

## 8 Ways to Make Social Media Matter

Pressure. You feel it. I feel it. Every nonprofit communicator and fundraiser out there feels it. Social media pressure, that is.

Whether the source of this anxiety (Am I keeping up? Do I have a billion Facebook likes or Twitter followers? Is my Instagram strategy driving action?) is your immediate boss, board chair, or colleague in programs, it's there. The pressure to generate a social media miracle.

### Breathe—There Is a Solution

You can boost marketing and fundraising impact, and you can deflate that pressure. Here's how:

- 1. Get to know your people.** Research, via online survey or calls, where your current supporters are when it comes to social media.
- 2. Use your marketing/fundraising plan** to remind yourself exactly who your prospects are (the people who are most likely to take the actions that will drive your marketing or fundraising goals forward). Then, use your supporter research to project where similar prospect groups are on social media.
- 3. Assess if and where to invest in social media, even if your organization has been there for years.** Probe whether the most-used social media channels are useful in helping you achieve your broader goals. Ask yourself two questions: Does the interaction in that channel mesh with your calls to action and goals? Is your investment in each of the most-used channels likely to be profitable?
- 4. Focus your energy and time on the *single* most-used channel,** but only if the return on investment (ROI) seems to be there. *Note: It's been proven time and time again - it is more effective to use one platform well, rather than use multiple platforms in a half-baked way.*
- 5. Invest the time.** Block out at least 30 minutes, twice daily, for social media if you are using just one platform. I urge you to get that one channel to work—or realize it's the wrong one—before you take on another platform.
- 6. Create some incremental benchmarks** so you get a sense of how your investment is or is not paying off. That might be retweets and followers for Twitter or likes and shares for Facebook. Request that your colleagues ask those who do take action—to give, register, or spread the word—what influences sparked them along the way.
- 7. Like or follow five to 10 colleague or competitive organizations** on that channel, be it Facebook or Instagram. It's important to see what folks who are competing for your supporters' and prospects' attention and dollars are doing. You can also find some relevant models by watching what organizations similar to yours in approach or issue—but not competing with you—are doing.
- 8. Adapt your approach as needed on an ongoing basis.** Build into your work plan an ongoing analysis of what is and isn't working, a review of other organizations' successes and failures, and a revision of your own approach. Social media, including websites and blogs, is a communications channel that requires ongoing evolution. Otherwise, don't use it. Take these steps to make your social media efforts meaningful and measurable for your nonprofit.