

Engaging Donors Through Multiple Media Channels

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By Danielle Brigida, Mark Davis and Casey Golden

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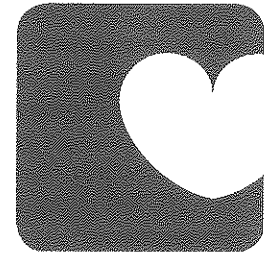
By Russell N. James III, J.D., Ph.D.

It seems like the ideal fundraising scenario. Step 1: Help people to understand a serious crisis. Step 2: Help them vividly imagine the most wonderful, possible results that would happen if the crisis were resolved. Step 3: Ask them for financial or volunteer help. What could be better? It turns out that including that second step is a bad idea.

Are Your Donors Brand Ambassadors?

By Patrick Dorsey

For fundraising professionals, today's new "social" landscape presents an equal number of challenges and opportunities. A majority of people of all ages and backgrounds now interact with their personal connections and professional network through a variety of Web-based and mobile social networks,



as well as blogs, gaming platforms and community forums. The characteristics of today's donors have not only evolved but they are also more involved. Social media can send donor engagement soaring, thanks to the connections arising out of posting, sharing, linking and "liking."

How should a fundraising professional take advantage of these new ways to develop a two-way dialogue with donors, increase their loyalty and turn them into brand ambassadors? It begins with developing a strong, clear strategy. That strategy must help navigate this new social universe while integrating it into current donor relationship-management efforts.

Developing Authentic Engagement to Drive Donations

Donors are now in the driver's seat when it comes to engagement. With a plethora of social media options, donors can speak up when they want, share thoughts with others, or opt out of any connection. Traditional "push" and "pull" marketing and communications tactics are no longer enough to connect with donors, and simply measuring and analyzing engagement through their transactions will miss valuable opportunities to gauge connections, encourage participation and build long-term relationships with the individuals and organizations that passionately support their mission.

If organizations want more from donors, they must connect with them where they are and how they want to be contacted—in a personalized, relevant way. Furthermore, donors also may want to be able to interact with others with similar interests within the communities and organizations in which they participate. They assume the leadership of the organization will be aware of conversations about the organization and its cause in the social sphere, and that the organization will respond promptly to what is being said.

Social media tools need to be used more thoughtfully and strategically, through the gathering, measurement and analysis of social data. This should provide a clear view of the relationship with the donor that is useful and actionable.

Listen to how people talk about your organization. You can now listen in and influence the conversation. Focus on delivering value and deepening the relationship to build donor evangelists. Next you need to be able to link social commentary, action and feedback received from websites and social networking sites with hard data.

Scoring and Measuring Data

That is where scoring comes in. Scoring can be based on criteria that are important to you—perhaps categories such as volunteering, fundraising, membership, purchases, social and program participation. You can track and assign values to such information as

- Who has a Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn account?
- Who blogs about you?
- Who forwards your emails?
- Who/What segment forwards your pictures or program promotions?
- Who mentions you on Twitter?
- What segments are more likely to take social action and amplify your message?

How Is Your Cross-Channel Fundraising?

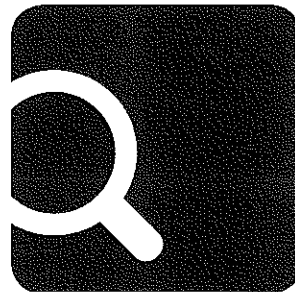
According to the *Annual Report on Philanthropy for the Year 2011* by Giving USA 2012, individual donations increased by 4 percent in 2011 (compared with 2010) to \$217.79 billion in contributions. After some leaner years in 2009 and 2010 following the 2008 recession, things are looking up for fundraisers. However, many nonprofits continue to face budget constraints along with hesitant donor prospects, and the transition from a direct-mail-centric organization to a truly multichannel engine has been difficult for many—or has yet to occur.

Since 2010, direct-mail volume has grown each year, including by 3 percent from 2010 to 2011. However, fundraising mail has not followed the same trajectory, perhaps because of tighter budgets and fewer donor dollars. (Of course, some fundraising marketers would see these constraints as an opportunity to send more mail, not less, but in a less expensive way.)

Fundraising mail slipped by 5 percent in volume from 2010 to 2011. As a percentage of the overall mail stream, it also went down to 25 percent, a drop of 8 percent from 2011. Still, 25 percent is not a paltry figure, as it takes up a full one-quarter of all mailboxes across the nation. And early indications in 2012 are that fundraising volume is back up, as the first quarter of 2012 registered at 27 percent of the overall mail stream.

With repeat mail, there was a small shift from 2010 to 2011, as the percentage of repeat mail went up from 44 percent to only 45 percent. In other words, nearly half of all fundraising mail has been mailed before, or 55 percent of fundraising mail is a new effort. Early returns in 2012, through April, reflect a continual growth of repeat mail, with the percentage increasing to 47 percent so far.

What does the fundraiser value more: getting new donors or retaining current ones? Both, of course, but in which direction is the money getting allocated? And how does



Analyze the responses. Do donors/segments with high special scores bring in new donors, have higher renewal rates, give larger average gifts and/or have a higher frequency of giving?

If so, change your moves management and workflow processes. For example, follow up a volunteer's thank-you call with a video of your mission in action and ask your donors with Facebook accounts to share it.

When providing donors with meaningful information about how their gifts have helped (before the renewal ask), send them a link to a success story about your organization.

Tape an interview with a major-gift donor talking about the effectiveness of your organization's mission and ask your Twitter followers to tweet the link as part of the acknowledgement for their renewal gift.

the fundraiser approach the donor prospect? Examining offer types—broken into acquisition, retention and expire mailings—reveals that retention mailings have grown by 16 percent from 2010 to 2011. Fundraisers are putting more emphasis on keeping the donors they have. Furthermore, expire mailings also went up, by 7 percent. Accordingly, acquisition efforts were affected, and decreased by 3 percent.

This is just some of the information found in *Cross-Channel Fundraising Tips and Trends* from Direct Marketing IQ in Philadelphia (www.directmarketingiq.com). The publication offers extensive data on current fundraising trends: volume, seasonality, package formats and dimensions, premium and freemium usage, personalization, donor strings and more, as well as comparisons between 2010 and 2011 results. In addition, there are key email metrics, including monthly volume, word count, delivery day and times, and subject line words.

Nine chapters on multichannel fundraising best practices cover such topics as:

- “11 Simple Ways to Increase Direct Mail Fundraising” by Kirk Swain and Robert Salta
- “Four Direct-Mail Fundraising Best Practices” by Joe Boland
- “The Obama Effect: 20 Takeaways for Multichannel Fundraisers” by Britt Brouse
- “Four Email Fundraising Campaign Best Practices” by Joe Boland
- “The Seven Steps to Multichannel Success” by Karin Kirchoff and Jeff Regen

In addition, the publication includes five case studies on nonprofits and their very successful integrated fundraising campaigns—allowing you to build your future campaigns around what is already working.

For more information, visit <http://store.directmarketingiq.com/store/p/242-Cross-Channel-Fundraising-Tips-and-Trends.aspx?a=text0828>. ©

In short,

- start listening (monitor sentiment)
- store the data (with your other data)
- score it (with your other data)
- measure it (what is the share factor?)
- verify it

Most of all, be patient. Bringing donors down the path toward brand ambassadorship will take time to provide ROI, but it is well worth the wait. Like a successful marketing program, organizations need to test, analyze and make adjustments to achieve desired results. ☉

Patrick Dorsey is vice president of marketing with McLean, Va.-based Avectra (www.avectra.com).

Get Social—Engage Your Donors

By Alec Stern

Today's geo-located, email-checking, text-messaging, status-updating, smartphone-toting "social consumers" are ready to engage. Your nonprofit's supporters want more than content online—they want to make a personal connection.

Fundraising success has always been about engagement, but today there are new technologies to make engagement faster, easier and more cost-effective than ever before. Great content and experiences can make people feel connected to your organization, and when these connections happen on networks such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, these one-to-one conversations can turn into socially visible endorsements of your organization.

So how can you engage your busy supporters online and make that important personal connection?

1. Showcase what you are doing with donation dollars. Nonprofits should use all of their social media channels to show how members and donors are having a positive impact: a photo of a renewed park or a video of a child saying "thank you" can go a long way to keep supporters connected to a cause. It is very effective to hear this from the voice of a recipient of your services or volunteers supporting your programs and events.

2. Go photo-crazy. The Web is rapidly becoming a visual medium. Photos are just a smartphone away, and it is easy to take pictures of your staff and the organization's initiatives—and then use everything from Facebook to Flickr to share them.

3. Offer behind-the-scenes footage. Videos are also within everyone's grasp these days. Sites such as ustream.tv and YouTube help nonprofits showcase their work and promote their mission. By having videos that show how volunteers work toward an organization's goal, you can build a more personal relationship with your supporters. Showing how your donation dollars are used also strengthens ties.

4. Educate. You know your subject matter better than almost anyone. Volunteers count on that expertise, and sharing it via social media can help make people passionate about the cause and encourage dialogue online. Even short facts and statistics give supporters information they can easily share with their friends and family.

5. Leverage the news. Look for contemporary topics that speak to your cause and put yourself in the moment. An art museum's fans are likely interested in any news about art. An environmental organization can count on fans being passionate about any news about climate change. By sharing this kind of information you also position your organization as a resource for those interested in the broader aspects of the cause.

6. Keep abreast of legislation. Whether it is good or bad, legislation that will have an impact on your organization or its mission should always be shared with fans and followers so everyone is kept up-to-date with developments. Advocacy support can be amplified when shared over your social channels.

7. Make your events known. Promote your events to encourage attendance, and don't forget to post pictures from the events as well. Every event is a good opportunity to snap a picture for Facebook or Pinterest, whether you are at a conference or cleaning up a river. Attendees will likely share the posts and those not in attendance will see what happened at your event.

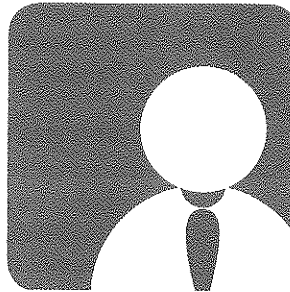
8. Share feedback. Share testimonials and any private thank-you from those who have been helped by the nonprofit—as long as it is OK with those individuals. Personal stories can be powerful ways to demonstrate the impact of your organization and show supporters and donors where their support and money are going.

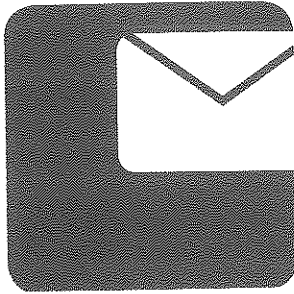
9. Welcome new members. Members, volunteers, new staff and everyone else can be welcomed with Facebook posts. Showing the faces behind an organization, including a brief bio, can be a great way to connect fans with an organization.

10. Connect with bloggers. Bloggers can be powerful allies when you are launching a social media strategy. Search for people who are already writing about your organization's causes and invite them to post on your site or write a series of articles about the organization's mission.

11. Keep your perspective. At times it may seem as though social media sites are growing exponentially, while nonprofits make do with the same number of staff or volunteers. Start small and don't try to do everything at once. Find where your audience is and work from there. Having a single, established social media destination is better than having a dozen, half-finished ones. ☉

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Shape Up!

When the director of development for Old Spanish Missions (www.oldspanishmissions.org), a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of the four 300-year-old Spanish missions,

including the well-known Alamo, in San Antonio, Texas, decided to use a shaped direct-mail piece to invite patrons to a historical preservation celebration, she anticipated a typical response. What she did not expect was hearing from 88 percent of those invited.

The invitation, which was personalized for each recipient and featured one of the four historic San Antonio missions, was credited not only with encouraging a huge turnout for the event but also with increasing awareness of the nonprofit's efforts to raise more than \$15 million in a successful capital campaign.

U.S. postal regulations now allow custom-shaped pieces (known as Customized MarketMail®) in sizes as large as 12" x 15" to go through the mail without an envelope, and a wide range of organizations have used a specialty printer to produce high-quality, customized and even personalized shaped-mail campaigns.

The recruitment specialist at Genesee Community College (www.genesee.edu) in Batavia, N.Y., had been using traditional mailings for high school juniors. After a while, responses had started to plateau. In October 2007, GCC had a personalized mailing card designed in the shape of a pizza box. When the student opened the card, personalized type flashed his or her name written in pepperoni. In addition, a "GURL" (generalized URL) was included to track students who registered on the Web so they could be targeted in future mailings. Future mailings included "PURLS" (personalized URLs) with customized student information.

Another open house card mailing was die-cut to be shaped like a pizza slice. The name of the student was personalized and included in the headline. The copy asked the student, "How many other schools have sent you a piece of pizza lately?"

The shaped customized mailings sent to prospective college students drove Web-based registration for what would become the second-most well-attended open house in the school's history.

For more information about Customized Market-Mail visit <https://www.usps.com/business/customized-market-mail.htm>.

Printers producing shaped mail include Clarigo (www.clarigomarketing.com), ShipShapes (www.shipshapes.net) and ThinkShapes Mail (www.thinkshapesmail.com), to name a few. ☉

Segmenting Your Constituents by Their Social Capital

By Danielle Brigida, Mark Davis and Casey Golden

Some people can't get enough social media—posting, tagging, sharing and reposting. They love to blog and tweet

and pin, or at least some of them do. Just like life lived offline, social media sites are populated with introverts, extroverts, wallflowers, performers, audiences and authors. For every blogger there are many others who are satisfied to make an occasional post or to repost someone else's content. As a participant, it all works, but if you are a nonprofit marketer interested in harnessing the power of social media, understanding constituent communications preferences is a challenge.

Who's Who?

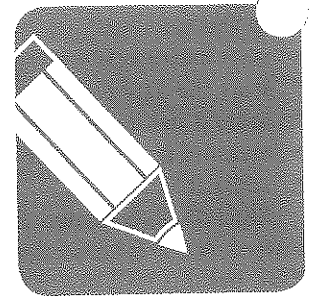
In a meeting or a social setting it is not hard to figure out who's who and adapt your communication style to fit theirs, but what do you do with a large constituency of social media users you don't know? How do you engage them and build relationships with them?

The answer is, get to know them. Of course, it is impossible to personally know the thousands of social media users in your database, but you can do it through segmenting and targeting. However, just as a stamped letter is different from a tweet, social media segmentation is different from major-donor segmentation.

In the case of social media users, you are *not* segmenting by financial capital. You are segmenting by social capital.

Begin by analyzing your database with the goal of segmenting your constituents into categories based on the breadth, depth, frequency and scale of their social media interactions across their networks. Then score the results, which may vary depending on the technology you are using. Blackbaud's Social Scoring service, for example, segments your constituents into one of four categories: Key Influencer, Engager, Multichannel Consumer or Standard Consumer. Each of these groups plays a different role in social media networks, and each one of them is important to your success.

- **Key Influencers** are only 1 percent of social media users, but they are so highly engaged and so capable of influencing others that they have to be at the top of your list when it comes to designing social media strategies.
- **Engagers** belong to all three major networks—Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn—and while they are only about 5 percent of all social media users, they drive up 80 percent of content and communications. You need to know who they are in order to most effectively leverage the audience and networks.
- **Multichannel Consumers** are active on at least two soc





ork sites and make up about 45 percent of all social media users. They like to keep up with what is going on social media sites through their friends and work colleagues, and can be strong influencers of people they know personally.

- **Standard Consumers** typically belong to one social network to keep up with friends, family and current events. They are influenced by their more socially active friends and make up 49 percent of all social media users.

Socialize!

When you know where your constituents fit in the social media universe, you can make plans to engage them. Here are some things to think about as you design your campaigns.

Key Influencers

- **Key Influencers** are just that: “key.” Give them early access to news and special events. Offer them compelling content that is easy for them to redistribute, share and discuss on your behalf.
- The National Wildlife Federation identifies **Key Influencers** and **Engagers** who participate in peer-to-peer fundraising events such as the Great American Campout. Why? Because they know happy campers who have high social scores will spread the word about the organization and its mission.

Engagers

Find out why your constituents who fall into this category care about you, and they will help you keep your social

community vibrant. Design calls to action that encourage them to articulate why your organization is important to them. Remember, their opinions are important. They influence many others.

- To promote its athletic endurance fundraising events, the American Cancer Society targeted the **Key Influencers** and **Engagers** among its constituents who participate in athletic endurance events and reached out to them with information. By doing so, the organization has a far better chance its message will be delivered to the right audience.

Multichannel and Standard Consumers

- **Multichannel** and **Standard Consumers** can be your heart and soul. They consume information and calls-to-action from your **Influencers** and **Engagers**. They have great potential to support you financially and as volunteers. Learn who they are and who influences them, and they will pay dividends.

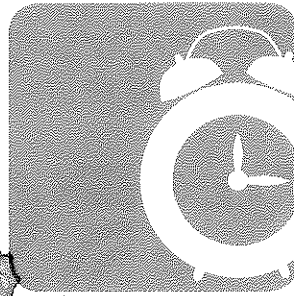
While each of your constituents is a potential donor, some are more adept at spreading the word and energizing others. By knowing these active, influential social media constituents, you are in a position to develop mutually beneficial relationships with them. ☺

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Fundraising on Fantasy Island

By Russell N. James III, J.D., Ph.D.

It seems like the ideal fundraising scenario. Step 1: Help people to understand a serious crisis. Step 2: Have them vividly imagine the most wonderful, positive results that would happen if the crisis were resolved. Step 3: Ask them for financial or volunteer help. What could be better?



Surprisingly, researchers at New York University and Hamburg University found that including that second step was a bad idea. In fact, it dramatically reduced willingness to make substantial contributions. Not only did this happen in one experiment but it happened repeatedly across several different experiments.

In the first experiment, 81 participants read a *New York Times* article about a real, but obscure, crisis caused by a lack of pain medication in Sierra Leone. One group was told to vividly imagine the most positive thing about the crisis being resolved. The other group was told to factually describe the situation as being resolved in “matter-of-fact” terms. When asked to give \$25 toward the cause, 29 percent of the “matter of fact” group, but only “5 percent” of the positive imagination group, agreed. However, when asked for only \$1, the positive imagination group was not less willing to give.

Faced with this surprising result, the researchers changed the experiment to address a recent flooding crisis in the United States. Participants were then asked to volunteer their time rating advertisements in order to earn money to purchase sandbags. When asked to volunteer 60 minutes, 65 percent of

the “matter-of-fact” group agreed, compared with 45 percent of the positive imagination group. However, when asked to volunteer only 5 minutes, compliance was similar between both groups.

Finally, the researchers designed another experiment with 131 participants, again using the Sierra Leone crisis. As before, one group was told to vividly imagine the most positive outcomes from the crisis being resolved. The

other group was given an unrelated letter-marking task that took the same amount of time. Participants were then asked to pledge volunteer hours toward the cause. If participants were told that no significant progress had yet been made to fix the crisis, the letter-marking group pledged an average of 10 times more hours than the positive imagination group. However, if they were told much was already finished, the difference between the two groups disappeared.

What is going on here? The authors of the study explain, “Because they allow people to mentally enjoy a desired future in the present, positive fantasies yield the relaxation associated with success rather than the energy needed for effortful action.”

It turns out that these results fit into several other psychology experiments. Positive fantasies have been shown to predict low effort (and consequently low success) in tasks as diverse as losing weight, getting good grades, finding a job after college or even learning to throw darts. When people were told to engage in positive fantasies about outcomes, they were still equally willing to give low effort (\$1, 5 minutes or a job almost finished), but not high effort (\$25, 60 minutes or a job barely started).

As fundraisers, we may imagine beautiful outcomes from problems solved. However, to keep people committed, it probably makes more sense to focus on the current need and the difficult work required.

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