From Click To Act: How Nonprofit Organizations Can Use Social Media To Generate Funds And Increase Volunteerism

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Abstract

Social media has changed the way people communicate and consume information. Businesses have used social media to create and retain relationships with customers. They also have utilized social media as marketing and sales tools to increase revenue and acquire new customers. This research tries to examine whether nonprofit organizations can leverage these functions of social media.

The researcher interviewed three employees who handle social media for leading nonprofit organizations- The American Cancer Society (ACS), American Red Cross (ARC), and Do Something.org (DS)-that successfully implement social media strategies for fundraising and volunteer recruiting.

The findings show that the most effective social media campaigns for fundraising and volunteer recruiting include using a variety of communication tools, inspirational and calls to action messages, and two-way communication processes. The research results in best practices for using social media to raise funds and increase volunteerism. This strategic approach will help nonprofit organizations develop their own social media strategies and achieve their missions under the high pressure they are facing.

Introduction

Social media has become one of the most powerful tools for not only for for-profit corporations, but also nonprofit organizations. As companies are using social media to build relationships with stakeholders and gain consumers' interest in the hope that they will become the top choices for consumers, nonprofit organizations are using many of the same strategies. Under the pressure of the competitive environment, together with economic recession, nonprofit organizations are trying to be more engaged with existing and prospective supporters while meeting lower budgets. Typically, nonprofit organizations have been early adopters of new technology. They already have seen the potential of social media and have embraced it as a tool to communicate and build community. However, a great deal of research points out that nonprofit organizations are underutilizing social media in terms of asking supporters to take action such as becoming volunteers or making donations. This research paper will explore how nonprofit organizations can use social media for fundraising and to increase volunteerism.

Literature Review

Nonprofit organizations' Challenges: Do More With Less

Nonprofit organizations normally are under pressure to do more with less, especially during economic recessions. These are times when people need more help, but there are fewer individuals and corporates making donations, and expenses are higher. According to the Nonprofit Finance Fund's annual survey, 78 percent of nonprofits saw an increased demand for service in 2012. However, more than half of nonprofits could not meet demand and probably would not be able to in the coming years. Moreover, most nonprofits have been facing financial strain. Only 31 percent of nonprofit organizations broke even and 29 percent had a deficit. One of the respondents in the survey reflected his organization's problems in the interview: "[Our greatest challenge is demand for expanded services with limited financial resources to support current/expanded services. Internal challenges with staff morale – staff have not seen salary adjustments in three years and have assumed additional expenses for health insurance and payroll taxes." Just as in the for-profit sector, pressure on nonprofit organizations also comes from fierce competition that has been increasing every year. According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics' public charities, giving, and volunteering report 2012, there were an estimated 2.3 million nonprofit organizations in the United States in 2010, an increase of 24 percent from 2000. In brief, the conditions that nonprofits have faced with high demand for services, limited financial and human resources and intense competition have been addressed in various academic studies for decades (Adams & Perlmutter, 1995; Burt & Taylor, 2003; Ryan, 1999).

The Internet And Online Donation

Nonprofit organizations have typically been early adopters of new technology (Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009; Shreve, 2012). Nonprofits have tried to implement information technology in order to improve their effectiveness (Buteau, Brock, & Chaffin, 2013; Hackler & Saxton, 2007). The Internet has played an enormous role in terms of enabling charities and volunteer-based groups to expand their grassroots mobilization and advocacy efforts throughout the 1990s (Cukier & Meddleton, 2003). Nonprofits that have limited financial resources can easily reach out to various public audiences on their websites while amassing lower costs compared to offline public relation activities (Lee, Chen, & Zhang, 2001). The Internet also has made donation easier for contributors. Before the Internet era, givers needed to donate money in person, by mail or over the phone. Email has been the alternate way for nonprofit organizations to communicate with stakeholders regarding fundraising, such as distributing fundraising campaign information, donation forms and receipts. Nonprofit organizations also allowed donors to make donations on their websites. Many nonprofit organizations started using their website to provide information such as how to become affiliated with the organization (97.9 percent) and to contribute money (90.6 percent) (Kang & Norton, 2004).

However, in the early 2000s, fundraising using the Internet was relatively new in the nonprofit sector. Some organizations offered donors who were not comfortable making online donation a printable form that could be faxed to the organization to process credit card donation. Ted Hart, an Internet fundraising expert predicted that the Internet would not replace the traditional methods of fundraising such as direct mail, phone, and personal solicitation. He suggested that those nonprofits that would be successful would be the ones who effectively integrated online donation or Internet-based fundraising with traditional fundraising marketing tools (Hart, 2002).

Nonprofit organizations quickly adopted online donation during 2000-2001. Prior to 2001, only 50 percent of nonprofit organizations on the Philanthropy 400, a list published by the Chronicle of Philanthropy, had online donation capability. By the end of 2001, the number increased to 80 percent (Waters, 2007). The public also responded to the online donation trend at the same pace. The Harvard Business School's Initiative on Social Enterprise reported that in 1999, about 4 percent of donors contributed online for an estimated $10 million. In 2000, online donors gave around $250 million (Austin, 2001). In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, $215 million of the $2 billion collected in total was donated online to help the victims of this tragedy (Thompson, 2010).

Online donation has been growing each year, especially during major disasters. For example, one-third of the totals raised for the South Asian Tsunami in 2004 were made online (Network For Good, 2006). However, online donation is still relatively small compared to the total charitable giving. The "2012 Charitable Giving Report" by Blackbaud, the online donation platform provider, reported that online giving grew 10.7 percent in 2012 compared to 2011. Still, of the total giving of $4.8 billion for 2,025 nonprofit organizations, online donations accounted only for 7 percent of overall fundraising, on average. This was an increase from 6.3 percent in 2011. With advanced information technology, the lower cost of hardware and software, and consumers spending more time online, there is a great potential for nonprofit organizations to raise funds online. Nonprofits just need to develop communication strategies that match with their own organization.

How Nonprofits Use Their Websites

Advances in website technology allow nonprofits to not only use their websites as a payment channel for donors, but also as a tool to build trust and relationships with stakeholders. Using the interactive function of Web 2.0 technology, nonprofits could interact with website visitors in real time and increase the level of engagement. While most nonprofits have installed an online donation function and tried to provide a lot of information to promote fundraising and volunteer recruiting on their websites, just a small handful of nonprofits have employed the interactive function to communicate with their site visitors. Nonprofits have not been able to use websites as strategic and interactive stakeholder engagement tools (Saxton, Guo, & Brown, 2007). Walter (2007) found that 94 percent of nonprofit organizations allowed donors to make a financial contribution over the Internet and used several ways to make website visitors aware of the donation function. Most organizations (70.6 percent) placed a link to the online donation page on the site's permanent menu, 9.4 percent used graphics to highlight their online donation option, and 8.7 percent used text boxes that are not part of the permanent menu. Trying to build trust and relationships with potential donors, most organizations provided descriptions of service (96.9 percent), current news (91.9 percent) a mission statement (87.5 percent), and an annual report (64.4 percent). But only 29.4 percent posted a copy of the completed IRS 990 form (Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax). The most common methods organizations used to contact stakeholders were collecting email addresses (88.8 percent) and providing feedback forms (87.5 percent) on their sites. Only 3.1 percent had discussion forums, and none of the participating organizations had live chat. Walter, Saxton and Guo (2011) also observe the same problem. They conducted research on nonprofit organizations' Web-based accountability practice in 2009 and found that the vast majority of nonprofit organizations have effectively used websites to provide financial and performance disclosure, but not to create conversation or have interactive engagement with stakeholders. Only one percent had online needs assessment and another one percent had an interactive message center.

Social Media And Nonprofits

People might not visit nonprofits' websites daily, but they visit social media sites daily, and some people visit them several times per day. A survey conducted in November 2012 shows that 41 percent of social networking site users access these sites several times a day, an increase from 33 percent in 2011 (Rainie, Smith, & Duggan, 2013). Nonprofit organizations have realized the potential of using social media as a tool for marketing, fundraising, building relationships with the public and their members, and becoming a part of social media communities.

Boyd and Ellison (2008) define social media or social network sites as Web-based services that allow users to create their own profile, display their connection, and view a list of other user's connections. The first recognizable social network was SixDegrees.com which was launched in 1997. But it was not until the launching of Facebook in 2005 [Facebook actually began in early 2004 as a Harvard-only social network (Carlson, 2010) that social media became a phenomenon. Individuals and businesses have adopted social media and use it regularly. According to Facebook's financial report, as of December 31, 2013, Facebook had 1.23 billion monthly active users, an increase of 16 percent year-over-year, while Twitter shows in its financial report that it has 241 million monthly active users, an increase of 30 percent year-over-year. The ranking and the number of active users of social media sites vary with different research sources, except for Facebook (NASDAQ: FB) and Twitter (NYSE: TWTR), which are publicly traded companies and have continuously disclosed active user numbers in their financial releases. Despite nonprofit organizations using other popular social networks including Google +, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and YouTube, academic research regarding nonprofits and social media has focused on Twitter and Facebook in particular.

Who Has Adopted Social Media?

The latest number from "4th Annual Nonprofit Social Network Benchmark Report 2012" of 3,522 nonprofit respondents from small volunteer-led groups to very large multi-nationals based in North America shows that 93 percent have a presence on social networks with 98 percent of respondents reporting a presence on Facebook. Curtis et al. (2010) observe that nonprofits with public relations departments are more likely to adopt social media and use it to achieve their organizational goals. Nah and Saxton (2012) find that nonprofits that employ a fee-for-service such as YMCA and nonprofits that rely on public donations are more likely to have a social media presence compared to nonprofits that count on funding from government sources.

How Nonprofits Use Social Media: Digital Billboard

The pattern for how nonprofits have adopted social media is similar to their adoption of websites. Nonprofits have adopted social media early, but they have used it as a one-way communication tool, underutilizing its potential to build community and calls for action through interactivity and engagement (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

Waters and Jamal (2011) find that of the top 200 fundraising nonprofits in the United States on the Philanthropy 200 list, 81 organizations actively used Twitter, primarily using it as a tool for sharing information instead of relationship building. Only 24.1 percent asked Twitter users to become involved with the organization, and eight percent engaged in ongoing conversation. Lovejoy, Waters, and Saxton (2012) examined the 100 largest non-university affiliated nonprofits in the United Stated based on revenue and found that 73 organizations had Twitter accounts, 80.8 percent of which were classified as

active based on amount of tweets they sent out per week. Analyzing the sample tweets revealed that rather than using public messages to reply to other Twitter users or connecting to others by retweeting messages, nonprofits are primarily using the site to convey information using one-way communication. Less than 20 percent of the total tweets demonstrate conversation. And only 16.21 percent used public messages. This phenomenon can be described as a "Digital Billboard," in which many nonprofits handle social media the same way they use traditional mass media. They post mostly one-way communication messages on social media sites on which they can interact with mass publics.

Social Media For Fundraisings And Calls For Volunteers

Research has confirmed that continuous communication with the public on social media can build relationships and have a positive impact on fundraising and volunteerism.

Smitko (2012) explains that, based on the Social Network Theory, social media users can build relationships of trust within their own networks, assuming that relationships built with networks can lead to the increase of social capital or relationships of trust embedded in social networks (York University, 2005). When nonprofits use the "@" symbol on Twitter to mention or reply to their followers or retweet, the organizations include their followers in their networks. According to nonprofit giving behavior, nonprofits' responsive communications could drive donors' trust and hence giving (Sargeant, Ford, & West, 2006). If nonprofits build a strong trust network, it can lead to giving.

Farrow and Yuan (2011) have the same result in their study on Facebook impact. Their study shows that active participation in Facebook groups positively predicted strength of network ties in terms of frequency of communication and emotional closeness, which then influences the level of volunteerism and charitable giving to their groups.

Looking at a social media users' perspective, Twitter users also form communities with people who share the same interests and advocate for causes they care about. Smith (2010) analyzed tweets during the aftermath of Haiti earthquake in 2010 and found that individuals used Twitter to connect with other supporters on Twitter, promote involvement, call people to act, and show that they care. They acted as ambassadors of nonprofits that were sending help to Haiti and provided information how other people could send help via those nonprofits.

Some nonprofit organizations have been able to catch onto the trend and successfully implement effective social media strategies. Briones, Kuch, Liu, and Jin (2011) interviewed 40 employees of the American Red Cross on how they use social media to build relationship with stakeholders. The organization's social media strategy involves a two-way communication mostly with Twitter and Facebook. The American Red Cross listens to its stakeholders' opinions. The organization has found that social media helps it reach a younger audience to get them to volunteer. The barriers of using social media were resources, specifically time, staff and the difficulty of persuading board members who are older generation and might not be accustomed to the new technology.

These barriers might be one of the reasons why many other nonprofit organizations have not strategically used social media as a tool in fundraising and volunteer recruiting campaigns. Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) report that only 3.1 percent of 100 largest nonprofits in the U.S. used Twitter to promote donation appeal and 0.8 percent used it for a call for volunteers and employees. As Nah and Saxton (2012) also find, even though nonprofits that depend on fundraising were more likely to use social media, they did not often include appeals in their messages.

Web 3.0 Mobile Technology Is Already Here

While some nonprofit organizations are still struggling to fully utilize social media to achieve their organizational goals, technologies have already advanced and consumer behaviors have been changing.

According to Pew Research Center's nationally representative survey (2013), 91 percent of American adults own a mobile phone and use their devices for more than phone calls. Besides the traditional use, 81 percent send or receive text messages, 60 percent access the Internet, 52 percent send or receive email, and 50 percent download mobile apps. The findings from the Pew Research Center's research in 2012 on how teens are using mobile phone are even more fascinating. About one in four teens owns a smartphone. Almost half of all American teens have gone online on their mobile phone in the last 30 days. The median number of texts sent per day by teens is 60.

In 2010, Americans sent text messages to donate money for Haiti earthquake relief effort, accounting for more than $30 million in 10 days (Choney, 2010). The latest survey by the mGive Foundation shows that mobile is one of the top-three preferred methods of donating (the most preferred method is online donation). The reasons that the participants like mobile donations are that they are easy and convenient, and participants can control how much they will donate (Snyder, 2013).

What are these findings telling nonprofit organizations? They need to start thinking how their websites and emails appear on target receivers' mobile browsers and how nonprofit organizations can create mobile fundraising campaigns.

The reviewed literature shows that online donation is growing. The public has been ready for it. Some nonprofit organizations are already doing it right, while many nonprofits are missing a great opportunity to gain more funds and volunteers by using social media and mobile technology. Nonprofit organizations already have these tools in their hands, but how they can use them to achieve their organizational goals?

RQ: How can nonprofits use social media to raise funds and increase volunteerism?

Methodology

Participants

The participant criterion for this research was professionals who handle social media for leading nonprofit organizations in the U.S. that are successful in using social media for fundraising and volunteer recruiting. Three participants were interviewed: Jennifer Coulombe, ACS Eastern Division's former director of communications and marketing, Metro New Jersey, and an account representative; Michael Vulpillieres, Interim Communications Director at American Red Cross in Greater New York; and Calvin Stowell, DoSomething.org's director of content and digital strategy.

Interviewing procedures

There was one face-to-face interview and one phone interview. Each semi-structured interview lasted about 30 minutes and was audio recorded. The interview began with participants giving their organization's background. Then seven main questions were asked. For example, "What communication tools are you using for your fundraising and volunteer recruiting campaigns?" and "Do you think social

media is an effective tool to use for raising funds and volunteer recruitment? (See Appendix, page 61) Another participant provided answers for the same set of questions via email.

Data Collection

The face-to-face and phone interviews were transferred to electronic transcription. The email interview was copied and saved as a Word document. All interview transcripts were coded and used to identify common themes. Besides the in-depth interviews, comprehensive literature review of the latest books, articles, and studies related to participating organizations were analyzed with data from the interviews. Lastly, data from all sources were used in developing the case studies and best practices.

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Case Studies

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Case Study 1: the American Cancer Society

Each nonprofit organization has different perspectives on how they can use social media. Most nonprofits agree that social media can build relationships and encourage people to learn more about these organizations and lead to long term relationships (Smitko, 2012). However, just a small number of nonprofits believe that social media is an effective tool for fundraising and volunteer recruitment. Waters, Burnett, Lamm, and Lucas (2009) finds that only 13 percent of their participating organizations post donation appeals on their Facebook fan pages, and the same percent post current volunteer opportunities. Even large-scale nonprofit organizations such as the American Cancer Society (ACS), the largest health charity with 12 regional offices and more than 900 local offices throughout the U.S., and the American Heart Association (AHA), the nation's oldest, largest voluntary organization devoted to fighting cardiovascular diseases and stroke, have differing views on whether nonprofit organizations should use social media to ask for donations or volunteering.

AHA deems that asking for donations and volunteering on its social media outlets might have a negative effect on the relationships with its online communities. K. Hoermann (personal communication, October 25, 2013), AHA's social media strategist, says:

> We do some light fundraising during our end-of-year giving campaign, but we don't believe we should hit our community over the head with fundraising messages. Volunteerism is a little stronger – although, also not heavy either.

On the other hand, ACS, which has succeeded significantly in raising funds and recruiting volunteers, strongly believes that integrating social media with other marketing tools can boost donations and the level of volunteerism from the organization's supporters. ACS assigns communications and marketing teams to handle social media outlets. Besides using social media to deepen relationships with ACS's online communities, the communications and marketing teams also utilize ACS's social media to recruit volunteers and contribute online donation efforts to ACS's eRevenue divisions, which directly respond to online fundraising using email marketing and other marketing tools. ACS affirms that by the nature of the nonprofit industry and missions, nonprofits should not feel that their appeals are unwanted or unexpected. J. Coulombe, ACS Eastern Division's former director of communications and marketing, Metro NJ and account representative, says:

> I don't think when we put appeals out there it should surprise people because we are in the business that we raise money, so we can fund research to help cancer patients.

Thus, we should not feel that we are asking for too much because we need people and donation to support our work.

According to the American Cancer Society Stewardship Report 2013, ACS's donations have been higher than the nonprofit industry's average. From 2003 to 2008, the Society's annual growth was around 4.6 percent, while the charitable health sector grew 1.1 percent annually. The Society's fundraising dollars exceeded $1 billion for the first time in 2007 and again in 2008. In 2012, the Society raised $889 million. Around $5.7 million of the total were from individuals with an average gift size of $50. Seventeen percent of ACS's donations were made online.

ACS's Social Media Audience Segmentation

ACS has vast online communities and is considered a key influencer in the nonprofit area. The secret of ACS's success in creating large communities is target audience segmentation. ACS has a high Klout score of 80. It has a large number of fans in most of the leading social media sites such as YouTube, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and MySpace. However, the organization's main social media platforms are Facebook (898,227 likes) and Twitter (@AmericanCancer has 451,000 followers). ACS has created its multiple Facebook fan pages and Twitter accounts serving each social media audience segment based on audiences' interest, passion, and geography. For instance, besides its main Facebook fan page, which focuses on cancer-related topics, survivorship, care giving, and the organization's movements, ACS also has five more separate Facebook fan pages for its main campaigns including Relay For Life, fundraising events; Making Strides Against Breast Cancer, the largest network of breast cancer awareness events; More Birthdays, events to celebrate the birthdays of cancer survivors; Hope Lodge, free temporary housing for cancer patients and their families who are undergoing treatment; and Coaches vs. Cancer, a program in which basketball coaches nationwide can participate to increase cancer awareness and promote healthy living.

ACS also has eight Twitter accounts: @ACSNews, @AmericanCancer, @RelayForLife, @Morebirthdays, @acsglobal, @CoachesvCancer, @OtisBrawley, and @DrLen. Each of the ACS's regional offices also handles its own Facebook fan pages and Twitter accounts separately. For example, the ACS Eastern Division serving New Jersey and New York has its own Facebook Fan Page, American Cancer Society of NY & NJ (24,038 likes), and Twitter account, @CancerNYNJ (2,601 followers). ACS's supporters can go directly to the Facebook fan pages or Twitter accounts related to their specific interests. Within the groups, the supporters can exchange their opinions and share experiences as well as meet in person at the actual events. These group interactions reinforce the emotional connection between the supporters and the causes. Moreover, the supporters also invite their friends and families who may be interested in the same causes to follow the pages and accounts and join them in actual events.

Research by Georgetown University and Waggener Edstrom (2012) showed that this is the common action for advocates. The researchers found that 78 percent of respondents feel that it is important to them personally to influence others to care about the charities and causes that they are supporting.

ACS's social media strategy using multiple channels to capture different online target audiences was also validated by a study of 100 companies using Awareness Inc.'s on-demand social marketing management software (SMMS). The study shows that companies that have the highest social reach and engagement with their followers have at least 13 Facebook fan pages and more than 10 Twitter accounts in order to better serve the needs of niche communities (Awareness, Inc, 2011).

How Is ACS Using Its Social Media In Fundraising And Increasing Volunteerism?

The campaign that best illustrates ACS's usage of social media in fundraising and volunteer recruiting is Relay For Life, a community-based fundraising event. Relay For Life is one of the ACS's most successful fundraising and volunteer programs. Relay For Life events are held in local communities, campus universities, and in virtual worlds to fulfill the mission of improving survival from cancer, decreasing the incidence of cancer, and improving the quality of life for those who have been diagnosed with cancer. Today, Relay For Life reaches and engages more than 3.5 million people or one in every 100 Americans in 5,200 communities in the U.S. and 19 other countries. According to ACS stewardship report 2013, in 2012, the donations raised from Relay For Life contributed $378 million of the total $889 million. There were 145,200 people signed up online for the Relay For Life for NY and NJ's events in 2013 (J. Coulombe, personal communication, November 1, 2013).

Two elements comprise the ACS Eastern Division's social media strategy for raising funds and recruiting volunteers: inspiration and direct calls to action. Coulombe explains that for the first part, ACS uses inspiration to build an emotional connection with its target audiences. ACS believes that the emotional connection will indirectly encourage these people to donate more or be more involved with its organization.

> "We deliver messages which pull people's heartstrings. [We] hope that when people see photos and specific wordings around, it will inspire them to raise more money for us and find more people on their team," Coulombe says.

Figure 1: Relay For Life Facebook posts

Before Relay For Life events, the marketing and communications team will post pictures from the past events to make people excited about the upcoming event. The team makes sure that 90 percent of messages posted on social media sites are related and support fundraising and volunteer recruiting efforts. The second element of the strategy is a call to action, explicit instructions for ACS expects target audiences to do. The tactic that the ACS Eastern Division team found most effective is working within a short time frame because that adds a sense of urgency and arouses people to take action immediately.

"We had big short challenges for long weekends. We encouraged people to reach $100 in a short time frame. We found it has been successful. We had call to actions toward people who formed teams to help in fundraising and getting messages out. The short time frame helps people to be more focused and gets them excited. We have done that for the last three years," Coulombe says.

Social media is a big part of fundraising and volunteer recruiting campaigns, but it is not all about social media. To assure that a campaign or event will be successful, ACS uses integrated communication tools. Coulombe says:

> We promote [the Relay For Life weekend challenges] in all channels, not only on Facebook. We send direct email to invite them to an orientation. We have staff and volunteers talk to them regularly. It comes from a variety of communication vehicles. But Facebook helps to push. It is a big part of it.

Thus, it is hard to measure which of the communication tools accounts for campaigns success. It is also hard to measure the precise effectiveness of social media itself because it is related to emotional connection. The ACS Eastern Division team evaluates its social media campaigns effectiveness by monitoring numbers of impressions, shares, and likes of each post and comment. The team looks at every piece together and evaluates what kind of pictures and messages can attract target audiences' attention and favor.

Does Asking For Donation On Social Media Create a Negative Reaction?

> J. Coulombe (personal communication, October 31, 2013) says:
> We certainly monitor comments under our posts and see how people are reacting, are we getting negative feedback in anyway? I don't recall any one acting negatively way to that fundraising appeal because we don't do that every day.

The fundraising appeals on social media actually do no harm to nonprofit organizations' relationships with their communities if the organizations plan and execute it strategically. Two important factors that can minimize possible negative reaction from communities are how organizations shape messages and how often organizations ask.

The calls to action for fundraising should be achievable, useful, and practical. Coulombe gives examples of what her team has done.

> "Asking for money is more about fundraising angles. It's not like we are saying, Can you please donate $1,000 to us. It is more like, help us raise funds with your team members; this is what you can do it. Give an example of how they can fundraise through bake sales or ask 10 people to donate $10 each. We know that people who involve us through events like Relay For Life know that our overarching goal is to raise money," Coulombe says.

Figure 2: A small goal works better than a big donation goal

How And How Often Should Nonprofits Ask Their Supporters For Fundraising And Volunteerism?

The incorporation of inspirational messages and direct calls to action has proved to be an effective tactic. Both elements are crucial and must be used. However, the portion of them is not equal. The inspirational messages may take 90 percent of overall social media messages, but all of this 90 percent should finally support the fundraising or volunteer recruiting efforts. However, using calls to action, especially asking for donations, requires more sensitivity. Nonprofits should not ask for donations too often. Coulombe says:

> Donation should be very small. Once a week it seems a lot to me. We only ask for donation a few times a year. It depends on an overall strategy. You need to provide useful information before asking people for money. The vast majority may be 90 percent of information you are pushing out. You should really know that it has direct correlation with fundraising at the end. I mean they could be the type of information that inspires someone to get involved with your organization. Thus, I think it is a strong correlation between two.

ACS's ratio of inspirational messages and calls to actions usage is similar to Heather Mansfield's, the author of *Social Media for Social Good: A How-To Guide for Nonprofits*. She writes that out of every 10 tweets, only one should be a direct request such as make a donation or like us on Facebook (Mansfield, 2012).

Coulombe points to the risk of losing online community members because of the overuse of calls to action. She states that, "If we are asking people every day or multiple times a week to donate to us, then people might get tired of it and don't want to follow anymore."

ACS's Advice for Using Social Media To Raise Funds And Increase Volunteerism

Even though ACS finds that its email marketing is slightly more successful for raising funds and increasing volunteerism than social media, ACS believes that social media is an effective tool too. ACS's initial advice for using social media to fundraise and recruit volunteers is that organizations need to build a community first. Then, the organizations should try to create dedicated followers. Remember

that at some point nonprofits, which depend on donations, will have to ask for money. The organizations do not need to ask for donations every day. They should mix messages using photos, quotes, and useful information. It is important that the organization should know what their audiences' interests. The organizations should deliver messages that match their target audiences' personal interests. Nonprofits should plan what messages will inspire their target audiences to take action.

ACS's social media messaging strategy is similar to that of Rebecca K. Leet, the author of *Message Matters: Succeeding at the Crossroads of Mission and Market*'s action connection diagram. The author explains that in order to receive expected action from target audiences, organizations should create strategic messages. The organization should study what their target audiences' desires are. The next step is locating an overlap of organizations' desires and target audiences' desires. Then, the organizations should write the messages based on the shared desires.
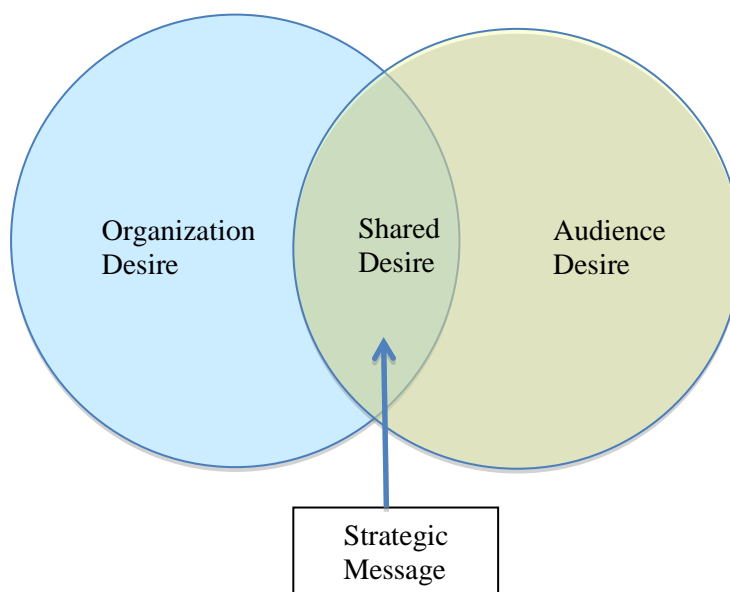

Figure 3: The Action Connection diagram

In conclusion, from ACS's point of views, social media can be an effective tool in fundraising and volunteer recruiting efforts. However, nonprofit organizations should integrate social media with other communication and marketing tools. When nonprofit organizations plan their social media strategies for fundraising and volunteer recruitment campaigns, they should think about time frame, since shorter time frames arouse action; type of messages, such as inspirational messages (shared desire), and calls to action; and frequency of asking. Overusing social media for fundraising and volunteer recruiting efforts can turn online communities off. Nonprofit organizations should always monitor their communities' sentiments closely throughout their campaigns.

Case Study 2: American Red Cross

The American Red Cross (ARC), founded in 1881, is a humanitarian organization that provides emergency assistance, disaster relief, and education. With $685 million of public support, ARC was ranked as the sixth largest nonprofit in the U.S. on *Nonprofit Times*' NPT 100, the 25th annual ranking of nonprofits based on organizations' Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 990 for the fiscal year ending 2012 (*The Nonprofit Times*, 2013). ARC has had many successful fundraising efforts and volunteer recruitment campaigns. For instance, during and after Superstorm Sandy in October 2012, $308 million was donated to ARC, and more than 15,300 volunteers joined forces for Sandy relief (American Red Cross, 2013). Social media has been one of ARC's key success factors. ARC has been well-known and respected as a leader in managing and using social media dialogically (Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011).

ARC's social media path started in 2005 after it faced negative criticism online in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Since then, ARC has developed social media strategies focusing on conversation monitoring and social media training programs. It has learned that listening is key to engaging an online community. ARC ensures that all ARC employees and volunteers understand the power of social media and its impact on the ARC brand by providing social media guidelines and trainings (Cass, 2009).

Michael de Vulpillieres, Interim Communications Director at American Red Cross in Greater New York, explains that ARC's national communications team provides social media guidelines to local communication teams. Local teams can also ask and exchange ideas with the national team during weekly and monthly meetings. Similar to other social media leaders, ARC has separate accounts for the national brand (https://www.facebook.com/redcross) and local chapters.

While ARC's local social media outlets' content is about local incidents, the national social media accounts are centered on the big picture such as national disasters and the organization's news and policies. Sometimes, if the national team considers that the incident is important and the entire country would want to learn about it, the national team will retweet or repost from a local chapter's social media outlet. On the other hand, during a national or international disaster, local teams post about how local people can get help or support victims through local ARCs. For example, when Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines in November 2013, ARC in New York promoted the phone number that the Filipino population in New York could use to call their loved ones in the Philippines and provided a web link and a toll-free number that the public could call to donate to ARC to support the relief response.

ARC's Strategies In Using Social Media To Raise Funds And Increase Volunteerism
Messaging Strategy

Figure 4: Always update how you will use donations
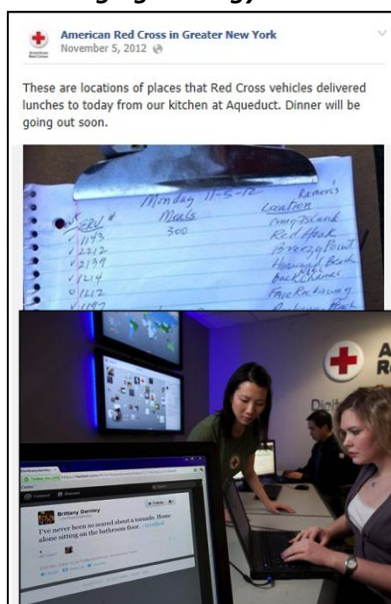
"You don't need to be scared to do fundraising, but you need to balance that out. Your content should be about your service, because people need to know what you are doing and your level of compassion before they will give you money." (M. de Vulpillieres, personal communication, November 13, 2013)

Besides the national team, fundraising teams also provide guidelines of how communication teams can use social media for fundraising efforts. ARC believes that nonprofit organizations should always share stories about their successful works and activities. Thus, the public will know how nonprofits are using and will use their donations. This will build trust and show the shared compassion between organizations and their supporters. After that, nonprofit organizations can provide

channels through which the public can deliver their support. "Once people understand what you are doing, they will understand the need to fund raise those actively," M. de Vulpillieres adds. According to the Fellow of the Society for New Communications Research and Livingston (2009), 75 percent of high-dollar donors who are 30-49 years old and using social media want to know whether or not a nonprofit is successfully making an impact. These donors want updates and transparency from nonprofit organizations that they support or are planning to support.

However, one thing that nonprofits should always keep in mind when they are using social media for fundraising is that they should craft their messages carefully during sensitive times. "After immediate disasters, you need to be sensitive, and you want to serve as a resource for people. You are not supposed to say give me money, give me money," M. de Vulpillieres says. It is like organizations adding value for their audiences. When developing content and messages, organizations should focus more on how they can help people than on how people can help the organizations.

Moreover, during the early stage of incidents, ARC tries not to actively push messages asking for donations, because it does not want to raise more money than it needs for the incidents. Instead, ARC monitors its social media outlets to listen what victims want. Thus, the organization can provide and also ask for appropriate help. During Superstorm Sandy, ARC trained 20 digital volunteers to monitor and interact with people who were affected by the storm. They tracked more than 2 million Sandy related social media posts in the early weeks of the response. The team responded to thousands of requests for information, comfort and encouragement (American Red Cross, 2013).

When asked how often nonprofit organizations can ask for donations, M. deVulpillieres answers, "You can ask for donations when the time is right. Also keep in mind that during a major disaster people want to help. Thus, we let them know how to help. It needs to be balanced."

Personal Social Media

Figure 6: M. Vulpillieres' tweet from his personal

Another ARC social media strategy is cultivating and empowering organizational ambassadors. ARC has social media training not only for its employees, but also for its volunteers. The training includes how to use each social media tool, ARC's missions and values, and how to create effective messages. ARC expects these ambassadors to get the word out in the social media space. "We encourage people to use social media under their own names. It's much more powerful if I am tweeting from my personal twitter

Figure 7: The rewards of being a Red Cross volunteer

feed about the Red Cross. Then the official Red Cross can retweet my tweets. We use that and we see value in that. It provides the voice and it lends a lot of credibility to that and it is a lot of power in that because we have many volunteers," M. de Vulpillieres says.

Accessibility Increases Contribution

Figure 4: ARC's Facebook post promoting Text to Give

ARC sees social media as a useful tool not only for nonprofits, but also for contributors. While nonprofits are trying to reach the public for help using social media, the public is also trying to use social media to help with causes about which they are passionate. Social media connects both parties together and helps nonprofits' work moving forward. M. de Vulpillieres (personal communication, November 13, 2013) says:

> Social media is constantly evolving, and we need to continue to evolve with it. Now we not only inform people about our services, but we also use social media as a tool to better serve and a tool to reassure and empower people. There is a personal connection that you can use even on social media.
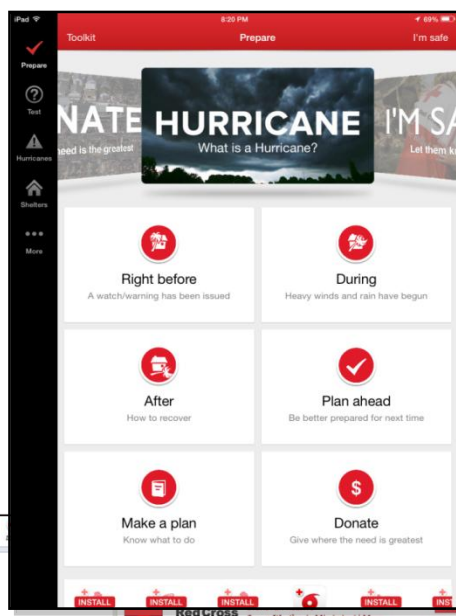

Figure 5: ARC's Hurricane app

ARC believes that accessibility or convenience can increase contributions. ARC has integrated available communication tools to let people know how they can contribute to people in need. It has provided many channels that the public can use to make donations and use to apply to be volunteers. For example, ARC has successfully applied the Text to Give program. Individuals can text "Red Cross" to 90999 and it automatically provides a $10 donation to ARC. This program is primarily used during major disasters, such as Sandy, Haiti, and the tornado in Oklahoma, when people want to give immediately. According to mGive, a mobile donation provider (2010), $23 million was pledged to the Red Cross for Haiti relief efforts. mGive (2013) also finds that mobile is one of the top three preferred methods of donating because it is easy, convenient, and allows the donor to retain control over how much they donate. Currently, text donations are limited to $5 or $10 (Text2Give, 2014).
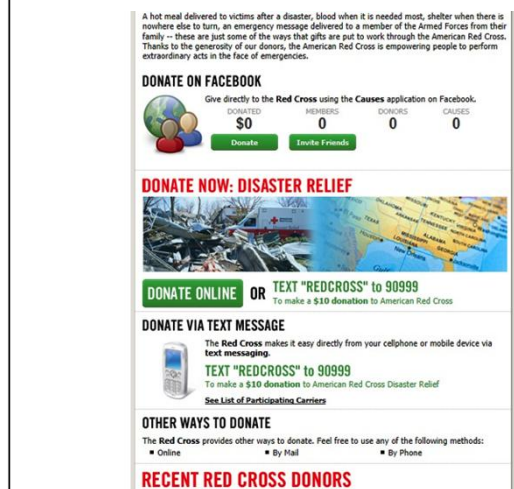
To increase the effectiveness of Text to Give campaigns, ARC uses social media as a tool to promote this new donation channel. This number, 90999, always exists, but ARC does not normally raise much money outside the major disasters. People do not donate that much if the disaster is not on the news.

Another great tool that ARC has developed is a mobile app, which enables ARC to get a lot of small gifts from people who otherwise do not give frequently. ARC's Hurricane App generated 400,000 downloads during Superstorm Sandy (The

Figure 6: Donation tap on Facebook page

American Red Cross, 2013). People can get timely information about the hurricane situation, how to prepare, where shelters are, and they can also donate via the app.

ARC also has partnered with Facebook and is one of the first nonprofits to experiment with Facebook's newest donation feature on Facebook fan pages. ARC also was the first nonprofit that featured Facebook's donation pop-up when Haiyan hit the Philippines. ARC also has the full donation tap on its Facebook fan page where people can click a button and make an online donation right away and get information on what other channels they can use to contribute.

Figure 7: Facebook's new donation tap on fan pages

Nonprofit organizations cannot avoid dealing with social media. For nonprofits that are reluctant to use social media for fundraising and volunteer recruitment, there are several key takeaways from ARC. Firstly, build personal connections by showing the organization's compassion and dedication. Once the community trusts the organization, the target audiences will want to contribute to the organization. Secondly, empower brand ambassadors to speak for the organizations. It is more credible and persuasive. Lastly, always learn new technologies. If the technology is within an organization's budget, experiment and evaluate it. The more convenience that nonprofits offer the public, the more donations and volunteerism nonprofits will receive.

Figure 8: ARC's donation pop-up during Haiyan

Case Study 3: Do Something

Slacktivism: Worthless Or Useful?

The word "slacktivism," the shortened version of "slacker activism," reflects a misconception of people in an online community, especially young people who get involved in good causes on the Internet. The *Oxford dictionary* defines "slacktivism" as actions performed via the Internet in support of a political or social cause but regarded as requiring little time or involvement, e.g., signing an online petition or joining a campaign group on a social media website. Some journalists and social activists believe that

slacktivists have a low impact or contribution on social goods. Those journalists and social activists agree that the online efforts draw attention to a cause, but they doubt whether slacktivists make a significant lasting impact (McCafferty, 2011).

In contrast, many nonprofit leaders believe that slacktivism actually is a good beginning point for teens to develop to be activists in the future. Rady Paynter, CEO and Founder of Care2, the largest online community empowering people to lead a healthy and green lifestyle, says in an interview with Mashable that, "Small steps can lead to bigger steps. Being critical of small steps serves no good. It simply disfranchises folks" (Livingston, 2010).

Dosomething.org (DS), one of the largest organizations in the U.S. for teens and social change, with 2.5 million active members, also dislikes the word "slacktivism" and believes that young people doing something online for good causes is meaningful. Calvin Stowell, DS's director of content and digital strategy, states that, "It [the word "slacktivism"] makes me roll my eyes. Every social scientist will tell you that someone who likes a page on Facebook about a cause or retweets a tweet about a cause on Twitter is actually far more likely to be involved than someone who did nothing at all. At the same time those social scientists will tell you that one of the easiest ways to get someone involved is to graduate them through barriers, which basically means you start with something as innocuous as a "like," then they create awareness around a cause, then they take action by volunteering and donating." People underestimate the potential of slacktivists. The small acts online such as signing petition can lead to the next big steps like joining off-line activities.

DS was co-founded in 1993 by American actor Andrew Shue and his childhood friend Michael Sanchze aiming to motivate young people to take action on social changes that make an impact. The organization strives to create a culture of volunteerism and activism among young people. DS designs campaigns based on teenagers' interests such as voting, bullying, education, and teen pregnancy. The organization also partners with teens' favorite brands like H&M, Aéropostale, Virgin Mobile, Staples, Intel and Toyota. This strategy not only benefits DS in term of image, but also in terms of generating a marketing budget for promoting the campaigns.

For example, DS has partnered with Aéropostale since 2008 for the Teens For Jeans (TFJ) campaign. In this campaign, teenagers are encouraged to bring their gently worn jeans to Aéropostale, and these jeans are then donated to over 1,000 homeless shelters in the United States and Canada. According to Aéropostale's news release, there have been over 4.3 million pairs of jeans donated since the campaign launched. There already have been 802,488 pairs of jeans donated this year (Do Something, 2014).

DS was ranked number four on the *Nonprofit Times*'s best small nonprofits to work for 2013 and number 11 on TopNonprofits.com's Top100 NGOs on the Web in 2013. The key success of DS is the ability to understand teens' nature. Andrew Shue, co-founder of DS says in an interview in *Teen Ink* magazine that, "If you can get a teen leader in each sector of a student population, you can pull people in. Everybody wants to get involved, but most are too afraid. When they see a person they think is cool leading it, they are first to join."

DS has researched teen behaviors, what they care about, who influences them, and what media they are using. The organization has heavily leveraged websites, mobile, social media, and pop culture. DS uses many celebrities to promote its campaigns. For example, Nigel Barker, Jay Sean, Nikki Blonsky, Chace Crawford, David Archuleta, Ashley Greene, Justin Long, Demi Lovato, Rachel Crow and Fifth Harmony

have attended and promoted the TFJ campaign. Not only does DS promote these endorsers on its social media, the celebrities also promote TFJ on their personal social media accounts to.

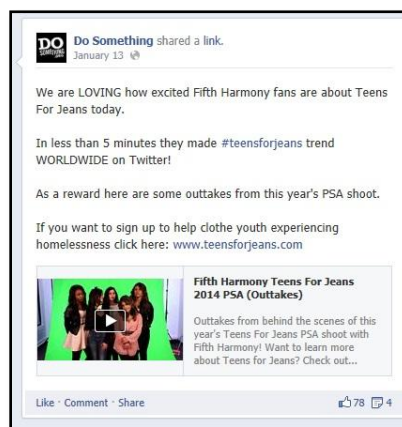Figure 9: Drew Barrymore's Instagram promoted TFJ

Figure 10: DS promoted Fifth Harmony endorsing TFJ 2014

Young People Are Eager To Do Something

There is a misconception that young people are apathetic or uninterested in social change. DS has proved that young people are actually eager to do something. DS finds that the barrier for young people for initiating social campaigns is a lack of tools, knowledge, experience, or opportunity. DS provides young people easy and complete resources and solutions for undertaking real world action at one single point, DS's website. C. Stowell (personal communication, November 6, 2013) says:

> The biggest incentive we offer is impact. Very few organizations give people a way to create a tangible and visible impact, let alone give that opportunity to young people.

To promote news about its campaigns, DS encourages teens to spread their participation in DS' campaigns on their social media. DS also requires all participants to take pictures and upload these pictures on DS's website to prove the campaign participants' action. DS knows that the teens will absolutely share these pictures with their friends on their social media. This online peer influence is

highly important for recruiting teens to get involved to causes. This is because the success stories of someone that teens know will inspire and challenge them. Sago (2010) finds that Millennials are significantly influenced by online comments on social media sources, especially Facebook, with minimal consideration given to their relationship closeness to the commenters.

Even though today teens might just read posts, click like their friend pictures or share them on social media platforms, there is a good chance that one day they will attend campaign activities in the real world too. Georgetown University and Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide (2011) finds that slacktivists are more active than most people think. Americans who get involved with causes thought social media activities are also participating in cause-related activities outside of the social media space. They are just as likely to donate money as non-social media cause promoters (41percent vs. 41 percent). Surprisingly, social media cause promoters are also twice as likely to volunteer as non-social media cause promoters (30 percent vs.15 percent).

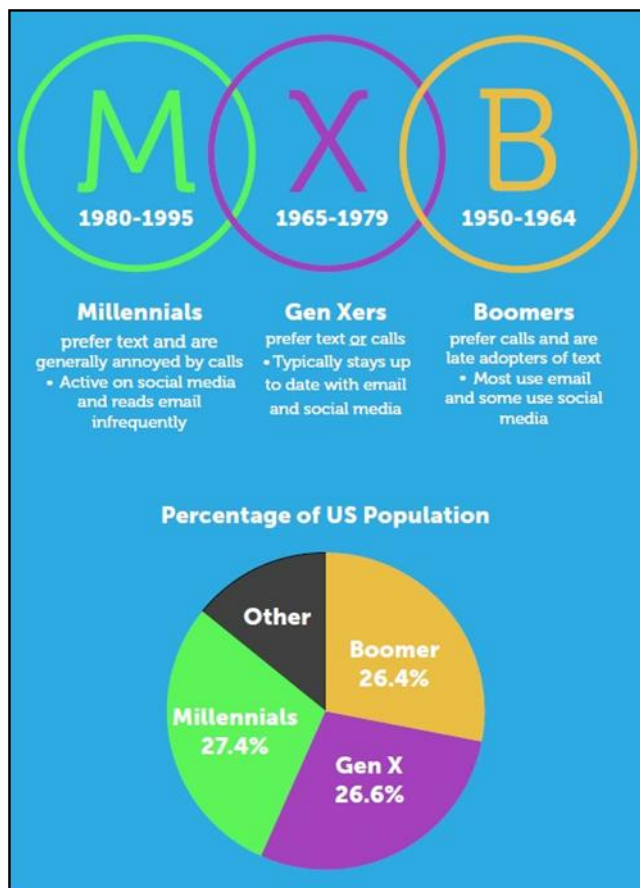**Social Media Cannot Get Teens Off Their Couches; Text Messages Can.**

Figure 15: Millennial prefer text, Source: Mobile Cause's 2014 Mobile stats for fundraising

DS finds that young people do not read emails. The open rates are already low for adults. They are much lower for young people. A research team from Georgetown University (2011) finds that 74 percent of participants feel that emails about causes sometimes fell like spam and almost half of Americans believe that they receive too many emails about causes. In contrast, text messages are almost always read. According to Mobile Cause's research, 99 percent of texts are read and 90 percent of them are read within three minutes (Mobile Cause, 2014).

While DS are using social media such as to provide campaign detail and show pictures and stories from past activities, text messaging is its main tool for inviting teens to join the campaign and events. C. Stowell (personal communication, November 6, 2014) says:

We have found the best way to gather young people into one place is to geo-target them via text. Facebook is less effective at getting people off of their couches and into a central location.

DS finds that the effective text messaging strategy is creating solutions where teens can take action directly on their phones from that text. For example, the text receivers can sign up to join a campaign from the text. DS's text messages have a 99 percent open rate. Although the text response rates vary, they are always much higher than any other platform (C. Stowell, personal communication, November 6, 2014).

The mobile phone has become a new medium to reach the Millennials. Pew Research Center (2013) finds that 78 percent of U.S. teens ages 12 to 17 have mobile phones, 47 percent of these mobile-owning teens report that they have smartphones. Teens also use text messaging as the primary communication method. According to Pew Research Center, in 2011, teens ages 12 to 17 sent a median of 60 texts per day. And texting (63 percent) is their most frequent way of communication compared to phone calling (39 percent), face-to-face socializing outside of school (35 percent), and social networking site messaging 29 percent (Lenhart, 2012).

How To Succeed In Creating Volunteer Recruiting Campaign For Young People

C. Stowell believes that in order to get young people as an organization's advocators, nonprofits should become a friend not a brand. "Young people are four times more likely to volunteer, if their friend asks. Brands need to transform from a logo to a personality that teens would want to hang out with" C. Stowell says. If these young people like causes, they will promote the cause without waiting for nonprofits to ask them to do. According to the digital persuasion research by Georgetown University and Waggener Edstrom (2012), 76 percent of participants agree that it is important to them personally to influence other people about the nonprofits or causes that they care about.

DS thinks the text messaging campaign is a must-have tool for nonprofits. However, it is expensive. Every text an organization sends and receives cost money; a back-end management of the organization's mobile list also costs money. Nonprofits just starting mobile campaigns should test and optimize everything. "Look at the data. It does not lie. Check your ego at the door and see what actually works the best," C. Stowell adds.

The Millennial generation population is the next biggest population to the Baby boomer generation. It could keep growing to 88.5 million people by 2020 (Doherty, 2013). Today's teenagers may not be high-dollar donors, but they will grow up and become them in the future. Ford Bell, President of the American Alliance of Museums says in an interview with Blackbaud to "Get people early in their careers to start giving now, so as they succeed, they will be the donors of the future," (MacLaughlin, 2013). Involving young people now is an investment in the future.

In short, nonprofits should use social media to build relationships with teens by speaking teenage language and acting as teens' friends, not as organizations. Nonprofits need to capture teens or celebrities who are influencers and get the word out from their side. Finally, the organizations should utilize text campaigns using the geo-target to bring teens in the target area to the organizations' off-line events.

Best Practices For Using Social Media To Fundraise And Recruit Volunteers

The author developed these guidelines for using social media to fundraise and recruit volunteers based on advice from the participating nonprofits in this research-American Cancer Society, American Red Cross, and Do Something.org- as well as information from secondary research.

First Thoughts
- Build community first, then inspire, and ask for help later. You need advocates who will make your campaigns go viral.

- Write a social media plan, get approval from the executive, and distribute to everyone on your team. According to the research conducted in 2012 with 3,522 participating nonprofits, the top three factors for success on social media are developing a strategy (41 percent), prioritization by executive management (37 percent), and dedicated social media staff (28 percent) (Nonprofit Technology Network, Common Knowledge, and Blackbaud, 2012).
- Set specific goals and effective measurement tools. Do not look at only quantity, but also consider quality. For example, shares and comments have higher value than likes. Your content drives people to engage with your post. Monitor and use data to evaluate and adjust your next campaigns.
- Social media plans need to reflect the goals of the organization. They must integrate not stand apart. For instance, three years ago, Do Something.org posted a video featuring well-known YouTube celebrities who asked young people to donate their used sports equipment to youth in need. The video got 1.5 million views, but no one made a donation (Bladt & Filbin, 2013). What we learn from this case is to be focused on your organizational goals, not only social media metrics.
- Nonprofits that have limited budget can start with free measurement tools that the social platforms provide such as Facebook Insight and Twitter Analytics Suite. Social media aggregators or publishers such as Hootsuite and TweetDeck also provide basic reporting for free accounts. If later the organizations have more budgets and want custom reporting, they can upgrade these accounts.
- Use a sense of urgency. Short time frames excite people and inspire them to make decisions promptly.
- Provide a link to donate on every platform. Help people make donations quickly and easily.
- Use bit.ly or ow.ly to track click-through rates. This will help you to evaluate the effectiveness of your messages.
- Promote your social media account on your website, e-newsletter, print materials, and most importantly, on your "Thank you for your donation" landing page and email. Thus, you can use social media to build and retain donor relations.
- Make your fundraising an annual event such as Relay For Life.
- Ask for sponsors from companies or partner with brands for donation matching. These companies can help you promote the campaigns too.

Figure 11: donation matching campaign

- Keep your promises. Online community members always follow up and track back what you say. Peoplewater.com promised that for every repost of its picture of a victim from Haiyan Typhoon in the Philippines, the organization would donate $1 for clean water. Peoplewater did not indicate the timeline and an extremely large amount of people reposted the picture in a short time period. Peoplewater took down the picture and caused outrage from the online

community. Later, the organization explained that the staff launched the campaign without approval from the executive.

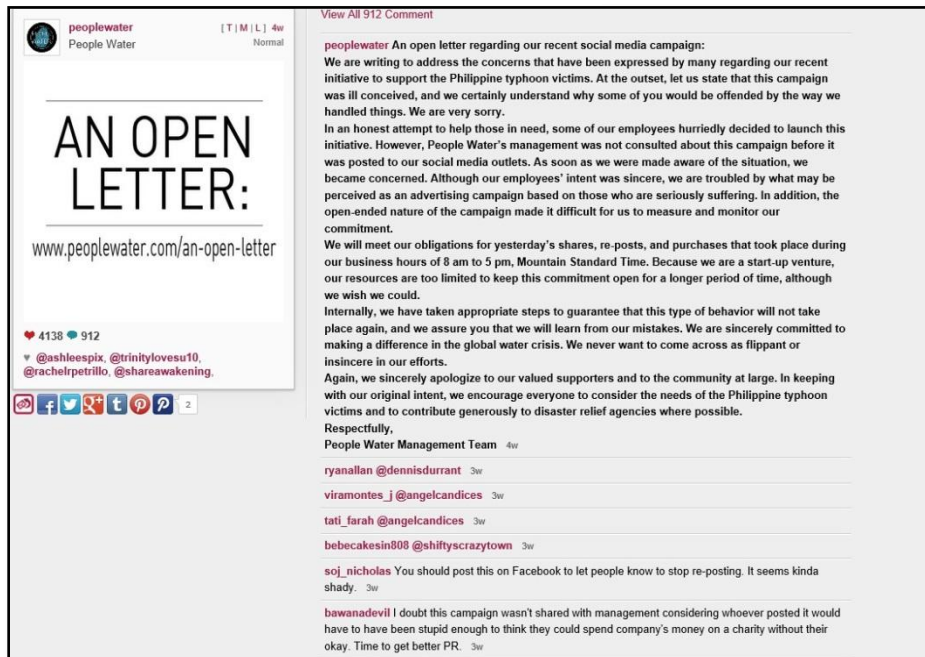Figure 12: Peoplewater's Haiyan social media campaign

Figure 13: Explanation from Peoplewater

Messages And Content

- Have simple, short, and clear calls to action such as donating or signing up to volunteer, but limit yourself to just one call to action per message. Multiple conflicting calls to actions cause people to hesitate in making a decision.

Figure 14: ACS's clear call to action tweet

- Storytelling makes fundraising personal. Use touching stories and let them know how potential donors or volunteers can make an impact.

Figure 15: Touching story of how your donation can change someone's life

- On average, limit your fundraising message to twice a month (Kanter & Fine, 2010). People can get tired very soon if nonprofits ask them again and again.
- Don't tell donors why they should give; encourage them to tell your organization why they should give.
- Set small goals and communicate specifically to the contributors what the donation will achieve.

Figure 16: a small goal

- Say thank you to your donors, volunteers, and sponsors in public. Thankfulness makes people want to give more.

Figure 17: Say thank you to sponsors publicly

- Tell donors what they can do next such as becoming a volunteer or signing up for a newsletter. Research says that the first 30 days after donation is important in building a long-lasting relationship with donors (Flandez, 2014).
- Ask donors and volunteers to share their stories. Donors can help influence other donors to give. Make the "thank you" page shareable.
- Provide creative materials for users to easily spread your message. Giving Tuesday provides a "Social media ambassador tool kit" that includes ready-to-tweet/post messages and downloadable visuals for anyone who wants to help promoting the campaign (GivingTuesday.org, 2013).
- Be transparent about how much money you are receiving and where contributions go.

Facebook
- Install Facebook's newest application "Donate Now." All of funds donated using this button will go to nonprofit organizations (Facebook, 2014).
- Nonprofits can also use apps such as the cause.com widget, which will link to your campaign page on the cause.com website.

Figure 18: Causes' donation widget

- Only status updates with the activities "like, comment, share" should get exposure on a "Top news" news feed. For a new nonprofit Fan page, ask your employees and volunteers to post comments and like your posts (Kanter & Fine, 2010).
- Always read comments and replies. People are more likely to unlike charity pages because the charities have never responded to their comments than if the charities have posted too little (Georgetown University and Waggner Edstrom, 2012).

Twitter
- For every ten tweets, only one should be a direct request such as "make a donation" and "like us on Facebook" (Kanter & Fine, 2010).
- Use a different hashtag for each campaign. People can search for your campaign on twitter feed. #haiyan, #50cans, and #finishthefight
- Add links to your donation page using a URL shortener such as bit.ly or ow.ly
- Make sure that your Tweet, including your copy and shortened link to the donation page, is shorter than 120 characters. That way, people can retweet your message (Bennett, 2012).

YouTube
- Sign up for YouTube's Nonprofit program (http://www.YouTube.com/nonprofits). There are many useful functions for fundraising and volunteer recruitment including:
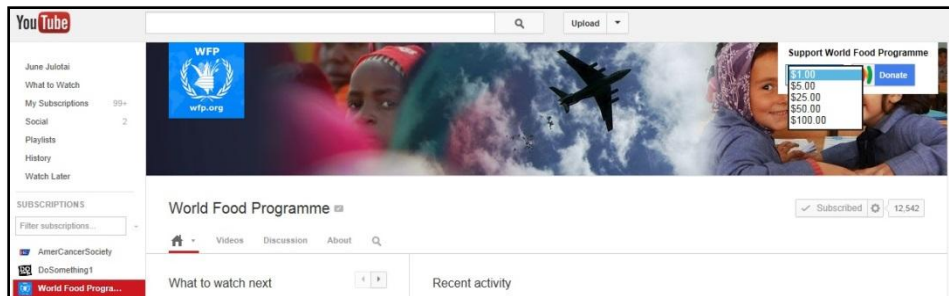
Donate button: viewers can donate directly to your cause from your video
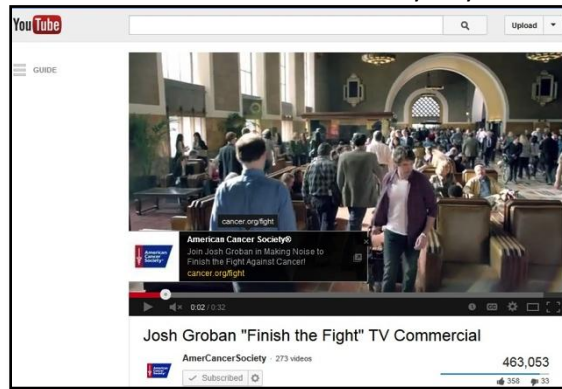
Call-to-action overlays: Viewers can respond to a call to action, such as clicking a link to your website.

Live streaming: Broadcast your event live on YouTube.

Video Annotations: Write a note on your video to encourage users to subscribe to your channel or click a link to your website.

Website

Nonprofit websites need to be compatible with mobile devices. Seventy-three percent of the U.S. open email on smartphones daily (Pruitt, 2013). According to Nonprofit tech for good (2013), in 2012, online donations via email dropped 21 percent due to donate pages not being mobile compatible.

- Consider responsive Web design (RWD); the website automatically adjusts to fit any screen size. It is easier to update, more cost effective, and accessible to more people than regular and mobile website design.
- If you choose a mobile Web, test with different mobile browsers.
- Keep your website simple and light to avoid long, frustrating download time. The average smartphone user waits a maximum of five seconds for a page to load before cancelling (Mobile Cause, 2014).
- Prioritize content. Make your content brief. Put the most important content, such as the current fundraising campaign, on top of the first page so that users do not have to scroll down.

Figure 19: ARC's website

- Add donate and volunteer buttons on the first page of desktop version and mobile version.
- Add share functionality to the donation page on your website. Your supporters can help you to spreading your donation campaign.
- Link to your social media accounts, text alert, e-newsletter subscription, and text-to-give.

Text message
- If you send text a message to subscribers and have a link to your website, ensure they link to the mobile version of your site.
- Start collecting mobile phone numbers. You can add a sign-up box on main websites, mobile opt-in field on volunteer and donation forms, and sign-up sheets during events.
- Set goals, current funds raised updates, and an end date for your donation text campaign. Thus, donors will have a sense of urgency and be a part of goal achievement.
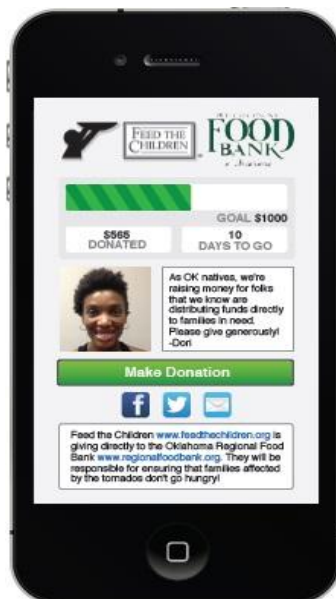
- Don't send more than two or three text messages per month.
- Use A/B Testing. Send different messages, different message frequencies, and different times of sending to small test groups and evaluate which one has a higher response rate.

Figure 25: Donation page on mobile, source: Nonprofit Tech for Good

Implications Of Case Studies

According to the reviewed literature, more than half of the largest nonprofit organizations in the U.S. have already adopted social media. Many nonprofits have successfully used social media to increase their brand awareness and build relationships with their online communities. However, nonprofits as a whole are lagging behind companies and brands that already have advanced in using social media to gain more customers and raise profit. This research tries to answer how nonprofit organizations can use social media to raise funds and increase brand advocators (volunteers) as much as for-profit organizations.

All three participating nonprofit organizations in this research, the American Cancer Society, American Red Cross, and Do Something, have affirmed that social media can be a useful tool for fundraising and volunteer recruiting. There are three themes that all three participating nonprofit organizations have in common: messaging strategy, two-way communication, and communication tools integration.

First, the organizations find that the majority of social media content should include inspirational messages that are related to fundraising or volunteer recruiting campaigns. They believe that people are eager to make visible impact and influence others. At the same time, nonprofits have to also deliver clear calls to action. They cannot promote only inspirational stories and skip the asking part. Asking messages trigger action. After target audiences are inspired, they need organizations to tell them how they can help.

Next, a two-way communication process includes sending, monitoring, measuring, evaluating and adapting. The organizations put a priority on listening to their stakeholders. They suggest that after launching a campaign, nonprofits should monitor conversations among their online community members, evaluate the sentiment of those conversations to examine the effectiveness of the messages, use that data to adapt and customize replied messages, and then join the conversation with their online communities. Nonprofits should always use data from their past campaign metrics to plan their next campaign.

The last theme is communication tools integration. The organizations agree that social media is a useful tool to raise funds and increase volunteerism. However, to maximize campaign success, nonprofits need to integrate their available communication tools such as email, text messaging, and mobile application in each campaign.

Recommendations

The advance of technology pushes organizations to always learn and adapt to the changing environment. Sometimes technology is developing too fast, and some nonprofits that lack resources feel like they are left in the dark. It is useful to learn from the leaders that already experiment. However, all organizations are different. There are some points nonprofits have to consider before following those leaders and designing their own social media campaigns.

The first consideration is that nonprofits should choose a social media platform based on their target audiences. Nonprofit organizations have to know their target audiences' demographics and communication behaviors. For example, DS finds that teens respond to text messaging more than Facebook event invitations. Only 5.7 percent of Facebook users are teens aged 13-17 years old (iStrategy Lab, 2014). Nonprofits targeting young people may need to implement text messaging tools.

The second point is cost effectiveness. If organizations have a small number of donors and volunteers, investing in mobile applications might have a low return in investment (ROI). There are not only initial costs, such as development, that nonprofits will have to pay, but also operating costs including staff training, operation and maintenance.

The last point is the available resources. Even though researchers suggest separate Facebook fan pages to best match with target segments, small nonprofits should have only one to three pages and stay focused. Remember, quality is more important than quantity.

Nonprofit organizations should always be open for new technologies and be smart in choosing the solutions that fit with their organizations. The best way is to learn from case studies and best practices. Fear of making mistakes and the attitude that they do not have sufficient staff will cost nonprofits the opportunity to do better. There are many free applications that small nonprofits can use to manage their social media platforms.

Limitation And Future Research

There are several limitations of this research that need to be addressed. Firstly, this research was conducted with only three nonprofit organizations. In addition, two of participants are well-known organizations. So, they already have high brand awareness and reputation capital. People are already likely to donate or volunteer with these organizations regardless of their social media communications. Lastly, two of the participants are local chapters. National communications teams may have different strategies and point of views

However, there is significant diversity of these participants. Two of the participating organizations are large international nonprofits that have a wide range of target audiences. One of them is a smaller local organization that targets teens under 25 years old. Therefore, these three case studies cover Internet users of a wide range of ages. Moreover, all three organizations focus on different causes. Most importantly, participants in this research are the most successful nonprofits in using social media. Their experience is valuable and well worth learning from.

Future research should include more participants with more variety in terms of level of reputation, size, causes, and target audiences. It would also be interesting to interview nonprofit development executives who are experts in fundraising and can provide in-depth theories of donor behavior. Lastly, there are several new platforms, such as Instagram and Snapchat, which have become very popular among the online community. Some nonprofit organizations are already using them for their fundraising and volunteer recruiting campaigns. Studying these new platforms will provide additional information for nonprofit organizations that want to explore new communication channels.

Conclusion

Social media, if one knows how to effectively utilize it, can be a powerful tool to raise funds and recruit volunteers. Usually, the basic functions of most social media platforms are free. Nonprofit organizations that are new to social media can experiment with these basic functions and find the platforms that will work best for their organizations. To be successful in using social media for fundraising and volunteer

recruitment, nonprofits should develop a social media plan, and craft messages customized for each target audience. Messages should be precise, inspirational, and shareable. Nonprofits do not need to always follow new trends and employ every social media platform. Instead, they should invest their resources and focus only on platforms that their target audiences are using. Finally, nonprofits should try to build an emotional connection with their online community members, so these brand ambassadors will help organizations spread the word.

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