



Social Media—February, 2011

Question

“For a small non-profit organization considering launching into the Social Media arena, what specific media do you recommend as a starting, getting-your-feet-wet first, initiative?”

Johnny Daurio, Executive Director, The Grill Health Information Center

Answer

Johnny, we recommend a Facebook Page, Twitter, and blog. Here's why: The Facebook Page will give you a great way to start practicing messaging to your community. With the advancing changes in Facebook Causes you could set up a Cause too, but we think the FB Page provides more options right now (*except being able to accept donations*). Twitter is a quick and easy way to gain more followers and steward stakeholders wherever they are. Finally, a blog (*we prefer WordPress*) is an important way for your organization to tell your story - about programs, impact in the community, opinions, and organizational news. For your blog to get much traction you really need to promote it across your social media networks (*Facebook and Twitter*) and others' networks. We've attached a Sample Social Media Plan and Sample Social Media Policy for your review in case it is useful. We're guessing you don't have a lot of time to implement social media strategies as the E.D. of a small non-profit. The good news is that you don't have to do it all yourself. In fact, you shouldn't be doing everything. You can create a social media tribe so that there are many voices posting, tweeting, and blogging on behalf of The Grillo Health Information Center.

Question

“What is the best type of content for Twitter?”

Joy Eckstine, Executive Director, The Carriage House Community Table

Answer

Good content (*just kidding!*). For all of your social media we believe you want to think of it as a cultivation and stewardship tool. Here are some of our favorite topics: 1) Organizational successes and program stories; 2) questions to the stakeholders about their opinions; 3) news from others related to your mission; 4) blog postings and website highlights; and 5) funding requests. The key here is to **add value and create conversation**. A common mistake non-profits make is that they just ask for money. Demonstrate value before asking for money. Check out the attached social media plan and policy for more ideas.

Question

“What are the factors that make a texting fundraising campaign effective?”

Anonymous, Executive Director

Answer

Factors that make a mobile giving campaign effective are:

- How much awareness will be created around the campaign? Successful mobile giving campaigns have several things in common:
 - TV advertising or continued media exposure
 - sporting events or concerts... large venues

(Answer continued on Page 2)



Texting Campaign Answer Continued

- well-known spokespeople encouraging donations (President Obama for Haiti and the Red Cross; Alicia Keys on American Idol)
- impulse and emotional calls to action such as Haiti and the 2004 tsunami produced
- A campaign that appeals to a large volume of new donors giving small amounts vs. a campaign to your current, engaged supporters that will more likely net more than a \$10 gift.
- A core group of young supporters. If your target audience is Millennials (1982-2002) you might want to explore this option more so than if your core supporters are Gen Xers and Baby Boomers, though more Gen Xers are getting on board as mobile giving gains more attention.

Question

“I'm wondering if there are any examples of smaller, local organizations successfully using cell phones (text) to increase donations. We've seen it with Red Cross and other large organizations, but I don't know of any small organizations that have used it successfully. If there are any examples, I'd love to know details about how they set it up and got it going.”

Suzanne Crawford, Executive Director, Sister Carmen Community Center

Answer

Unfortunately, there are not a lot of examples of small non-profits successfully using mobile giving yet. There are still many barriers, including

- the use of mandatory foundations and ASPs (application service providers) to interact with carriers and their processing fees (cost prohibitive),
- a rigorous vetting process to become accepted,
- limited short codes that are necessary to make your campaign memorable and easily accessible, and
- slow turn-around times for payment back to your organization.

On top of these concerns, there are the considerations in the previous question around creating enough awareness for the campaign to see a return on your investments. Currently organizations need size and scale to make mobile giving effective.

Our recommendation for smaller, local organizations would be to consider if a social media channel such as Facebook and Facebook Causes is right for your organization. The barriers to entry are small and there are many efficient ways to reach new supporters interested in your mission.

Further resources:

- <http://mashable.com/2010/02/04/non-profit-texting/>, about why mobile giving presents challenges for most nonprofits.
- the LinkedIn group: [Mobile Technology for Nonprofit Organizations](#)—a good place to ask questions.

Mobile Giving Service companies include:

- MGive <http://mgive.com/?gclid=Clz2qZvviKcCFQEGbAodkBtKeA>
- [Mobile Giving Foundation](#)
- [Cause Cast Mobile Fundraising](#)
- Greatest Fan <http://www.greatestfan.com/GF/index.html>
- giveo <http://giveo.com/>
- Text-to-Pledge by Sophist Productions <http://www.texttopledge.com/texttopledge/home/>
- Venmo is considering adding this function. <https://venmo.com/>