CharityComms Guide to Social Media for Charities

2

CharityComms

Inspiring Communications at the Heart of Charities

PART TWO
NEXT STEPS

Welcome to Part Two of the CharityComms Guide to Social Media for Charities.

Many charities have recognised the value of social media in building relationships with their stakeholders and the wider public. In particular, social media channels can be incredibly effective for campaigning – raising awareness of your organisation and its cause, engaging support and lobbying for change. But what does best practice look like for charities using social media, and how can you make sure your communications are integrated throughout your organisation? And can anyone actually raise money using social media?

Part Two of our Guide to Social Media looks at how to get the best out of the different channels, including converting online conversations into offline action and evaluating your activity. We've set out the steps you can take to take your organisation's social media communications to the next level of success.

There's heaps of information on the web covering the best use of social media, so part of this guide's aim is to do the hard work for you of trawling the net and bringing together the articles, tools and sites that contain the most useful information for charities.

Communications – and particularly social media – is a constantly evolving discipline, so if you find other sources of information that would be helpful to charities, or spot great examples – including your own – of charities using social media effectively, do let us know so we can continously update the guide.

We hope you find it useful.

Vicky Browning, Director, CharityComms
@CharityComms
www.charitycomms.org.uk

Matt Collins
@charitychap
www.charitychap.com

CharityComms is the professional membership body for charity communicators. Find out more and access great content, events, best practice and networking opportunities at www.charitycomms.org.uk

PART TWO
NEXT STEPS
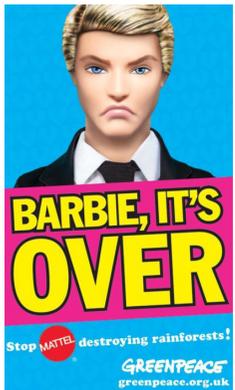
Greenpeace ran a hilarious campaign to stop toy manufacturer Mattel using deforestation to make its toy packaging

Social media campaigns

Creating inspirational campaigns using social media is one of the most modern, groundbreaking ways to galvanize your supporters. Campaigning has become a central activity for charities in the 21st century. Taking campaigns online is a fantastic way to raise awareness about your cause, make the case for change and make it easy for supporters to take action. Social media is integral to online campaigning. **Good ideas like these spread like wildfire online**, as it has never been easier to share interesting content. If your supporters find your campaign interesting on Facebook, Twitter or elsewhere, they can tell the world at the click of a button.

The main types of social media campaigns are fundraising (covered separately), awareness raising, and lobbying. These are all established strands of charity activity, and they take on a unique dimension in the online arena.

Awareness raising

These aim to raise awareness of your cause in general, and tend to have an educational slant.

Examples include:

- **The Citizenship Foundation**, who ran an interesting campaign whereby young people could become Chancellor for a day. They were given control of the budget and had to decide how to allocate it between areas like defence, education and health. This was a great way to put young people in the shoes of the lawmakers via an interactive game.
- **ICAN**, the children's communication charity, ran an initiative that combined fundraising with awareness raising. Anyone could log on to www.adoptaword.com and own a bit of the English language for just £15. All proceeds went to help children who struggle to find the words they need to communicate. This innovative combination of the fun vanity in having things named after you, and promoting the issue of children with difficulties communicating, was extremely effective.
- **Greenpeace** ran a hilarious campaign to stop toy manufacturer Mattel using deforestation to make its toy packaging. The campaign sees Ken breaking up with Barbie because of her involvement in deforestation, with the couple even arguing on Twitter. The promotional video was posted on YouTube, and integrated into the campaign website, covering lots of different mediums at the same time. The entertainment value of the whole campaign really hooked supporters in, and was a very clever way to educate the public.

This excellent presentation from Madeleine Sugden and Damien Clarkson has lots more examples of **small charities** making the most of their resources in their online campaigning work, and how you can utilise the same principles to create your own campaigns.

Lobbying

Political campaigning has hugely grown in importance for charities. As well as encouraging supporters to be local agents for change, more and more charities are also lobbying MPs and ministers to legislate for national change on specific issues.

For large charities, asking supporters to lobby for change is a

PART TWO
NEXT STEPS

The RSPCA's Big Stop campaign encouraged armchair supporters to get involved

regular and focused activity. Oxfam's GROW campaign asks us to demand change for the global food production system. Shelter needs our help to evict rogue landlords. Save the Children has one page listing all its campaigns and showing how supporters can get involved (www.savethechildren.org.uk/get-involved/join-our-campaigns)

These are just three examples of what is fast becoming the main charitable output for charities of a certain size.

What to campaign about
What you choose to campaign about will depend very much on your charity's aims and objectives. Again and again, ask yourself the question - what is the one thing that my charity aims to achieve? This is what all of your campaigns should be directed towards.

You can find more inspiring examples at Third Sector's Digital Campaign of the Week. Each week, they promote a different charity's digital campaign as an example of best practice.

Whatever you decide to campaign about, you'll need a good idea. Social media will not turn a boring idea into an interesting one. The seed of your idea should be interesting, engaging and original.

People expect to be able to do things very easily and quickly online, so you should also make it easy for your supporters to get involved. This trend of armchair campaigning has been called slacktivism, and while this may be a harsh term, it does underline how today's online audience expects to be able to get involved in

your campaign without much difficulty. Allowing entry points of different levels of involvement (eg from sending an email to your MP, to signing a petition, moving up to changing your Facebook status, blogging or getting actively involved) will enable a much wider range of your supporters to engage with your cause. The RSPCA did just this when it used its Big Stop campaign against the use of wild animals in circuses to bring activism into the mainstream using "cyberpressure".

Can you raise money with social media?
Despite its all pervading nature, the naysayers of social media would still have us believe that social media is still distracting fun. Hours spent on social networking sites can't produce real benefits for our causes, only suck up our time in a blur of idle chit chat.

However, did you know that one "like" on Facebook can be worth £5? This stat from Justgiving works on the assumption that a certain proportion of our supporters on Facebook are likely to donate, and spreads the amount of an average donation across all of them. Therefore building communities on these platforms can produce financial returns - often the best kind for charities.

If your website, Facebook page, Twitter feed and YouTube channel are all linked up well, then you will be regularly directing your supporters to pages where they can easily and effectively donate to your charity online. And if you interact well with your online supporters, they should want to donate.

Useful applications
Useful applications that can aid your online fundraising begin with Justgiving, the industry standard in raising money online.

PART TWO
NEXT STEPS

You can register on Justgiving as a charity, and easily collect money raised by your supporters through their dedicated Justgiving fundraising pages (Virgin Money Giving also provides a similar service).

Justgiving also has an all-singing, all-dancing Facebook App. This integrates your supporters' Justgiving pages with their Facebook profiles, and allows people donating to their friend's fundraising page to "like" the page with a single click of the mouse. This makes the page appear as a link in their Facebook stream, instantly promoting it to hundreds of people.

Other useful applications include JustTextGiving from Vodafone. This allows anyone with a mobile phone to instantly donate sums up to £10 to the charity of their choice, simply by texting a special number. The money comes off their phone bill and into your account, with no commission to pay. This allows your charity to contain an entire fundraising appeal within a short sentence, and spread it online.
"Floods have devastated parts of Somalia. You can help by texting DONATE to 45532".
It could hardly be easier to spread and donate.

Twibbon is one of the more established ways of fundraising via social media, while showing your support for a particular charity at the same time. A Twibbon is a small graphic that is put on top of your avatar on Facebook or Twitter, and shows your support for a particular charity or a campaign in a visual, impactful online statement. The user's Twitter account automatically tweets to let everyone know about their affiliation, and gives them the chance to donate.

The Dogs Trust raised £1,000 in just 48 hours with their Valentine appeal Twibbon

The Dogs Trust raised £1,000 in just 48 hours with their Valentine appeal Twibbon, which promoted the 1,600 dogs in their care looking for that special someone to give their affection to on Valentine's Day. One in 10 people who added the Twibbon made a donation to the Dogs Trust, making each Twibbon added worth about 60p.

How to raise money online

Remember, social networking sites don't raise money - **people do**. And people will only become your fundraisers if they are emotionally committed to your cause, and have a choice of fun activities to raise money with. So social media gives you the chance to communicate with your supporters to build up that emotional attachment.

So don't use social media to advertise - use it tell your

PART TWO
NEXT STEPS

Establishing new connections with the most influential online personalities can build your work, extend its reach and help get your message out

organisation's **story**. Hone in on very particular examples of your service users, and tell everyone about their journey. Tell the story of those who are in need of your service, that you need their money or time to provide it to them. Do it all in a creative, inspiring and heartstring-tugging way.

Relationships are key once again. If you have built up a good relationship online with supporters who are interested in your cause, you will find them much more open to supporting you financially.

Scott Stratten, author of Unmarketing, joined Twitter and spent a long time talking to his followers, being helpful, rarely asking for anything and building up good relationships with them. When he requested $12 donations towards his 12for12k campaign, the response was overwhelming. He had given them so many resources and provided so much assistance online that they were only too happy to help. Herein lies the key.

Finding your influencers

Every charity has limited resources. Yours is likely to be no different. So you have to focus what resources you do have into the areas where they'll make most difference.

So it makes sense that when using social media, you should prioritise outreach to the individuals who will be the best advocates for your cause.

Social media is all about reaching out to people and organisations who can make a difference to yours. Establishing new connections with the most influential online personalities can

build your work, extend its reach and help get your message out.

But where are these people? Here are some tools that will help you root them out.

Followerwonk

Allows you to search Twitter bios (the short description of the person or organisation) for specific terms. So if you're an educational charity, you might search for people who have the words "teacher" in their bio, and live in the UK. You can then follow and build a relationship with them.

Tweepz

This tool allows you to search for any term that your organisation might talk about. You can then choose the people or organisation with the most followers after that.

LinkedIn groups

These are a great way to enter broader discussions with experts in your area. Simply search for the terms you're most interested in, join the relevant groups, and start or participate in discussions with other professionals. See LinkedIn's groups help pages for more information.

If you've set up your searches on Twitter to monitor the search terms that your charity will be most interested in, you'll find out who your influencers are through the conversations you monitor and join. Who do those people retweet? Which Facebook pages are they sending you to? Make sure you connect with those people as well, and start conversations with them.

PART TWO
NEXT STEPS

Converting online conversations into offline action

Online action is important, but it is far from the be all and end all of any charity's engagement strategy. Like all relationships, interaction with your supporters takes on an extra dimension when they can see your face and develop a stronger attachment to your cause. So how do you take these online relationships into the real world, and why would you want to? This comes back to the actions you want them to take. Again, these are broadly asking for supporters' **time or money** - campaigning / volunteering, or fundraising.

Human beings have an **inbuilt need to be social.** It's how we survived as cavemen, and how we built the world around us. There is no substitute for spending actual time with other people to create the highs and lows of sadness, joy and camaraderie. This principle should be harnessed by taking online relationships offline wherever possible.

Your organisation will no doubt have **offline events** and campaigns in the diary. Fundraising events, protest marches or letter writing campaigns to local MPs may be scheduled. Use social media to promote them, and do it subtly. Build up to the event by talking about that topic more broadly through your social media channels. Get people involved in the discussions, stoke the emotive side of the topic and be engaging. Then when the event comes, you'll have a readymade audience of activists queuing up to get involved.

If you already have this committed group of activists online, meet them offline and make them part of your charity's family. Invite them to your office for a tour, to meet the rest of your team and

start to harness their commitment.

Give them a specific challenge to take on. They already have a desire to make a huge difference, or they wouldn't be there. What specific challenge have you got coming up that they could be a part of? Make a cup of tea and talk to them about what they would like to do.

If you have developed a positive relationship with an organisation online, ask for an email address or a phone number. Meet up with them, look them in the eye, and tell them more about your project. Find out how you can work together in partnership.

If you already have this committed group of activists online, meet them offline

Get activists involved: Whizzkidz ambassador Jamie quizzes David Miliband on Audioboo at the Labour Party conference

PART TWO
NEXT STEPS

Consultant Steve Bridger, who specialises in building online communities, once said we are no longer connecting to organisations, but to people within those organisations. The people behind social media feeds in other organisations are reachable individuals. So reach out to them, and build partnerships with them.

Integrating social media with your other communications
Remember, social media is not your message. Social media is not your cause, or a call to arms. It is simply the medium through which these things are delivered.

By now, you will have already established what your charity's aims and objectives are. In so doing, you will have seen where social media fits in with the rest of your communications. Integration with your other communications is as easy as planning and ensuring social media activity and communications are carefully timed to happen together. Your campaign activity will be planned so that you launch your press releases, online video, twitter hashtag and Facebook campaign all at the same time. This will maximise your campaign's impact across all the various channels, and create an integrated "through the line" approach.

There will of course be overlap. In fact, you should ensure there is. When your press release goes to media, publish it on your website, and link to it from your Facebook and Twitter accounts. You may be interviewed on the radio - create a link to the Listen Again feature on the BBC website, and push that out to your social media networks.

Remember, social media is not your message. Social media is not your cause, or a call to arms. It is simply the medium through which these things are delivered

At every stage, your social media feeds should be promoting what is happening elsewhere online and offline. There should be constant communication between your PR teams and your social media staff. Make sure everything overlaps.

Becoming an expert in your area and how it achieves your mission
Becoming an expert in your area is what will set you apart from other organisations operating in the same field. Being seen as an active expert in your charitable cause who is fully engaged with digital outlets can only add to your reputation.

But what is the point in being seen as an expert?

The answer lies in the difference between **push and pull** marketing. Push is what we're all used to. This is communications that we push out, hoping that they will be seen and read. Emails sent out to our email list, adverts placed in newspapers and the pushiest of all, street fundraisers asking passers by to donate regularly to your cause.

Pull marketing aims to bring supporters to you. It creates content that is funny, engaging and useful to people. This usefulness brings supporters to look at your website, read your blog and come to your events of their own accord.

There is a lot to be learned in producing expert content so strong that people cannot help but be drawn to it, and act upon it. So what is your area? Conservation for birds? Giving people in developing countries access to clean water? Raising local children's self esteem? Whatever it is, **create something**

PART TWO
NEXT STEPS

Just because social media is online communication, doesn't mean that you can't tell people about it offline. Take advantage of every opportunity you get to promote your feeds

so useful that people interested in that cause will find it irresistible. Give it away in exchange for an email address, and you'll have a database of people who are ready to do more for you, because they feel the gratitude of having got something from you already.

If your charity is one of many working in particular area, this is even more important. Your very survival could depend on how you stand out, and you have to make it easier and more desirable for your supporters to find you, not for you to find them.

So, create a **top ten tips list** on your blog. Provide comprehensive information for a variety of audiences on how to protect those birds, on the most innovative projects that are giving children worldwide access to clean water. Whatever they will be interested in is what you should be producing and promoting via your social media channels.

Should I have multiple accounts?
Should you have multiple accounts for different departments? Some organisations intentionally focus all of their social media activity towards some central feeds. Others are happy for fundraising, volunteering and specific projects within their organisations to have their own dedicated feeds.

What you decide will again be very much up to your organisation. Before deciding to create separate feeds however, you should make sure there is good reason for this. There will be a reasonable amount of training and monitoring of the different feeds involved, and you should be sure that the time and effort is worth it.

If your projects do entirely different things for entirely different audiences, there will certainly be a business case for giving them their own digital identities. This will allow them to build their own partnerships, establish their own tone of voice and flourish independently, within your mother brand.

Promoting your social media feeds
You've got your social media feeds all set up, you're using them regularly to reach out to new supporters and you're engaging with the ones you've already got. So new followers and fans will start flocking to you in their droves? Well, not exactly.
Just because social media is online communication, doesn't mean that you can't tell people about it offline. Take advantage of every opportunity you get to promote your feeds by:

- printing your social media URLs on your business cards
- placing links to your feeds on every page of your website (ideally the small versions of each logo)
- placing the URLs on presentation slides for any talks you give
- adding the URLs on your staff team's email signatures

Creating a significant following on any of your social media feeds will take time. Assuming you're creating fun, social content, they'll increase one at a time. So go through the above cycle again and again. In time, you'll have an interested, engaged audience of online supporters.

Crisis planning: what to do if it goes a bit pear-shaped
Like most communication, there are times when the coverage is less than positive. Negative stories about your charity's actions may break or people may have less than complimentary things to

PART TWO
NEXT STEPS

say about you. Time for some crisis management.

Crisis management via social media is no different to via any other medium. You will have to have clear messages you want to get across to the public about the crisis, the clear reasons for any actions your charity has taken, expressions of empathy for their effects and any actions you are taking to mitigate them. Social media is simply a channel you communicate these through.

But what if your crisis has started on social media? Perhaps an individual has started a rumour about your charity on Twitter, or misbehaviour by a member of staff is being talked about on LinkedIn Groups, spreading the news throughout the sector. What should you do to prevent the crisis escalating?

First of all, you need to be aware the crisis is happening. This is a test of your monitoring skills. Have you got searches for your organisation's name (and variations thereof) set up on Twitter and Google Alerts? Do you regularly check who's commenting on your Facebook posts and read your Twitter mentions? This is how you'll know if your organisation is being talked about negatively, and allows you to plan accordingly.

Things you must do if you spot a social media crisis threatening your reputation:

1. Act immediately - news travels fast online, so you'll need to establish your communications plan and implement it straight away.

2. Don't ignore it - if you don't respond, facts may quickly snowball into rumours. Ensure you respond with your version of events.

3. Monitor regularly - chances are that people will talk about this issue regularly online during the crisis. If you have the resources, allocate responsibility for checking mentions to one member of staff, or their team. Respond as often as practicable.

Measuring success
Like all projects, you have to be able to measure the success of your forays online. Otherwise, how can you convince the boss to let you do it?

This comes back to your organisational goals. What is the one thing you want to achieve? How can you break this down into specific measurable outcomes? Only you can set your social media metrics.

It is certainly not enough to say you have 1,000 Likes on Facebook or 2,000 Twitter followers, or 500 YouTube subscribers. Half of these could be spam accounts, the other half may rarely look at your updates, while the other half may never act on them.

PART TWO
NEXT STEPS

The secret is **conversion**. Who is making that leap from just being someone who chats to you online to taking real action for your charity? And how to do you want them to take action - fundraising, volunteering their time, taking part in your biggest campaign?

The first measurement is **how many people are clicking on the links you share**. You can track this using tools like bit.ly and goo.gl. The latter even shows the countries that people are clicking from, and the browsers they used. This is one of the main measurement tools - who is actually so interested in the content you produce that they click the link?

It may be that **awareness raising** is your only aim, for more people to mention your organisation and talk about your cause online. If this is the case, relatively cheap or free tools like Trendistic and Twittercounter will give you simple stats on how many mentions your organisation or topic is getting over time.

Other excellent tools include:

- **MentionMap** - a fantastic visualisation tool that tracks who you speak to most on Twitter, who their closest contacts are, and what they're also talking about.
- **Facebook Insights** - great analytics for who has liked your Facebook page, including trends over time, and demographics.
- **The Archivist** - find out who mentions you most on Twitter, and other great visual insights.
- **Klout** - a tool that analyses your style and influence across social networking sights.
- **Twittercounter** - analyse your Twitter accounts growth of followers, following and tweets, and compare it to that of others.

Who is making that leap from just being someone who chats to you online to taking real action for your charity?

PART TWO
NEXT STEPS

This second part of our guide is about how you can take your social media engagement to the next level. Once you have established your presence across the social networks and integrated your communications to support that presence, you are in a solid position to come up with creative fundraising ideas, campaigns and crisis management strategies. All of these will show your charity to be digital trailblazers taking full advantage of the incredible opportunities that the internet opens up to expand your fundraising and promote your vital message to a whole new audience.

TO DOWNLOAD PART ONE OF THIS GUIDE CLICK HERE

Here is a summary of top tips from this chapter:

Create interesting campaigns
Get inspiration from others, and get creative in coming up with your own awareness raising or lobbying campaigns. Push them out there using social media and make it easy for your supporters to join them.

Raise money
Join Justgiving and register for JustTextGiving so your supporters can raise money for you online. Share your service users' stories and build positive relationships to convert the casual follower to the committed fundraiser.

Take it offline
To convert your online supporters into offline activists, meet them face to face. Take your relationship to the next level and strengthen their commitment.

Integrate social media with your other communications
Plan your external communications so that social media is planned in to support and underpin your offline activity. Cross link your press releases from your website via your social media feeds, and promote offline coverage online as much as possible.

Become an expert
Create useful resources that underline your reputation as an expert in your area and a leader in your field. Make top tip lists and articles that are useful to your supporters, and give them away for free.

Measure your success
Decide what you want to achieve and which metrics will demonstrate success – or otherwise. Use tools like MentionMap, Facebook Insights and The Archivist to measure how successful your social media activity is in meeting your goals. Interpret the data to make it useful to you and amend your activities to improve your results.