audience will have their own idea of who should get their donation and what the amount should be. It's best to keep the audience feeling comfortable in thinking about their own favorite recipient, throughout. For best effect, carefully avoid any hint of favoritism. If you want to

persuade people to donate to some cause you personally believe in, please know this event is not designed for that purpose.

It's about how to move money from a specific source, the ESP. It's not about what the money's destination 'should be.' The root concept is to respect and honor each potential donor's free choice of a worthy cause and also their personal choices about what to donate and how much. With this in mind, event presenters should not champion any specific recipient or try to tell donors what they should give or how much.

The object is to move the audience forward in their generosity to take action, whatever form that takes and whatever recipient the donation reaches. If you feel you must engage event participants about specific recipients, please arrange to meet with them *after the event*. Always consider your hosts, who have to live with the consequences of what you say and do at their podium, including any member backlash you might trigger through an appearance of favoritism.

Pre-Event Preparation

1. Contact the leaders of your local service club chapters, like Rotary International, Kiwanis, Soroptimists, etc., and Chamber of Commerce leadership. Enlist them into this event production concept. Share this plan with them. Ask if the media can attend. Secure brief spots on their meeting agendas of 5 minutes or so. The sooner the better but you'll need a little time to get ready.

2. Recruit a few friends to donate and collaborate in the event. Engage them in an open discussion of what they think of the ESP and ask how they plan to spend their ESP money. Share your own ideas and this document with them. Explain to them in your own words why you think this event is a good idea and ask them to join with you in a couple hours of public service. Mention that they can choose their recipient and any amount that works for them, and that the donations will be in sealed envelopes.

Pick several people who are fully aligned with this process and its principles and design. Your collaborators must agree this event will not be a competitive or comparative situation, and most of all, that it's not a debate. Avoid anyone who can't be trusted to follow this plan explicitly. Basically, your group will act out a tiny stage play with scripted dialog.

You need at least 3 but probably not more than 5 or 6 collaborators. Have each collaborator choose their donation recipient and prepare their donation in a stamped, addressed envelope. Any required routing or identification information should be included. The amount is entirely up to the donor. Each should also prepare a brief, one-sentence declaration saying why they chose that specific recipient. Their statements should not contain any comparative language or references to donation amounts.

3. Contact the media by issuing a news release. Use the news release template at the end of this document. All you have to do is fill in the blanks. Distribute it to all local media via email. Make sure you reach the appropriate contacts for breaking news.

Press Release Note -- If you can reach news editors by phone before the press release goes out and briefly pitch them on this event idea's newsworthiness, this can help acceptance. However, it would be bad form to call editors after the news release goes out to ask if it was received – unless you have contacted them in advance.

4. Attend the service club meetings as scheduled. Have your collaborators present. Have each of them bring their donation envelope. Have each collaborator prepared to make their statement.

Event Sequence

It's important that this event be carried off smoothly, yet briskly and efficiently, and that the podium be vacated within the time limit promised. Respect your host's agenda.

1. You (the Presenter) take the podium when introduced.
2. You thank the club leadership and audience.
3. You explain briefly what the event is all about by reading this short script, without embellishment. If you memorize it, so much the better --

"These days, many Americans are considering how they'll spend our Government's Economic Stimulus Payments. Some may use their ESP money to cover necessities. Others may be planning to spend their ESP on indulgences.

"For me and a group of friends present here, the ESP has a different meaning. Will my collaborators now please stand with me?

[Pause until all are standing]

"We've decided our highest and best use of this 'federal mad money' is to donate some or all of it to a worthy cause. We've each picked a favorite recipient who we think will help make the world a better place.

"However the ESP's are spent, whether they slow the recession or not, we feel better about routing some of this money through worthy causes. We're hoping others will consider ESP donation as an alternative to spending their ESP money only for self-benefit.

"My friends have prepared their ESP donations for mailing. I'm accepting the envelopes on behalf of their recipients, symbolically. After this meeting I'll mail them off, along with my own.

"My friends will now come to the podium and hand me their donation envelopes and share with you who they chose to receive their donation, and why."

4. Your collaborators all come to the podium. They stand together around you, facing the audience. You ask them each, one by one, to announce who they chose as recipient. They each hand their envelope to you and respond in a one or two sentence statement that says only who the recipient is and why they chose that recipient to receive their donation.

Note well – The persuasive impact of this event arises much more from action than from words. It's critical that none of your collaborators pontificate, digress into a political speech, make a partisan statement, give a comparison of worthy causes, or anything like that.

5. When the envelopes are all collected and all the collaborators have spoken, you announce –

“I will mail these donations out later today. If anyone here is interested in producing an event like this themselves, there is a professionally designed event production plan available online, free. See me after the meeting and I’ll provide the link.”

6. You thank the hosts and audience.
7. Everyone in your group returns to their seats.
8. You mail out the donations, as promised, before the end of the day.
9. You sit out the meeting and make yourself available after it concludes to talk with anyone who approaches you with questions or comments. Expect the press to seek you out if they attend. Continue to follow the nonpartisan, non-denominational guidelines when you answer questions. It would help to have a few copies of this plan to hand out to folks who might wish to produce it again themselves. Or you could write the link to it on a business card for them.

Closing Comments

Let me acknowledge Annie Kirshbaum, a young friend of a friend, and a special education teacher in the Chicago area. Annie’s frustration and anger about the Government’s ESP program, and the way she morphed those emotions into a positive response, inspired me to create this event design, give it away, and attempt a viral deployment. I hope Annie likes what she inspired and that she might even work with it herself.

Annie and friends asked for my help to publicize the notion of spending some ESP money as a donation to a worthy cause rather than blowing it. I’m grateful her idea reached me because it’s inspiring to encounter, if only by email, a twenty-something who acts on behalf of others with so much compassion and provides such inspiration to reach out and help someone or something.

Nothing I ever bought for myself ever left me with such a glow of inner satisfaction as writing this project. As I produce some ESP donation events myself, that will probably get even better.

I also hope everyone who picks this up gets a charge from working with these mini-events. Thank you for joining with me in taking an idea on the road to see how much good can come from it. If you feel moved to share thoughts about this effort, please email me at jariden@gmail.com.

The download link for this FREE document is – <http://www.jriden.com/ESPevent.html>

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News Release

Contact: [Presenter's Name]

*** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ***

Phone: [Presenter's Phone Number]

Cell Phone: [Presenter's Cell Number]

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LOCAL AD HOC GROUP DONATES ESP MONEY

Events Support Donor-chosen Worthy Causes

[Presenter's Town and State, Month/Day of Release --] Today a local ad hoc group, recruited and led by [Presenter's name], announced they will stage a brief 'guerilla publicity' event at a meeting of the [whatever chapter] of the [service club or organization] at [whatever time] on [whatever date] at [whatever place.] The stated goal of this group is to inspire donations from Economic Stimulus Payments their audiences have received.

[Presenter's name] explained, "Our vision is to direct a significant portion of Economic Stimulus Payment funds to worthy causes. Staging this event helps accomplish that goal. We're seeding a nationwide, event-based social trend to redirect ESP funds. Donations are stimulated each time this event is staged.

[Presenter's name] continued, "We are raising awareness of donation to worthy causes as a worthwhile and personally rewarding response to the ESP and to recession. We're positioning ESP donation as a desirable positive action that helps make the world a better place -- however the donor's beliefs and choices may be aligned. We think this may not only help end the recession but also reconnect us to our neighbors and accomplish other worthy goals."

[Presenter's name] stated that their ad hoc group, and many others like them, will be using the free event production plan to stage this event in various venues nationwide throughout this spring, summer and fall. According to published schedules, ESP payouts will mostly be complete by the end of June but some may continue to trickle out until December.

Anyone who might want to present similar ESP donation events can download a complete, professionally designed, ready-to-use event production plan online at – www.jriden.com/ESPevent/html

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For story support, photos, or to schedule interviews – contact [Presenter's name], who can be reached for comment using the contact information above.

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