



# SOCIAL MEDIA WORKBOOK FOR NONPROFITS

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## Social Media Overview: Just what are we talking about here, anyway?

### What is social media?

*“Social media is the use of electronic and Internet tools for the purpose of sharing and discussing information and experiences with other human beings.” - BenParr.com*

*“Social media are media designed to be disseminated through social interaction, created using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Social media supports the human need for social interaction, using Internet- and web-based technologies to transform broadcast media monologues (one to many) into social media dialogues (many to many). It supports the democratization of knowledge and information, transforming people from content consumers into content producers.” - Wikipedia*

Or put more simply, social media is online, two-way communications that allows for heightened **participation** and **engagement**.

### How is social media different than traditional media?

Social media has a different focus than traditional outbound media. At its core, social media is about two way conversation between people. Social media conversations are similar to real life conversations, in that successful interactions start with **listening**, involve **sharing**, and result in building **trust**.

### Why should I care about listening, sharing and trust?

Listen to what people are saying *to each other* and *to you* about the mission, cause, and work of your organization or other similar organizations, and you will learn everything you ever wanted to know about how to succeed.

Share information, opinions, ideas, emotions, and experiences with people who come in contact with your mission, cause and work, and you will receive the stories that crystallize the need you try to fulfill and the impact your organization has.

Trust the people you have conversations with to be good stewards of your message, while acting in a way that inspires trust in others, and you will discover and develop the most effective advocates.

### What opportunities will social media create for my organization?

By engaging in conversations via social media tools, you will:

- Create an open and honest dialogue with people interested in your mission
- Empower influencers and advocates to evangelize for you

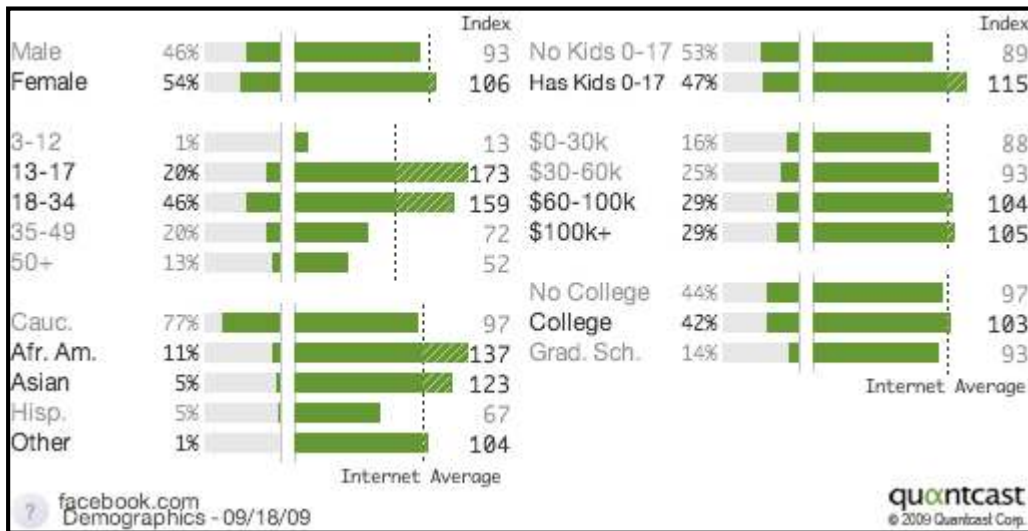
- Open up a feedback loop you can use to improve your organization’s communication and outreach programs

**What kind of people are using social media and what are they doing?**

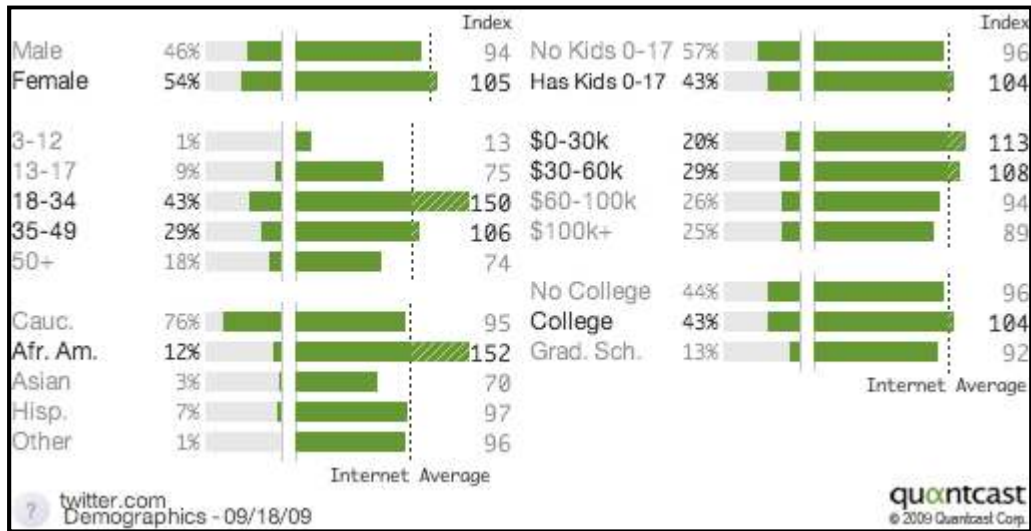
Looking at just a few of the places where conversations are taking place will provide an idea of the magnitude of social media’s reach. First, look at the most popular social network, Facebook. Facebook reportedly has over 250 million users worldwide and according to The Nielsen Company, as of June 2009 there were 87 million people in the US on Facebook. Now, look at the most popular microblog network, Twitter. Compete.com estimates that over 20 million people in the US were using Twitter as of August 2009.

Who are all these people online? Below are two demographics charts provided by Quantcast, one for Facebook and another for Twitter.

**Facebook US demographics as of October 2009**



## Twitter US demographics as of October 2009

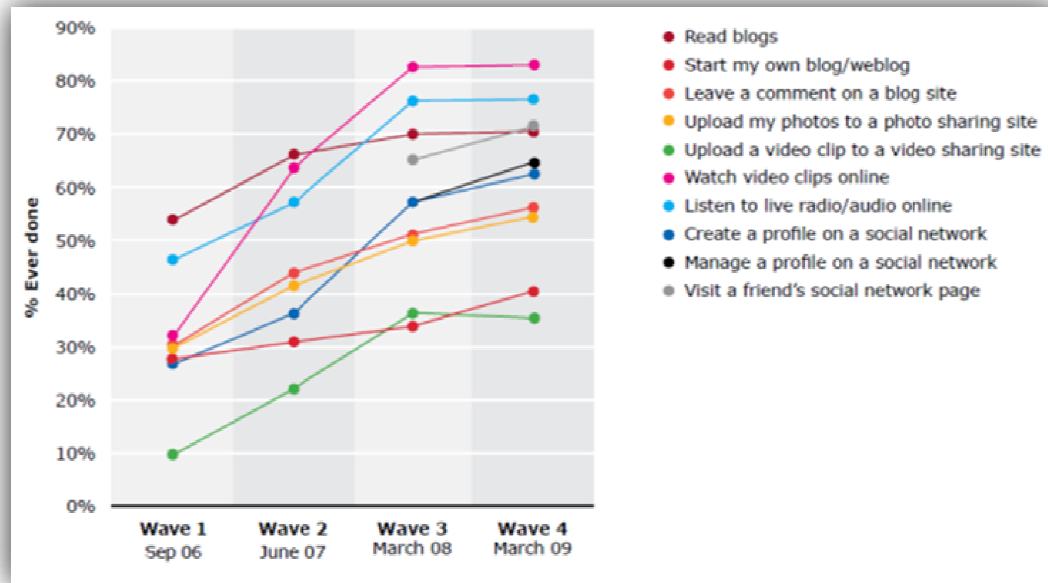


In both cases, people 18 to 34 represent the largest group, but there are a significant number of people between 35 and 49.

As a side note, Quantcast is a site that is based on viewing the statistics of other websites. Its prime focus is to analyze the Internet's websites in order to obtain accurate usage statistics by surfers from the USA.

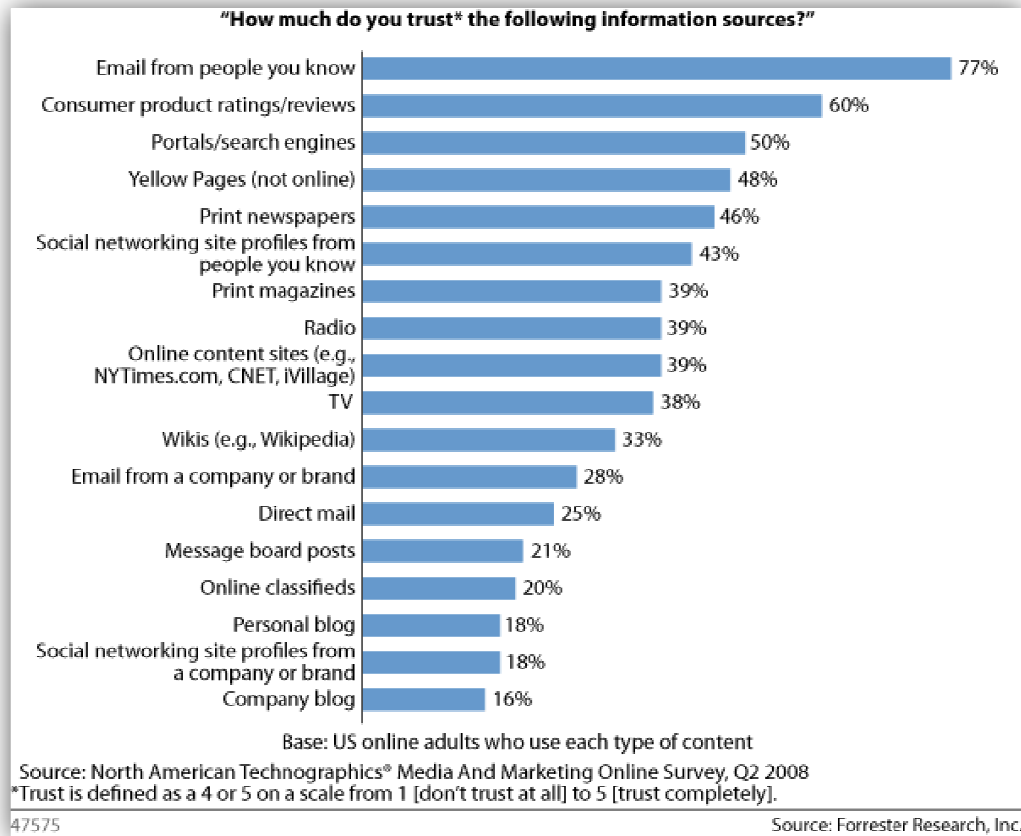
## What kinds of activities are people engaging in online?

The following chart, based on a research report entitled [Power to the People](#) by Universal McCann, illustrates that most activities supported by social media tools continue to grow.



Finally, here is one last section about the mindset of people using social media. A very important aspect to social media is the notion of trust. Trust was mentioned previously in this workbook, noting that working with social media appropriately results in a mutual trust between you and your constituents. Building this trust has added benefits beyond just the relationship with that individual constituent, because each constituent has “people” of his or her own. A trusted constituent empowered to be an advocate for your mission has the ability to reach other people and influence them through this trusted relationship with them.

How important is this trust? It’s very important, according to Forrester Research. Research indicates that people will trust other people before they will trust an organization. (See chart below asking “*How much do you trust the following information sources?*”)



In essence, you need to have constituent advocates if you hope to efficiently reach a lot of people, and the best way to develop these advocates is to engage in activities that build trust.

## What are the social media tools I can use?

Normally, organizations shouldn't immediately focus on the tools they plan to use, because strategy is more important to plan first. While this is still true, knowing what tools are available to properly form your strategy is important. This section will provide a short overview of the main tools available today. Later, you will learn how to evaluate these tools for strategic fit and see examples of best practices in using the tools that fit into your strategy.

### **1. Social Networks: Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn**

Social networks are websites that allow for users to set up profiles and facilitate interaction between users. Common elements include user profiles to share personal information, commenting or other types of one-to-one personal interaction with other site users and the ability to create meaningful groups based on common interests

Friends, acquaintances and colleagues alike connect in these spaces to share common interests, socialize and get involved with one another. For nonprofit organizations, this means social networks provide the opportunity to:

- Find new and current loyal supporters
  - Example: Reaching out to constituents either via an organization page or virally through constituent friends to find new people to support an organization or cause.
- Raise Funds
  - Example: Raising funds through applications such as Causes on Facebook and embeddable widgets.
- Mobilize constituents to take action on behalf of a cause
  - Examples: Signing a petition posted on a fan or group page, driving users to visit a website and asking people to post status updates on their respective pages to ensure their network of "friends" is exposed to a message.
- Inform supporters of news, updates and special information
  - Example: including an RSS feed of news and updates on a social networking page and posting relevant stories and multimedia clips to share publically with users.

*Examples of nonprofit social network engagement:* [Mobile Loaves & Fishes Facebook Page](#), [Humane Society of the United States Cause](#)

### **2. Blogs: Wordpress, Typepad, Blogger, Content Management Systems**

Blogs are a form of online journal or news sources that are usually written in a human voice. Blogs (Web logs) can be used to share factual news, advice, best practices around a particular topic, personal opinions, personal interests— or a mixture of some or all of these areas. One of the popular qualities

about blogs is that they tend to share real experiences or insight and engage people in issues in which they are interested.

Like other social media tools, blogs usually, though not always, provide a forum for feedback which empowers your viewers to share information and engage with the site beyond simply reading content.

*Examples of nonprofit focused blogs:* [The Epic Change blog](#), [Capital Area Foodbank of Texas blog](#)

### **3. Microblogs: Twitter, Plurk**

Microblogs are a shorter form of a blog and typically allow for the posting of short messages (140 characters or less). Any user can create an account on a microblog site, “follow” people and build a network of people who follow them. These sites are primarily used to share news, articles and links to web pages that may be of interest to a user’s network. Microblogs are also popular for having interest-driven, collaborative conversations in real time.

Because most users create public accounts, these conversations can be seen by anyone, especially the network of followers of the people holding the conversations. Most microblog tools also allow for keyword search, allowing many disparate conversations and thoughts on a specific topic to be found. Combined, this means microblogs are also excellent listening tools, allowing organizations to listen in on conversations about their mission and participate when appropriate.

*Examples of nonprofit-focused microblog accounts:* [Red Cross on Twitter](#), [Humane Society of the United States on Twitter](#), [Mobile Loaves and Fishes on Twitter](#)

### **4. Video Sharing Sites: YouTube, Vimeo, Blip.tv**

Video sharing sites allow online users to post video multimedia content to share with other online users. These videos can be easily shared and embedded on other sites and blogs and can also be shared with friends and colleagues via passing along the specific URL for a video’s web page.

Video sharing sites permit users to create a “channel” or main web page where all of one user’s videos are posted. Here, viewers can typically interact beyond simply viewing the video by commenting, friending, subscribing to the channel or “favoriting” content. Sites such as YouTube offer special, free features to nonprofit organizations.

*Example of nonprofit-focused video channel:* [Birthright Israel YouTube Channel](#), [Rock The Vote YouTube Channel](#), [Operation Smile YouTube Channel](#)

### **5. Photosharing: Flickr, PhotoBucket**

Photosharing sites create a location where a person or organization can share pictures with the public. Both organizations and constituents can create an account and post different sets (albums) of pictures that others can be directed towards or found through the site’s online search. Tagging of keywords in each picture helps to ensure searchers can find relevant content.



Photosharing helps organizations create a visual connection with their mission, highlight events or special people, engage supporters and volunteers in contests or events, and tell stories.

*Examples of nonprofit-focused photosharing:* [Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure](#)

## **6. Communities: ThePort, Ning, BuddyPress**

Online communities are social networks focused on a specific audience or topic. These sites bring supporters and interested people together in a more focused environment. Like social networks, members can create groups, start discussions, upload media and include feeds of relevant information. Information in online communities usually focuses on specific topics, interests or segments of people.

Communities help organizations provide a “safe place” for members to collaborate and share on specific interests.

*Examples of nonprofit-focused communities:* [Sierra Club Trails Community](http://trails.sierraclub.org) (<http://trails.sierraclub.org>)

## **7. Social Bookmarking: Digg, Delicious, StumbleUpon**

Social bookmarking sites make it easy for organizations and supporters to collect web pages that contain great information and share it with their network of friends. People can become friends with other people who care about specific topics, making it easier to keep up to date with the latest information by “crowdsourcing” the search for new content. Also, because the bookmarks are persistent, finding content from last year is as easy as finding content for yesterday.

Social bookmarking sites help nonprofits create an easily discovered and easily shared repository of content, and the organization has a chance to meet new people interested in the mission of their organization, perhaps to develop a deeper supporter relationship.

*Examples of a nonprofit-focused social bookmark collection:* [Greenpeace USA Digg stories](#)

## **8. Mobile: SMS, Smart Phone Applications**

The opportunity that mobile phone related engagement presents is massive. Over 80 percent of the US has a mobile phone, and the percentage of time in each day that people have a phone on their person is very high.

Text messaging and text to give opportunities provide a convenient and quick way for a person to engage with you. Especially at events, providing a simple “text XXXX to #####” opportunity can result in new constituents and donations. The growth of smart phones, like the BlackBerry and iPhone, also provide great opportunities to engage with existing and potential constituents via applications.

*Examples of a nonprofit-focused mobile engagement opportunity:* [Human Rights Campaign Mobile Action Network](#), [The Extraordinaries iPhone Application](#)

## Social Media Strategy: I'm In! Now, where do I start?

Now that you know the answer to “why social media” and the toolset readily available online to get started, you need to learn the “how” part. As always, the best place to start in planning a new journey is at the end, meaning you need to know where you want to go. In this case, that refers to the social media strategy for your organization.

Under the umbrella of strategy there is **strategy formation**, **measuring success**, and **selling strategy to management**.

### Strategy Formation

Defining your social media strategy is not much different than planning any other strategy. You need to make some important decisions up front that will guide your actions down the correct path. Below are the major categories with a description and some intricacies to consider, as well as a list of questions you'll need to answer.

#### 1. Identify Your Objectives

Essentially, you need to know what you want to accomplish using social media. This target will help you focus your efforts. However, keep in mind that social media lends itself better to some objectives than others due to its conversational nature. “Social Media friendly” objectives include:

- Gain a better understanding of what the perception of our organization and mission is among our supporters.
- Build awareness of our organization through our most passionate supporters.
- Be more responsive to our supporters, on a local, regional or individual level.
- Generate a collection of reusable content by empowering supporters to create content on for our organization.
- Be more effective at driving current, event-driven response amongst our followers.
- Establish our organization as a thought leader and primary source of information on a given topic.
- Drive more traffic to our organization’s website.
- Raise funds on behalf of our organization through leveraging the viral nature of social media.

**Ask and answer the following question:**

*What do we hope to accomplish through the social media channel?*



V. *Is my social media objective measurable?*

VI. *What is a clear statement of success?*

### **3. Evaluate Your Organization**

Assume for now that you have defined the best objectives possible. It won't matter if your organization isn't ready or willing to make the effort to accomplish the objectives. You need to make certain that your organization is ready and willing to make social media a success by evaluating its culture and capacity.

#### **I. Culture:**

Many organizations have a fear of social media because of the very nature of social media. There is a fear of losing control of the message, of negative feedback from supporters, of being overwhelmed by feedback, of being too personal or making mistakes in a public forum and of failure in a new channel.

To be successful in social media, your entire organization has to acknowledge these fears and risks, and do two things:

- Accept that the things they fear will happen.
- Have a plan for how the organization will react.

Have an open dialogue with your organization before embarking on any social media effort. Get all the fears out on the table and be honest with yourselves about how they could impact the organization. Then, put together a plan for each scenario. In many cases, this plan will result in a set of policies guiding organization staff— first, on how to interact in the social media channel in the first place so that problems can be avoided, and second on how to react when specific problems arise.

## **II. Capacity:**

Next, take a good look at the actual resources and constraints you have within your organization. While many of the social media tools are free to use, the time your staff spends in those tools is not. You need to be able to allocate appropriate time to managing your social media efforts, depending on your objectives. While there are no hard and fast rules on resource allocation, you can expect a few things:

- You won't get it right the first time. Plan on spending some time experimenting with the tools, the tone of voice you use in social media and the frequency of your communication. The hours you spend up front getting a feel for what works will translate into more efficient social media usage later.
- You may not have a lot of support at first. Plan on a small circle of people doing most of the work in the beginning until you refine your policies and procedures, and make it easy for others from your organization to join in the fun.

To get an idea of the amount of time you should budget, look at other organizations using social media who seem to have similar social media objectives as you do, and ask them how much time and resources they allot for social media.

### **Ask and answer the following questions:**

*I. What is the attitude towards social media throughout the organization?*

*II. What fears does your organization have concerning social media?*

*III. What is the worst that can happen?*

*IV. What can you do to mitigate these risks?*

V. *What is the number of full time employees you need to devote to social media? (hint: it could be less than 1 depending on your objectives)*

VI. *Do you have anybody on staff already that is comfortable with social media tools?*

VII. *Do you have anybody on staff that is naturally very good at connecting with people about your mission?*

VIII. *Does your social media effort depend on any other departments? If so, are they ready?*

#### **4. Evaluate Your Audience**

This section is Marketing 101 with a twist. Even with social media, to reach an audience effectively, you have to know who they are. The right audience will, in part, be determined by your objectives and the investment your organization is willing to make to achieve the objectives.

First, you need to understand what state of engagement with your organization the right audience is. Borrowing from Jason Baer of Convince and Convert, ask if the right audience is:

- In a state of high, medium or low Awareness of your organization and mission?

- In a state of high, medium or low Interest in your organization and mission?
- In a state of high, medium or low Activity with your organization and mission?
- In a state of high, medium, or low Advocacy for your organization and mission?

Knowing the state of your audience will help you determine which tactics and tools to use.

Second, you need to understand what kind of activities the right audience is doing in social media. You want to tailor the engagement you have with these people towards the kinds of activities they already like to do, or you'll fail. For example, if your objectives are to collect a large amount of user generated content, but the target audience tends to want to consume content, you've have a mismatch.

Third, you need to understand which social media tools the right audience is already using. You can't rely on getting people to use the tools that work for you — you must use the tools that work for them, or they'll move on. For example, if your target audience loves Twitter, don't base your campaigns in Facebook.

To get the kind of information you need to determine what kinds of activities and tools you should use, you'll need to do some research. While there are many tools online for this, the best place to start is with your own constituents. Ask them, listen to them online and watch them. If that doesn't help you enough, the resources section includes some tools you can leverage.

**Ask and answer the following questions:**

- I. Who are the people who can help you reach your objectives?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- II. What level of Awareness, Interest, Activity and Advocacy are needed from this group to reach your objectives and are they there yet?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- III. What are the activities your target audience likes to do online? Do these mesh with your objectives?*

IV. *What are the social media tools your target audience likes to use? Do these mesh with your objectives?*

V. *Do you need to do any research to discover or confirm your answers above?*

## **5. Identify Your Timeline**

Next, you want to define how long you are going to give yourself to reach your objectives. Keep in mind that you will probably have to go through a period of experimentation, where you get accustomed to the tools and the etiquette of the social spaces you are going to be a part of. You will also need time to build up the trusted network to effectively reach your objectives. As with any relationship, building trust takes time and effort. Don't expect to see results immediately with social media.

**Ask and answer the following questions:**

I. *How long are we going to give ourselves to get up to full speed?*

II. *How long do we expect to take to begin seeing results?*

III. *How long do we expect to take to reach our objectives?*



IV. *Are these timeframes acceptable to the organization?*

## **Measuring Success**

Once you know:

- What you want to do, and
- You are sure that is the right thing to do, and
- You know you are ready to do it, and
- You know who you are going to communicate with, and
- How you are going to communicate with them, then

You need to define how you will know you achieved your objectives. This involves measurement, which is defined as comparing an unknown with a known.

### **1. Define Your Metrics**

The first place to start with measuring your social media success is to determine which metrics will indicate you have reached your objectives. These could be anything, depending on your objectives: page visits, email subscriptions, dollars raised, actions taken, churn numbers, number of comments or posts or replies or retweets, number of social network fans/followers, etc. The list is long and it depends on what you want to achieve.

Rachel Happe, a social media blogger, has compiled a [nice list of metrics](#) you could use.

Here is another view from Social Agency:

	Activity measures the amount of content you are distributing through your social media channels	Engagement measures how appropriate your content was to its intended audience	Reach measures the direct and indirect number of users your campaign is effecting	Content Freshness measures the timing of your content distribution
Twitter	# of tweets	# of replies # of re-tweets # of bit.ly clicks # of mentions	# of followers	Time elapsed from last post
Facebook	# of posts	# of comments # of likes	# of friends / fans	Time elapsed from last post
YouTube	# of videos # of responses	# of views # of user ratings # of user comments	# of subscribers	Time elapsed from last post
Flickr	# of photos # of responses	# of views # of user comments	# of favorites	Time elapsed from last post
Blogs	# of posts	# of page views # of user comments	# of unique visitors	Time elapsed from last post
Widgets	# of installs	# of invites	# of active users	Time elapsed from last iteration / longevity
Social Applications	# of installs	# of invites	# of active users	Time elapsed from last iteration / longevity

## 2. Establish Your Baseline

Next, you need to determine the “known” part of the equation. For whichever metrics you choose, determine what your baseline is before you start using social media. By doing so, you will be able to measure movement from this point.

## 3. Set Your Schedule

Establishing a schedule for when you take measurements and identify milestones at which you want to measure interim progress is key in properly measuring results. This will tie closely to the timeline you’ve established. For example, you wouldn’t expect a large spike of growth during your allotted experimentation phase, but you might expect to show a specific amount of progress say, six months out from the end of the experimentation phase. Define this schedule, make it known within the organization, and follow up on it by reporting where you stand at the designated moments.

## 4. Don’t Forget Feedback

Not all success metrics will be quantifiable. You also want to have qualitative feedback loops in place before you start really communicating via social media. Establish and promote these feedback mechanisms both internally and externally early on so that you can get another

perspective on your social media efforts along the way. Also, don't simply rely on people to give you direct feedback. You want to listen to what people may be saying about your organization.

## 5. Grab Your Toolbox

You might be asking yourself at this point, "How do I measure all this stuff?" There are numerous (free) tools available to you. This is just a starter list:

- Website Analytics – Google Analytics ([www.google.com/analytics](http://www.google.com/analytics))
- Blog Content – Post Rank ([www.postrank.com](http://www.postrank.com))
- Blog Authority – Technorati ([www.technorati.com](http://www.technorati.com))
- Facebook Fan Page Activity – Facebook Analytics
- Twitter – Twitter Analyzer ([www.twitteranalyzer.com](http://www.twitteranalyzer.com))
- Bookmarks – Social Blade (<http://SocialBlade.com>)
- Listening – Google Alerts ([www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts))
- YouTube – YouTube Statistics and Data
- Flickr – Flickr Statistics

**Ask and answer the following questions:**

- I. *What are the right metrics to show you are reaching your objective?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- II. *What tools will you use to collect these data points?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- III. *Where is your starting point for each metric?*

IV. *How often will you take measurements?*

V. *What are your milestones?*

VI. *What can you do to collect qualitative data?*

VII. *How will you use the qualitative data?*

## Selling the Strategy to Management

You've come a long way by now. You've got your strategy defined and you know how you'll measure success. Now you have to get approval to do anything. How do you go about that?

1. Focus on the alignment between the organization objectives and the social media objectives. By showing that social media can be a tool to get the organization where management wants to be, you are demonstrating real business value.
2. Show the level of strategic thought and planning that went into the proposal, highlighting how it goes well beyond just using new and shiny tools.
3. Highlight the measurable objectives, and the metrics you plan to use. If possible, juxtapose these measurements and the costs associated with achieving them with comparable cost/benefit of traditional marketing efforts.
4. Show examples of similar organizations having success with social media.
5. Show examples of how the message is already out of your control.
6. Highlight the benefits of having a deeper relationship with supporters.

## **Social Media Activities: I've got a green light from the boss! Now what?**

Now that you have a solid strategy in place, it is time to get down to the fun stuff. This next part is all about the activities you will undertake in being a member of the social media community. Believe it or not, there is a somewhat of a science to conducting social media engagement well.

Three subjects will be covered in this section: Voice, Tactics & Tools, and Integration.

### **Voice**

Nothing will be as important to your social media success as your ability to participate in conversations with an authentic, personal and human voice. Nothing. The power of social media is rooted in the fact that people converse with and relay information from people whom they trust. If you are not able to humanize your voice, you won't be able to generate trust, and your messages will fall on deaf ears.

Corporations as large as Dell and Best Buy have been able to build successful social media presences because they started with one person as their voice, and focused on being authentic and personal. As that success was recognized, more people were added to the voices, but each with the ability to be themselves first and representatives of the corporation second.

There is no secret to achieving the right voice. You simply have to act like the human being that you are.

Ask and answer the following questions:

*I. Do you have the leeway to be yourself?*

*II. What does that voice sound like?*

## Tactics & Tools

Each tool covered earlier has strengths and weaknesses, depending on the type of communication you are after and your objectives. The best place to start is to think about the tactics and then decide which tool best fits the tactic. The major tactical areas include:

- Listening
- Sharing Content
- Participating in Conversation
- Curate Content
- Generating Buzz
- Creating Community

### 1. Listening

Even if you never do anything else with social media in terms of outbound communication, you should be listening. Count on the fact that there is conversation going on right now about your organization. You can choose to participate in it or not, but it is in your best interest to know what is being said. You will learn a great deal about the people interested in your mission, your constituents, and your organization, and by simply knowing you'll be in a better position to react accordingly, provide better services and information and plan for the future.

Listening can be done remarkably well for free or cheap.

- Set up Google Alerts for every term that you can associate with your mission and organization. You'll receive periodic links to internet content that mentions these terms.
- Be on Twitter and search for the same keywords there, including your organization's name and any public figures associated with your brand.
- Join the major social networks as an individual and join all of the Groups associated with your mission or organization.
- Set up an RSS feed to pull in content on your organization and mission.
- Use Technorati to find blog posts mentioning your organization, mission and keywords.
- Join Social Bookmarking sites and look for your keywords.





## 2. Sharing Content

Many organizations serve as the authoritative source of information on a specific topic. When this is the case, sharing that content via social media channels is an effective way to reach more people. Not only does it help to attract new constituents, but it deepens the relationship between the organization and existing constituents.

There are many ways to share your content:

- Blogging is a great way to share information with personality. Maintaining a blog takes work, so be sure to read up on blog management tips. Check out popular blogs in your space and emulate some of the practices they use.
- Photo sharing is relatively easy to do with tools like Flickr and Facebook. The key is to make your photos easy to find by tagging them well, and making sure you tell people where to find your photos.
- Video is such an inspirational medium that you can't ignore it even though it can require a deeper investment. Remember that your videos don't have to be perfect, or highly produced, they just need to tell a good story. With new technology like overlays on YouTube, you can even make your videos directly tied to your engagement opportunities. Be sure to respect copyright with your videos.
- Podcasts provide another great way to show personality along with content. Be sure you have an engaging voice and that you promote your podcast appropriately.
- Articles are more than likely already a mainstay of your organization, but you may not be using tools like Digg and StumbleUpon to help spread your articles faster. Spend some time building a network on these sites, and post your articles there so that others can easily find them.
- General promotion channels like Facebook and Twitter work well as ways to promote content you store elsewhere. Simply post a link to your content in Facebook or in a tweet.

Sharing your content doesn't have to be your job alone. Leveraging your passionate supporters to share your content amplifies your reach. You'd be surprised how willing supporters are to promote your content as long as you ask them nicely, make it easy for them to do so, and thank them when they do.

- Provide pre-configured messages for each channel that they can copy and paste.
- Incorporate easy sharing tools like Share This or Social Twist on your website.
- Use your listening skills to discover who is sharing and reach out to them with a thank you.



### 3. Participating in Conversation

Now that you understand some of the one-way communication, it's time to explore the better two-way communication that works well with social media. Engaging with people over social media is perhaps the next most important thing you can do after listening. After all, listening is half of participating in a conversation.

Participation in the conversation is the best way to begin building a network. Being a wallflower is no way to make friends, so you're going to have to start interacting. There are, of course, ways to do this well.

- Obviously, you have to be present to win, so create an account in the communities you want to leverage.
- Take some time to learn the etiquette of the community you want to enter. Nobody likes the person who tries to change to whole vibe of a party to suit his or her whims. Observe for a little while and then begin to interact in a way that fits the "norms" of the community.
- Give a little first before asking for anything. Leave helpful or insightful comments on profiles, blogs, photos and videos. Point to useful resources (many of which might be part of your content).
- Be responsive to people who react to you. If you make a comment and then disappear, people won't take you seriously as a member of the community.
- Forward along content you find interesting, providing ample credit to the creator. Chances are, they are listening and will see that you are helping them spread their content. They may return the favor some day.

The section on Voice covers this more thoroughly, but it is important to know that your interaction in any community has to have a human aspect. You can't expect to succeed with an organizational face, because people trust other people more than they trust organizations. You can be a representative of the organization, but you still have to do it as a person.

#### **Ask and answer the following questions:**

- I. Where are the places your target audience lives?*
- II. What are the norms of those communities? How should I interact with the community?*

III. *Am I comfortable being me in the community? Is my organization comfortable with that?*

IV. *What kind of backup resources do I have to make sure my participation is thoughtful and insightful?*

#### **4. Creating Content**

Most organizations struggle with creating enough content, and social media is an excellent medium for allowing your constituents to create content for you. They are creating and sharing their own content using these tools already, so it is really a matter of incenting people to create content for you.

- Make it easy for people to create content for you. If it is too hard to get their content into your system, most people will drop out of the process.
- Make it easy for the person to receive credit for the content. Everyone wants their 15 minutes of fame, and social media is actually seen as a way for most people to stretch 15 minutes to 20 minutes. Make it easy for everyone to see who created the content you are re-purposing.
- Seed the content repository with the kind of content that you want. A lot of people will be shy and avoid being the first. Have a few comments, photos, etc. in place to give folks an idea of what you want.

#### **Ask and answer the following questions:**

I. *What kind of content do we want?*

II. *Is my organization prepared to moderate the content to weed out inappropriate submissions?*

III. *Do I have a way to make it really easy to submit content?*

IV. *Do I have some content to seed the repository with?*

## **5. Generating Buzz**

Social media tools provide a great way to generate awareness of your organization because they leverage viral methods. To be in a position to really get the viral effect via social media, you need to have the network in place. This doesn't necessarily mean that you have to have a large network, rather you need to have a connected network. If you have built trust with a select group of influential people, then your small network has immediate access to a much larger secondary network.

To leverage your network effectively to generate buzz, keep these things in mind:

- Don't overdo it with the messages. You don't want to burn out your network.
- Make sure your content is the kind of thing other people will want to pass on. Content that leverages current events or current culture work well, as does funny material.
- Be sure to return the favor to your influencers, and pass on their content too.
- Make sure your content is in a format that can easily be passed along and is appropriate to the community for which it is intended.
- Provide guidance to your supporters on how to best help you, covering how they can spread your message, and how frequently to do it.

### **Ask and answer the following questions:**

I. *Who are the highly influential people I want to try and leverage?*

II. *Do I have enough of a trusted relationship with these folks? (If not, how can it be built?)*

III. *Is my content worthy of passing it on? If a friend asked me to forward the material, would I?*

IV. *Is my content in the right format for the community? (If not, what type of format should it be?)*

## **6. Creating Community**

The chances are good that there are already existing pockets of community centered around your organization or mission in the existing social networks. You certainly want to be sure that the right audience discussed earlier is the kind of people who do frequent online social networks if you are going to use this tactic. Assuming you do, here are some ways to build a community for your supporters.

Start by looking at what you can do in the existing social networks like Facebook, MySpace and Twitter. These social networks are populated by millions of people who have probably done a good deal to identify their interests and activities. They are great places to engage with existing constituents and meet new people interested in your organization and mission.

- Of course, you have to start with having a presence yourself in these networks. The vehicle available to you is different for each social network (profile in Twitter and MySpace, Fan Page in Facebook), but they amount to the same thing. Have a presence where people who are interested can find you and become friends.
- Seek out people who, though their activities in the social network, have indicated they are interested in your mission. With a human touch, engage them by participating in conversation. Places to look include:
  - Groups related you your mission of organization
  - Related organization profiles/fan pages

- Applications like Causes, focusing specifically on owners of causes that benefit your organization

For each of these folks, offer up content and support.

- Create opportunities to engage if they don't exist already. Create Causes around all of your campaigns. Create custom Facebook applications if you need specific functionality that does not exist.

Explore the possibility that your audience isn't interested in participating in a big, public community, but would really be excited about their own, topic specific community.

- There are many options for hosting your own community, ranging from free tools like Ning to paid tools like ThePort. Explore the options and choose the one that has the best set of features that will really engage your audience.
- Nurture your community to make it grow. This in itself is a big job. Some key tasks include:
  - Setting clear ground rules for appropriate participation from the beginning
  - Seeding a lot of content up front to get the ball rolling
  - Being very responsive at first while your members get used to interacting with each other
  - Welcome new members and make introductions to vocal members
  - Encourage member leaders to emerge with recognition and incentives
  - Get your staff involved so the members feel like they are really an extension of the organization

**Ask and answer the following questions:**

*I. Does your target audience already live in external social networks?*

*II. Are they so active that you simply need to engage them with support, or do you need to create opportunities for them to engage?*

III. *Do you have the resources to maintain a compelling, personal presence in a social network?  
What are they?*

IV. *Would your target audience prefer a private social network? If so, what are the most  
important aspects important to them?*



## Integration

The last part to the Activities portion focuses on the integration of your social media efforts into your other online and offline activities. Any effort in isolation will be less effective than if you can integrate other activities, simply because you are trying to reach people who have a lot going on in their lives and have a lot of touch points they pay attention to.

Some places where you will want to consider integration include:

- Your website, because that is most likely the place at the center of all your activities. Make sure you save some space on your website to promote the social media efforts you have going, just as you want to promote your website in all of the conversations you have using social media. Also, make sure your website is as socially enabled as you can make it, providing ways to let your supporters leverage their social networks to help you. Examples of this include opportunities to create content on your site, like comments or upload videos, as well as opportunities to push out your content via share tools like Facebook Connect, Twitter or Share This.
- Your outbound communications via email and direct mail. This is pretty simple, actually. Just include the location of your Facebook Fan Page, private social network, or Twitter handle somewhere in these communications, and you'd be surprised how many people will check you out.
- Your real world, physical interactions, like presentations and events. If you promote your social media locations at these physical events, people can take note and find you later. Of more likely these days, they will whip out their smart phone and find you immediately.

You also want to be sure you coordinate your messages across these channels. Following up an email with a tweet can be a great way to increase open rates and follow through.

### **Ask and answer the following questions:**

*I. How can I coordinate my efforts?*

*II. Which channel should be the lead and which should follow?*

III. *Am I doing enough cross promotion?*

IV. *What other properties can I be promoting on?*

### **Reference Library**

[http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/how\\_to\\_build\\_a\\_social\\_media\\_cheat\\_sheet.php](http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/how_to_build_a_social_media_cheat_sheet.php)

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<http://www.interactiveinsightsgroup.com/blog1/how-to-sell-social-media-to-cynics-skeptics-luddites-tips-resources-advice/>

<http://www.wearemedia.org/Module+Outline#tactical>

<http://pollyannaprinciples.org/info/>

## ABOUT CONVIO

Convio is passionate about helping nonprofit organizations use software and services to fulfill their missions. The company is the leading provider of online marketing, fundraising, advocacy and constituent relationship management software and services to nonprofit organizations. The company's online marketing suite offers integrated software for fundraising, advocacy, events, email marketing and web content management, and its database system, Convio Common Ground™ CRM, helps organizations efficiently track and manage all interactions with supporters. All products are delivered through the Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) model and are backed by a portfolio of best-in-class consulting and support services and a network of partners who provide value-added services and applications focused on the unique needs of nonprofit organizations.

Nonprofit organizations used Convio to process \$777 million in online donations during 2008 — a 72 percent increase over 2007. Convio clients sent more than 3.1 billion emails to constituents during that period with an industry leading deliverability rate in excess of 95 percent. Charities of all types used Convio to power more than 3,500 web domains as well as complete 44 million advocacy calls to action.

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