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INTRODUCTION

By now, social media marketing has become a no-brainer. The desire to stay virtually connected makes social media use the number one online activity.¹ Nonprofit marketers, specifically, have long known that social media is key to improving engagement and communication with donors. A study by Georgetown University and Waggener Edstrom revealed that 56 percent of survey respondents said they were inspired to take further action for a cause after reading a story on social media.²

Here are some quick stats to further illustrate social media's role in marketing:

- Across both mobile and desktop devices, nearly 20 percent of online activity in the U.S. takes place on social platforms.³
- A survey found that 83 percent of marketers actively pursue social media initiatives.⁴
- Approximately 46 percent of online users rely on social media when making a purchasing decision.⁵
- When asked about charitable communications, social media was the most preferred channel among millennials.⁶

¹ Mashable. "10 Online Activities That Dominate Americans' Days." <http://mashable.com/2013/08/15/popular-online-activities/#Xhp2GoITBZqC>

² Waggener Endstrom. "Digital Persuasion: How Social Media Motivates Action and Drives Support for Causes." <http://waggeneredstrom.com/downloads/DSCA-Summary.pdf>

³ Business Insider. "Social media engagement: the surprising facts about how much time people spend on the major social networks." <http://www.businessinsider.com/social-media-engagement-statistics-2013-12>

⁴ Hubspot. "The Ultimate List of Marketing Statistics." <https://www.hubspot.com/marketing-statistics>

⁵ HubSpot. "18 Fresh Stats About the Current State of Social Media Marketing." <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/18-fresh-stats-about-social-media-marketing>

⁶ The Nonprofit Times. "Digital Donors Changing Charitable Communications." <http://www.thenonproffitimes.com/news-articles/digital-donors-changing-charitable-communications/marketing/18-fresh-stats-about-social-media-marketing>

While these networks serve the overarching purposes of storytelling and conversation, not every social platform is created equally. They all have unique functions and understanding each platform's distinct purpose and value will enable you to harness its full potential. At the end of the day, familiarizing yourself with each network's strengths will help you build a marketing strategy that is best suited for your nonprofit organization.

How to Use this Guide

In this ebook, we dedicate a chapter to each of the primary social networks. Each chapter covers:

- Who Nonprofits Can Reach
- The Value of the Social Network
- Best Practices and Engagement Tips

Let's get started!



FACEBOOK

Facebook is the largest social network on the internet, with 1.86 billion users worldwide.⁷ With such a massive and diverse audience, it has become an indispensable resource for most brands, for-profit and nonprofit alike.

When it comes to expanding a brand's reach and driving traffic to its website, the numbers speak for themselves.

- Companies that have over 1,000 Facebook likes also **receive nearly 1,400 website visits a day.**⁸
- **85 percent of brand followers** on Facebook recommend that brand to others.⁹
- **70 percent of Facebook users** follow links posted by family and friends.¹⁰
- Half of all internet users who **don't** have a Facebook account live with someone who does.¹¹

Facebook also dominates in the increasingly important mobile market, with 78 percent of all U.S.

Facebook users accessing the platform on their smartphones.¹²

One study, in particular, showed that Facebook accounts for over 60 percent of all mobile social sharing,¹³ making it the most highly engaged social channel on mobile devices.



⁷ Zephoria. "The Top 20 Valuable Facebook Statistics – Updated January 2017." <https://zephoria.com/top-15-valuable-facebook-statistics/>

⁸ HubSpot. "18 Fresh Stats." <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/18-fresh-stats-about-social-media-marketing>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Pew Research Center. "6 New Facts About Facebook." <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/02/03/6-new-facts-about-facebook/>

¹² Tech Crunch. "Facebook Reveals 78% Of US Users Are Mobile As It Starts Sharing User Counts By Country." <http://techcrunch.com/2013/08/13/facebook-mobile-user-count/>

¹³ Digital Ramblings. "By the Numbers: 50 Amazing Facebook Mobile & App Statistics." http://expandedramblings.com/index.php/facebook-mobile-app-statistics/#.VEgN34vF_y0



Who Nonprofits Can Reach

Considering the sheer size of the network, not having a Facebook page is more of a gamble than learning how to manage one. In fact, 79 percent of all online Americans are on Facebook, for those between the ages of 18 and 29, that number rises to nearly nine in ten.¹⁴

Furthermore, 95 percent of users follow a brand, company, or organization on Facebook, and 47 percent support causes through the platform.¹⁵ If leveraged effectively, your Facebook page can help influence the giving and engagement levels of your community.

However, the increasing amount of content available to users—from political commentary to lunch menus—has made it more difficult for brands to stand out on users' timelines.

One way to ensure your content gets the eyes it deserves is to focus on its quality. Facebook encourages brands to deliver meaningful content to their audience by rewarding high-quality posts with better timeline visibility. This puts the onus on the marketer to understand what their audience wants and to deliver with high-quality content.

¹⁴ Pew Research Center. "Social Media Update 2016." <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/>

¹⁵ Waggener Edstrom. "Digital Persuasion: How Social Media Motivates Action and Drives Support for Causes." <http://waggeneredstrom.com/downloads/DSCA-Summary.pdf>



Use The Algorithm to Market Smarter, Not Harder

While Facebook changes its algorithm all of the time, there are several key factors that affect whether your content is being prioritized for your audience. Understand and consider these factors when creating Facebook content to ensure your posts get the eyes they deserve. ¹⁶

Facebook chooses what content to show users based on...

Who Posted

Facebook tries to show users content from the brands and users with whom they frequently engage. In other words, if a user often likes or shares your posts, Facebook will note this behavior and show more of your content. This is one reason engagement is so important; when your audience clicks, likes, comments, and shares, it helps make sure they see your future posts.

How Others Engaged

In order to deliver the most useful or enjoyable content, Facebook rewards posts that have high engagement with other users. If your post has been liked by twenty people, it will probably be prioritized over another post that doesn't have as many interactions.

The Type of Post

Another way Facebook tailors the content in each user's feed is by tracking what kinds of posts (such as images, videos, text, links) they most often engage with. For example, if a user never clicks on videos, Facebook won't prioritize that type of content for their feed.

¹⁶ TechCrunch. "How Facebook News Feed Works." <https://techcrunch.com/2016/09/06/ultimate-guide-to-the-news-feed/>



The Time Posted

Although many factors contribute to the order of users' news feed items, recency still matters. Newer posts are more likely to be viewed than older ones.



You can create and schedule posts ahead of time in Facebook. Use the Facebook Insights section to determine when you receive the most traffic and schedule content then.

By marketing smarter, rather than harder, you can improve your organization's reach.

The Value of Facebook

Visual Storytelling

Visual content drives engagement, period. According to Kissmetrics, Facebook photos get 53 percent more likes, 104 percent more comments, and 84 percent more click-throughs on links than posts containing only text.¹⁷ Nonprofits have some incredibly compelling stories to share, and visual storytelling enables your organization to bring supporters face-to-face with the heart and impact of your mission.

Explore what forms of content—whether it's photos of beneficiaries or behind the scenes clips at the office—drive the most discussion on your page. Remember that Facebook can be used to both inform and activate supporters. Try to post a mix of content that engages people directly on the platform, as well as sends them to your site (like a donation page or your blog), where they might feel compelled to more actively interact with your cause.

¹⁷ Buffer Social. "7 Powerful Facebook Statistics You Should Know for a More Engaging Facebook Page." <http://blog.bufferapp.com/7-facebook-stats-you-should-know-for-a-more-engaging-page>



Community Building

Communication on Facebook tends to be organic and conversational, and this fluid exchange offers an opportunity for nonprofits to directly nurture a community of engaged followers who feel involved in the cause. If you actively ask questions and reply to comments and feedback, you can build more personal relationships with supporters that will create real-world advocates for your cause.

Take this example from St. Baldrick's Foundation. They posted a photo and asked followers to share their own in the comments. In doing so, they communicated to their followers that they're all about genuinely interacting with their community.





Other Ways to Use Facebook

Grow Your Email List

To ensure your supporters don't miss a beat about your cause, encourage your Facebook fans to subscribe to your newsletter. Also, make sure to add social media sharing buttons to your emails and blog posts, so subscribers can easily share your content with their personal networks.

Embed Your Organization's Facebook Posts

This feature allows supporters to **engage with your Facebook page or posts directly on your website or blog**. Try replacing static images in your blogs with a Facebook post that contains a photo or video. This will encourage readers to immediately interact with your Facebook page and increase your posts' engagement level.





Connect Alumni Through Groups

Facebook groups allow alumni of your programs to stay in touch. They can also be used to organize future fundraising teams.

Conclusion

With great storytelling, adaptation to Facebook's constantly evolving features, and an eye on metrics, your Facebook page can be a key resource that improves your organization's overall reach.

Ready for more? Check out the next chapter, which dives into Twitter.



TWITTER

Since its launch in 2006, Twitter remains one of the world's most-visited websites, boasting 313 million active users worldwide.^{18,19} With users sending over 300 million tweets per day, the micro-blogging network has evolved into a platform that allows people to consume news, exchange ideas, and connect with a global community in real time.²⁰

Not to mention, it's a valuable place for organizations as well. In fact,

- **83 percent of charitable organizations use Twitter.**²¹
- **47% of users** who follow a brand on Twitter are more likely to visit that brand's website.²²
- **72% of Twitter followers of a brand** are more likely to purchase something from that brand.²³

Although tweets are brief, the platform is built specifically to facilitate timely conversation, connect with unlikely contacts, and discover chatter around particular topics. Cause-specific organizations are well-served by Twitter because it allows them to easily uncover and connect with their audience, engage with like-minded organizations, and leverage current events to drive campaigns. The platform is also a great tool for distributing and promoting links to blog posts or specific pages on your website.

¹⁸ Alexa. "The top 500 sites on the web." <http://www.alexacom/topsites>

¹⁹ Twitter. "About." <https://about.twitter.com/company>

²⁰ Business Insider. "Leaked Twitter API data shows the number of tweets is in serious decline." <http://www.businessinsider.com/tweets-on-twitter-is-in-serious-decline-2016-2>

²¹ The Nonprofit Times. "Digital Donors Changing Charitable Communications." <http://www.thenonprofittimes.com/news-articles/digital-donors-changing-charitable-communications/>

²² Digital Marketing Ramblings. "By the Numbers: 220 Amazing Twitter Statistics." http://expandedramblings.com/index.php/march-2013-by-the-numbers-a-few-amazing-twitter-stats/2/#.VD71govF_xZ

²³ Ibid.



Who Nonprofits Can Reach

According to the Pew Research Center, Twitter is most popular among 18 to 29 years-olds (the millennial generation) and people that have at least some college education.²⁴

The millennial generation accounts for \$200 billion in direct purchasing power and will inherit a \$30 trillion transfer of wealth from older generations in the coming years.²⁵ As this generation transitions into its peak earning years, nonprofit organizations would do well to focus on how to engage these future donors. And as millennials make up over half of Twitter's users, it's a great place to initiate engagement with this cohort of supporters.²⁶

In addition to its popularity with millennials, Twitter is also experiencing solid user growth across other age groups.²⁷ Countering the popular belief that social media is only for the younger generation, 10 percent of online adults over the age of 65 are Twitter users.²⁸

Regardless of where your audience falls demographically, having a voice in the mobile-optimized Twittersverse can help you expand your visibility and engage with your supporters.

²⁴ Pew Research Center. "Social Media Update 2016." <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/>

²⁵ Forbes. "10 New Findings About The Millennial Consumer." <http://www.forbes.com/sites/danschawbel/2015/01/20/10-new-findings-about-the-millennial-consumer/#2c5c147f28a8>

²⁶ FutureCast. "How do Millennials behave on social, mobile and the web?" <http://millennialmarketing.com/2013/04/how-do-millennials-behave-on-social-mobile-and-the-web/>

²⁷ Buffer Social. "10 Surprising Social Media Statistics that might make you Rethink your Social Strategy." <http://blog.bufferapp.com/10-surprising-social-media-statistics-that-will-make-you-rethink-your-strategy>

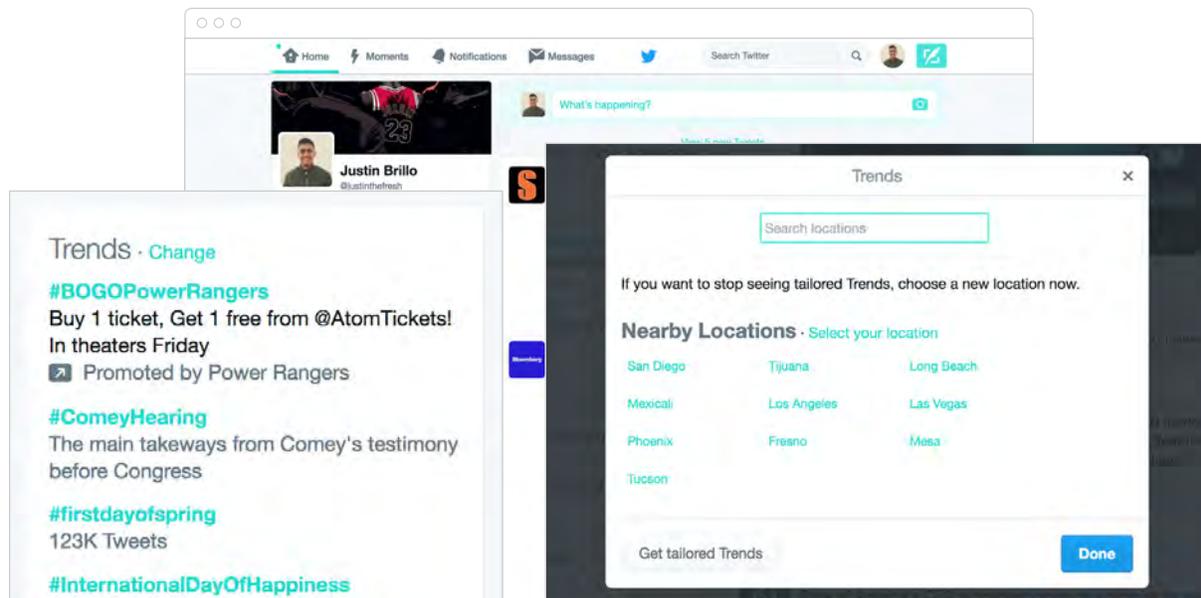
²⁸ Ibid.



The Value of Twitter

Tracking Trends

Twitter is an excellent way to keep an ear to the ground on what’s happening and being talked about, both locally and globally. By using the platform as a micro-news aggregator, you can provide your organization with ample opportunities to leverage real-time events. Use Twitter to engage with like-minded individuals or thought-leaders, campaign for your cause, or curate content relevant to your audience.



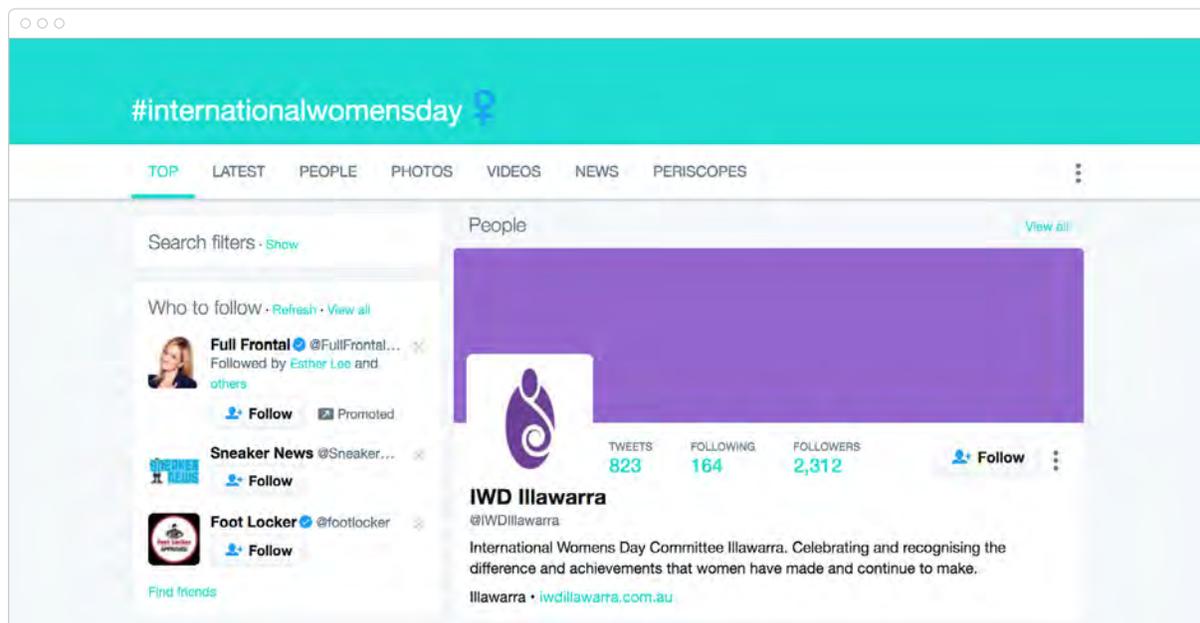
To find out what’s trending on Twitter, use the “trending” widget directly under your profile picture. You can set the widget to display local or global trends. You can also use the search widget to look for conversations about other trends or topics (using either a specific hashtag or a normal search query).



Building Influence and Community

Hashtags make it possible to stream tweets relating to a particular topic or event, enabling you to create, join, or follow conversations. This is an incredibly powerful tool to find relevant audiences and communities, and then build a presence or influence within them.

To understand what hashtags your community uses and who the key players are, start with a simple search query. You'll be able to identify influencers by selecting the "Top Tweets" tab on the search results page.



Begin strengthening your presence on Twitter by following key influencers, the users who are engaging with them (for example, favoriting or retweeting their tweets), and joining in on the conversation.

If you add value to these conversations, rather than just spam users with promotion, you'll have a better chance at forming authentic connections on Twitter.



Examples of How and What to Post on Twitter

Shout-outs to Your Fundraisers

If your fundraising registration process asked participants to submit their Twitter handle, you can take the time to give your supporters a personal shout-out. Not only will this broadcasted thank you make your donors feel special, it can also increase the visibility of your organization. Include a link to the individual's peer-to-peer fundraising page as a way of appreciating and supporting their efforts.



Retweets and Replies

Spreading great tweets and relevant content from other Twitter feeds is a valuable way to share information with your network. Retweet posts that are relevant to your cause or that you think your audience would find interesting.



Maintaining a conversation on Twitter also means responding to your followers when they tweet at you. According to HubSpot, 72 percent of consumers who complain about products on Twitter expect a response within one hour.²⁹ Reply to tweets in a timely and helpful fashion, and your network will see that you value your supporters' feedback and perspectives.

Links and Visual Media

Tweets that include links are 86 percent more likely to get retweeted—and this extra exposure can help drive traffic back to your website.³⁰



Photos and videos attached to posts automatically preview on users' feeds on mobile and desktop screens. This allows your posts to be more visible on a user's crowded feed. Tweets with a photo garner three times the engagement as those without.³¹ When it comes to Twitter, the value of visual storytelling applies now more than ever.

²⁹ Hubspot. "72% of People Who Complain on Twitter Expect a Response Within an Hour." <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/twitter-response-time-data#sm.000000iopf6oqnf1hz3z9rtm26hyn>

³⁰ Buffer Social. "10 Surprising New Twitter Stats to Help You Reach More Followers." <http://blog.bufferapp.com/10-new-twitter-stats-twitter-statistics-to-help-you-reach-your-followers>

³¹ Twitter. #TweetTip: use photos to drive engagement." <https://blog.twitter.com/2015/tweettip-use-photos-to-drive-engagement>



Powering Global Campaigns

Twitter is based on the premise that anyone can reach you and you can reach anyone else. It's a great platform to join global movements or to start them.

#GivingTuesday is an example of a campaign that relied on Twitter for momentum and growth. The #GivingTuesday initiative is the charitable counterpart to shopping mega-events Black Friday and Cyber Monday. It was launched in 2012 around a simple hashtag and has since grown into a global day of giving.

"Twitter was the tool that connected the movement. As the initiative has rolled out, spreading the word through Twitter chats and memes like the #unselfie have been a huge part of #GivingTuesday's evolution and growth," said Henry Timms, co-founder of #GivingTuesday.³² In 2015, #GivingTuesday generated 114 billion Twitter impressions.³³

Useful Statistics About Twitter Engagement

Buffer reports recently revealed that certain types of tweets can generate higher engagement levels.³⁴ With this in mind, here are a couple of tips to help your organization find its tweeting sweet spot:

- Less is more—tweet with **less than 100 characters** (120-130 if you include a link).
- Include one or two hashtags, **as opposed to three or more**.
- Ask for a retweet (**and spell out the word "retweet"!**).

³² Twitter. "Celebrate #GivingTuesday, the global day of giving." <https://blog.twitter.com/2015/celebrate-givingtuesday-the-global-day-of-giving>

³³ #GivingTuesday. "About." <https://www.givingtuesday.org/about>

³⁴ Buffer Social. "10 Surprising New Twitter Stats." <http://blog.bufferapp.com/10-new-twitter-stats-twitter-statistics-to-help-you-reach-your-followers>



The timing of your tweets can also influence their exposure and engagement.³⁵

- On average, early morning tweets get the most clicks.
- Tweets in the evening or late at night receive more retweets and favorites.
- The geographic location of your audience can impact your tweets. If you have a lot of followers in a different time zone, you may want to schedule tweets for this audience.

Conclusion

If leveraged effectively and creatively, Twitter can be an incredible tool for connecting your organization with a large audience. You can increase your exposure and engagement with just a few tweets a day, and following news and other influential voices in the nonprofit sector will allow you to add value to your followers' feeds and keep up with current trends.

Next up, let's learn about Instagram!

³⁵ Buffer. "The Biggest Social Media Science Study: What 4.8 Million Tweets Say About the Best Time to Tweet." <https://blog.bufferapp.com/best-time-to-tweet-research>



INSTAGRAM

There are now 600 million people in the worldwide Instagram community. Eighty million photos are posted each day and users produce 3.5 billion likes each day.³⁶ Launched in 2010 and later acquired by Facebook in 2012, the app is still one of the fastest growing social networks on the market.³⁷

After rolling out a video component in June 2013, Instagram became a single platform for two forms of visual storytelling: image-sharing and short-form video.

Targeted toward mobile social sharing, Instagram allows users to capture photos or videos of up to 60 seconds with their smartphones and apply filters to their content. They now also enable users to stream live videos or send content that disappears after being viewed.³⁸ On top of its visual storytelling faculties, Instagram's content can also be shared across multiple networks, including Facebook, Twitter, Email, Foursquare, and Flickr, making it a malleable marketing tool for nonprofit organizations.

Who Nonprofits Can Reach

Instagram is most popular among those ages 18 to 29, with 59 percent using the platform. But a third of internet users aged 30 to 49 are also on Instagram. The image and video-sharing app is also more popular among women than men.³⁹

³⁶ Instagram. "600 million and Counting." <http://blog.instagram.com/post/154506585127/161215-600million>

³⁷ Search Engine Watch. "23 up-to-date stats and facts about Instagram you need to know." <https://searchenginewatch.com/2016/04/20/23-stats-and-facts-about-instagram/>

³⁸ PetaPixel. "Instagram Launches Live Video and Disappearing Photos." <https://petapixel.com/2016/11/24/instagram-launches-live-video-disappearing-photos/>

³⁹ Pew Research Center. "Social Media Update 2016." <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/>



Instagram is free, offers easily shareable content, and is iPhone and Android-user friendly. So every organization has the budget to use Instagram as a visual storytelling platform, as long as they are willing to dedicate some time to content creation. In fact, according to Simply Measured, 86 percent of top brands are on Instagram.⁴⁰

Nonprofit organizations of any scope can engage followers and increase their reach on Instagram by posting compelling visual content and staying active on the platform.

The Value of Instagram

An Instagram is worth a thousand words. According to HubSpot, 40 percent of people respond better to visuals than plain text. And because the brain processes visuals 60,000 times faster than text, nonprofit organizations can use photos to transcend linguistic boundaries and instantly connect supporters with their story.⁴¹

A report by Buffer studied how the Fortune 500 use Instagram and found that certain types of posts outperform others on the platform.⁴² Here are a few pieces of data to keep in mind when creating content to ensure it will resonate with your Instagram audience:

- **Instagram photos are more popular than videos.** Brands are seeing more engagement with photos than with video. However, Unruly released data saying 40 percent of the 1,000 most shared Instagram videos come from brands. Don't be afraid to test out what works best for you. If you diversify your photo and video content, it can help you deduce what content gets the most engagement with your audience.⁴³

⁴⁰ Simply Measured. "86% of Top Global Brands Use Instagram." <http://simplymeasured.com/blog/86-of-top-global-brands-use-instagram/#sm.000000iopf6oqnf1hz3z9rtm26hyn>

⁴¹ HubSpot. "19 Reasons You Should Include Visual Content in Your Marketing." <http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/33423/19-Reasons-You-Should-Include-Visual-Content-in-Your-Marketing-Data.aspx>

⁴² Buffer Social. "10 Surprising New Instagram Statistics to Get the Most out of the Picture Social Network." <http://blog.bufferapp.com/instagram-stats-instagram-tips>

⁴³ Search Engine Watch. "Brands Account for 40% of Top 1,000 Most Shared Instagram Videos." <http://searchenginewatch.com/article/2302585/Brands-Account-for-40-of-Top-1000-Most-Shared-Instagram-Videos>

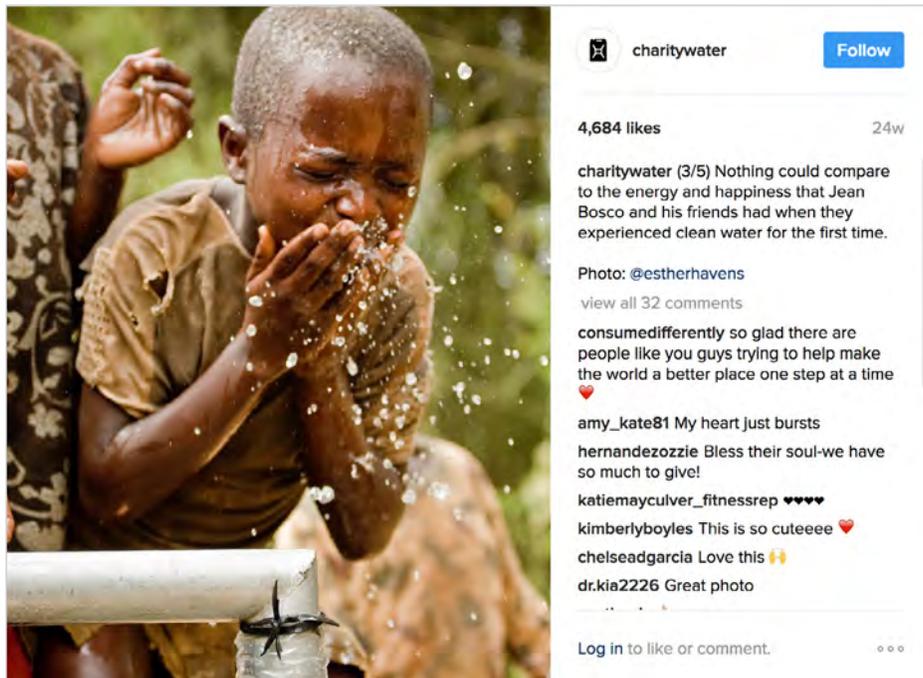


- **Hashtags help for content discovery and curation.** Hashtags (#) allow users to search for images using certain keywords or trending topics. Users want to share, curate, and discover other images that interest them, so adding relevant hashtags to your posts can make them more discoverable to users with the same interests.
- **Normal (or No Filter) is the most popular filter, but not the most engaging.** Normal is used the most, but Mayfair seems to garner the highest number of likes and comments.

Here are several ways you can connect with your audience on Instagram.

Demonstrate Your Impact

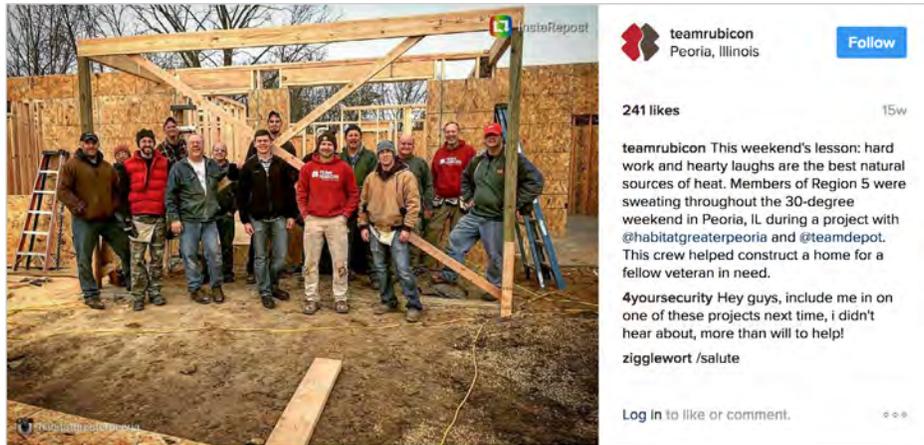
Photos from the field are a powerful way to connect to supporters on a deep and emotional level. They can help incite action from potential donors because they come face-to-face with your work and its impact.



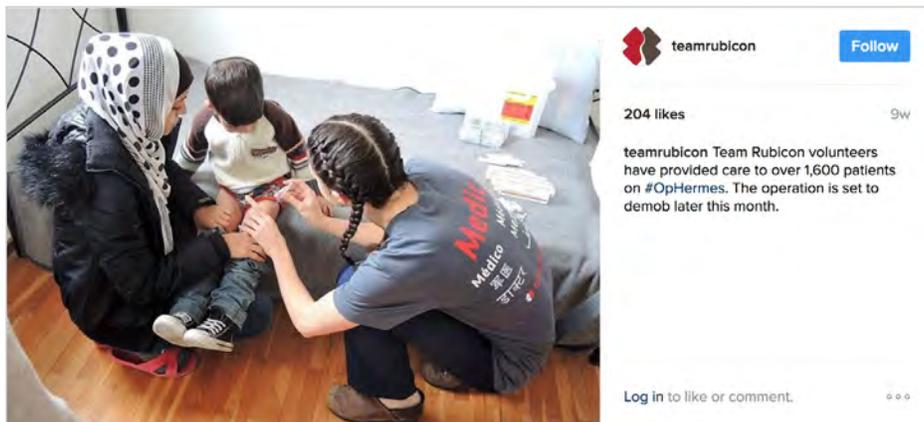
This post from charity: water brings their work to life and shows donors an individual child that now has access to clean water.

Highlight Volunteers

Showcase the direct influence your supporters have on the ground. Photos or videos of your volunteers alongside beneficiaries can help build trust with donors as they see your organization's impact in action.



Team Rubicon uses Instagram to show supporters the work their Region 5 volunteers did in Peoria, Illinois.



Team Rubicon posts pictures of their volunteers working in a refugee facility in Greece.



Promote Events and Campaigns

Visuals and large text are attention grabbers, so inform your followers about your organization's upcoming events or news with an Instagram photo. Include additional details in your caption.



With just one look, followers of Athletes4Cancer see that donations will be matched and they get a reminder of the programs their gifts fund.

Go Behind the Scenes

Take followers behind the curtains for a more intimate look at your organization. Document ideation sessions, prep work for an event, or a website rebrand in the making.



The Trevor Project gave their Instagram followers a peek into their offices on Spirit Day, an awareness day to support LGBT youth and end bullying.

Say Thank You

No matter what your cause, saying “thank you” to donors is always a good idea. Use Instagram to show your appreciation. A thankful smile goes a long way.



World Food Program USA thanks their supporters for making this school meals program in Beirut possible.

Share Supporter Photos



Expand your visibility and get supporters involved by asking them to submit their own entries for a photo challenge or a monthly series. To enter, ask them to use a customized hashtag and to tag your organization (by adding “@username” in the image description).

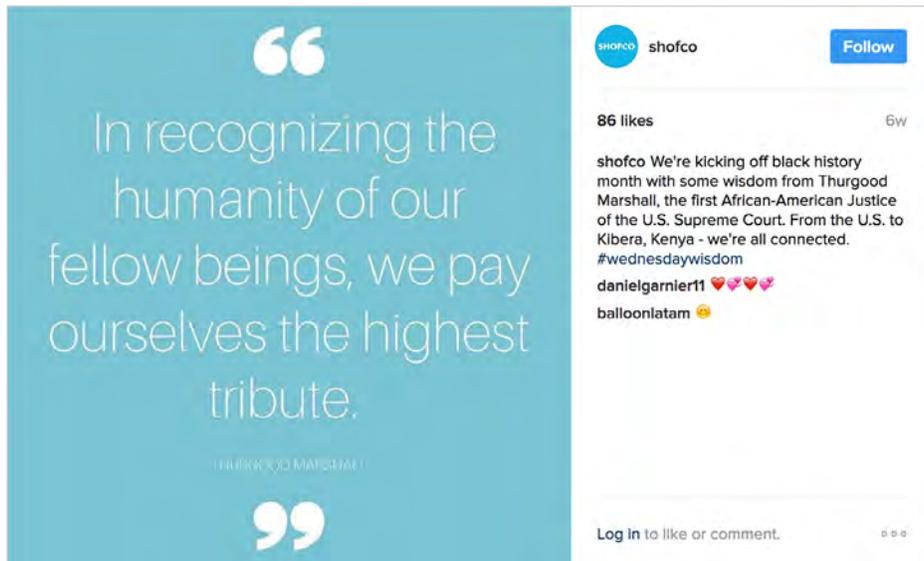


Feeding America encouraged their followers to post their own #spoonember pictures to raise awareness for hunger.

Not only will the tag directly mention your organization to all of your supporters' Instagram followers, but it will also link to your profile and notify you when someone submits an entry.

Inspire

Inspirational quotes can motivate followers, fundraisers, and supporters to take action. Be sure to also use hashtags related to the image itself to expand your reach and attract new followers.



Shining Hope for Communities created this simple graphic and added the popular hashtag, #wednesdaywisdom.



To Write Love On Her Arms shares quotes from donors and those affected by depression and self harm.



Instagram Video

Instagram allows users to post videos that are up to 60 seconds long. Here are a few ways you can take advantage of this feature.

Promotional Campaigns

Use Instagram Video to launch a new campaign. This allows you to dynamically demonstrate the campaign's purpose and explain how supporters can participate.

Volunteer Storytelling

Ask your supporters and volunteers to take a video and share why they are personally connected to your cause. Remind them to caption their post with a designated hashtag.

Achievements Reel

As a thank-you to your donors after a year-end campaign, create a montage of video clips to showcase your organization's different achievements.

Conclusion

The beauty of Instagram is that it is an inherently visual platform. Its aesthetic and simplistic design are part of what have made it so popular to date. And it's not the only platform that leverages large images—Pinterest is up next.



PINTEREST

Pinterest, the social network that allows users to visually share, collect, and discover new interests, now has over 150 million users, more than doubling their audience since 2013.^{44,45} Despite its smaller size, conversion rates for Pinterest traffic are 50 percent higher than those from other social platforms.⁴⁶ In other words, Pinterest is a powerful referring site that can help you gain brand recognition.

The social network allows users to post, or “pin,” photos or videos to their own collections of pins (known as pin boards). Eighty percent of total Pinterest pins are repins, which means your visual content has a high chance of being shared and can direct traffic to your website.⁴⁷ Posts can also be shared on Facebook, Twitter, and email to increase your reach across other social channels.

Who Nonprofits Can Reach

Among online American adults, 31 percent are Pinterest users. The platform is most popular among ages 18 to 29 (36 percent), followed by ages 30 to 49 (34 percent). Organizations should also note Pinterest’s gender gap. While 45 percent of women use the platform, only 17 percent of men do.⁴⁸

Nonprofits can leverage Pinterest to drive traffic to their websites and blogs. On top of uploading and pinning images directly onto a Pinterest account, website visitors can easily pin your website’s visual content on Pinterest, which helps to expand your reach.

⁴⁴ Forbes. “Pinterest Reaches 150 Million Monthly Users, Boosts Engagement Among Men.” <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kathleenchaykowski/2016/10/13/pinterest-reaches-150-million-monthly-users/#4937807e1018>

⁴⁵ Search Engine Watch. “Pinterest Tops 70 Million Users; 30% Pinned, Repinned, or Liked in June [Study].” <https://searchenginewatch.com/sew/study/2282835/pinterest-tops-70-million-users-30-pinned-repinned-or-liked-in-june-study>

⁴⁶ Social Media Today. “Pinterest: The Sales Conversion Powerhouse.” <http://www.socialmediatoday.com/content/pinterest-sales-conversion-powerhouse>

⁴⁷ Digital Marketing Ramblings. “By the Numbers.” <http://expandedramblings.com/index.php/pinterest-stats/#.Uug3UmTTn-k>

⁴⁸ Pew Research Center. “Social Media Update 2016.” <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/>



Help Your Website Visitors Help You

Pinterest eliminates any heavy lifting and generates the embed codes for several buttons for you so it's easy to add them to your site. Include them on your website pages to display the value of your Pinterest account and grow your Pinterest following.

You can add a:

Pin It Button

This button allows visitors to pin an item from your website to Pinterest, and every pin includes a link back to the original source. Although these are no-follow links (links that don't boost your page's ranking with search engines) that cannot directly impact your SEO strategy, they still allow pinners to find your content and land on your website in just one click.

Follow Button

Embed this button to allow site visitors to follow your Pinterest account.

Profile Widget

This widget displays up to 30 of your latest pins anywhere on your website, which can help you demonstrate the value of your Pinterest account to potential followers.

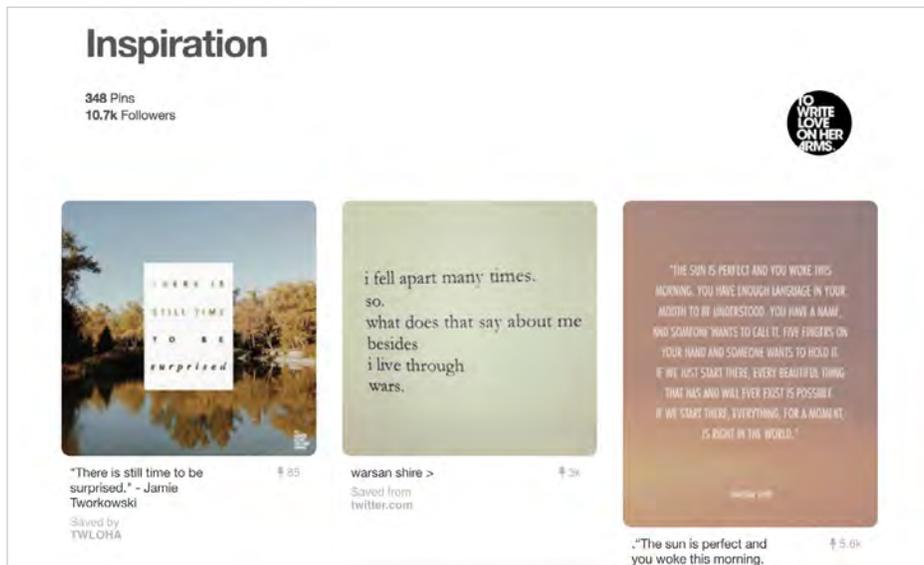
Board Widget

You can show up to 30 of your favorite board's latest pins. Using this widget on particular pages or sections of your website can help you promote your content.



The Value of Pinterest

The vision of Pinterest is to “connect everyone in the world through the ‘things’ they find interesting.” You can increase your brand’s awareness on the network by showcasing the lifestyle your organization encourages. Create boards that relate to the everyday needs and concerns of your target audience to build trust with your prospective donors and show that you hold similar values.



To Write Love on Her Arms has a Pinterest board called “Inspiration.” The uplifting pins reflect the nonprofit’s mission to support people struggling with depression, addiction, and self harm, but they also apply to the day-to-day trials of supporters.

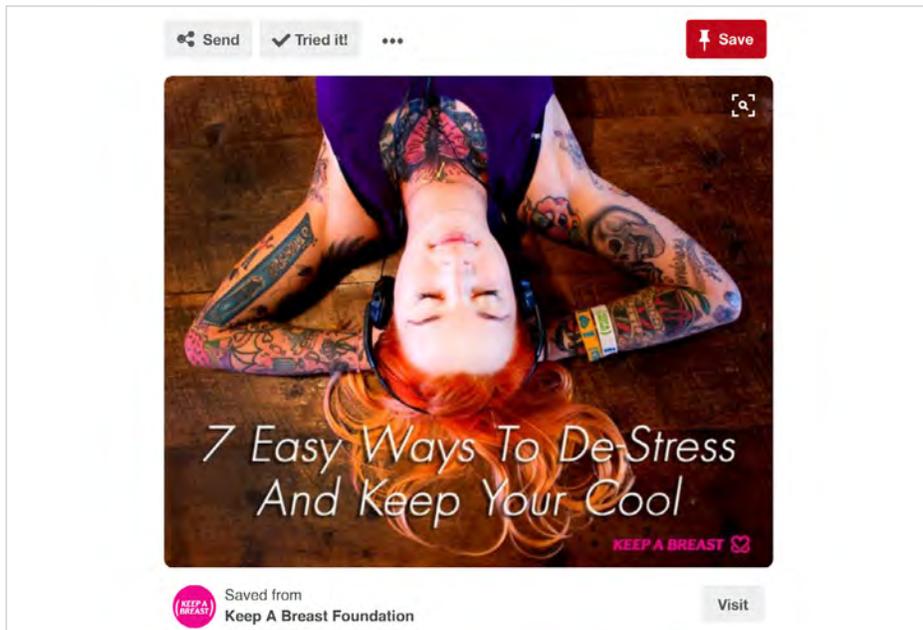
Make Awesome, Topic-Specific Boards

Pinterest allows users two “follow” options when they encounter content they enjoy: they can either follow a specific board by a Pinterest user, or a user’s entire account. This means that one of your boards can have more followers than your overall account. Therefore, making boards on specific topics is not only critical to getting found among all the content on Pinterest, but it can also attract followers who are passionate about a particular subject. Make sure to create unique and keyword-conscious board names as well.



Pin Blog Content

Pinterest also allows you to pin articles and blog content. These pins can drive traffic to your website or blog.



This pin by Keep a Breast links to a blog post.

Check Who Pins Your Images

Kissmetrics points out that you can find any pinned content from your website by going to the URL: [http://pinterest.com/source/\[yourdomain.com \]](http://pinterest.com/source/[yourdomain.com]), and replacing [yourdomain.com] with your website. Regularly check to see what on your site gets pinned to Pinterest. It will also show you the users who have pinned your content.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Kissmetrics. "Pinterest Marketing Tips for SEO, Traffic, and Online Reputation Management." <http://blog.kissmetrics.com/pinterest-marketing-tips/>



Best Practices

Put Effort Into Your Descriptions

The 500-character description for each pin is the largest text-based section on Pinterest, so make sure to include any SEO-relevant keywords or contextual information for your pins. HubSpot Social Media Scientist Dan Zarrella analyzed 11,000 pins and found the content with the most engagement (repins and comments) had descriptions ranging from 200 to 310 words.⁵⁰

Include Links in Pin Descriptions

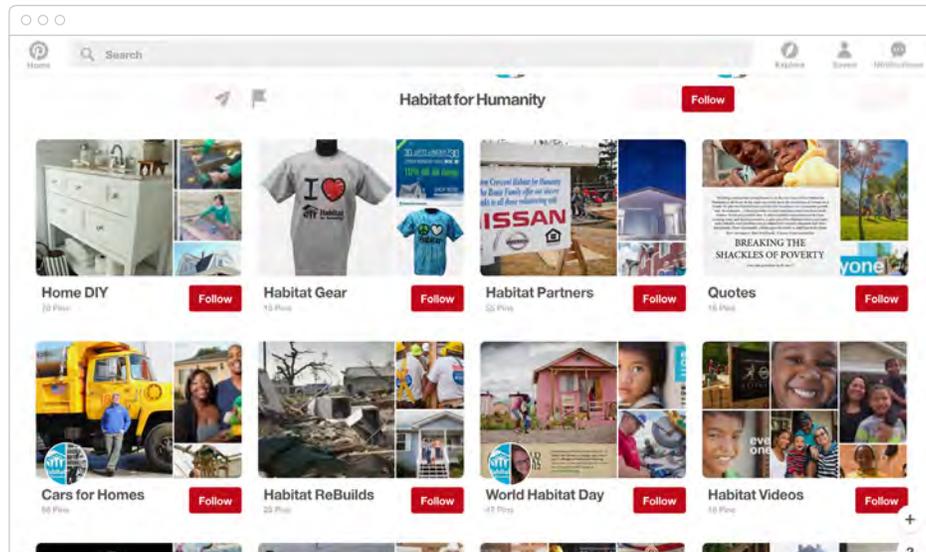
Always add a link back to your website, blog, or landing pages in the descriptions of your pins. Not only will this highlight the image's association with your organization, but it can lead interested followers back to your website to learn more about your organization.

⁵⁰ Dan Zarrella. "[Infographic] How to Get More Pins and Repins on Pinterest." <http://danzarrella.com/infographic-how-to-get-more-pins-and-repins-on-pinterest.html#>



Be Authentic and Straightforward

Rather than being direct calls-to-action, your Pinterest boards should be designed around your prospective donors' lifestyles, interests, and everyday needs. Use terminology in your "About" section and board names that your target audience members actually use in their daily lives.

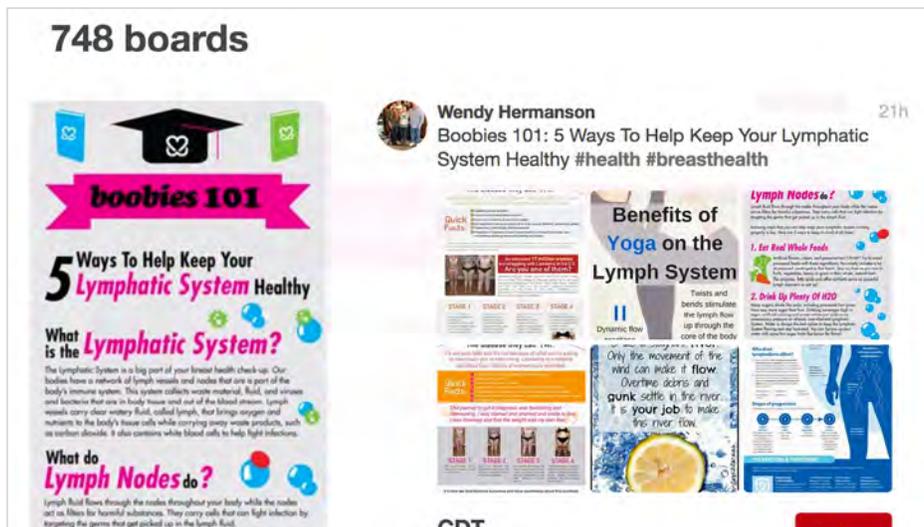


Along with program-related boards, Habitat for Humanity's Pinterest profile has boards on topics that interest their supporters, like "Home DIY" and "Habitat Gear."



Use Tall Images

A HubSpot study showed that the greater the image height, the more often it was repinned.⁵¹ Focus on posting taller images to attract more repins. Infographics are a great option.



Keep A Breast pinned this infographic on how to keep your lymphatic system healthy. Another 748 people repinned it the post to their board.

⁵¹ HubSpot. "20 Data-Backed Ways to Upgrade Your Social Media Marketing [SlideShare]." <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/data-backed-social-media-marketing-tips>

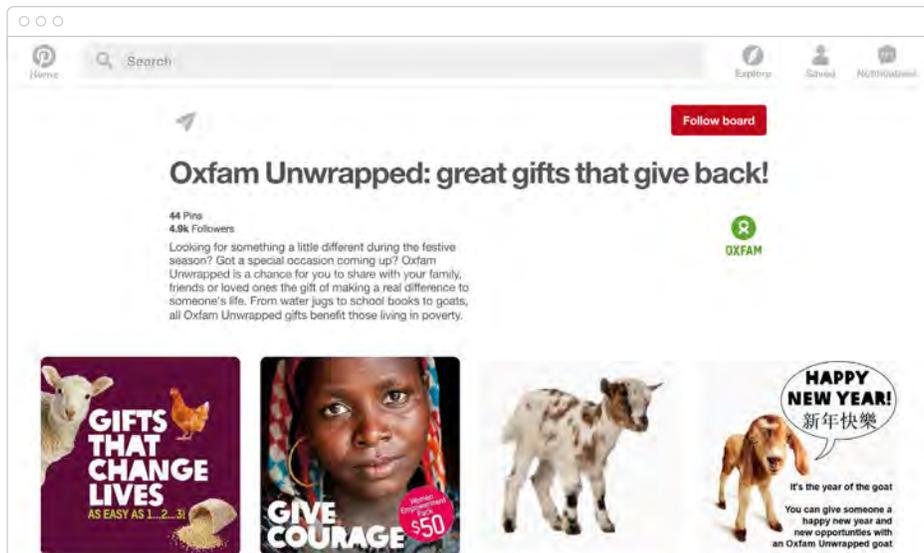


More Pin Board Ideas

In addition to the boards specific to the nature of your organization, here are additional ideas for your Pinterest profile:

Document Specific Campaigns

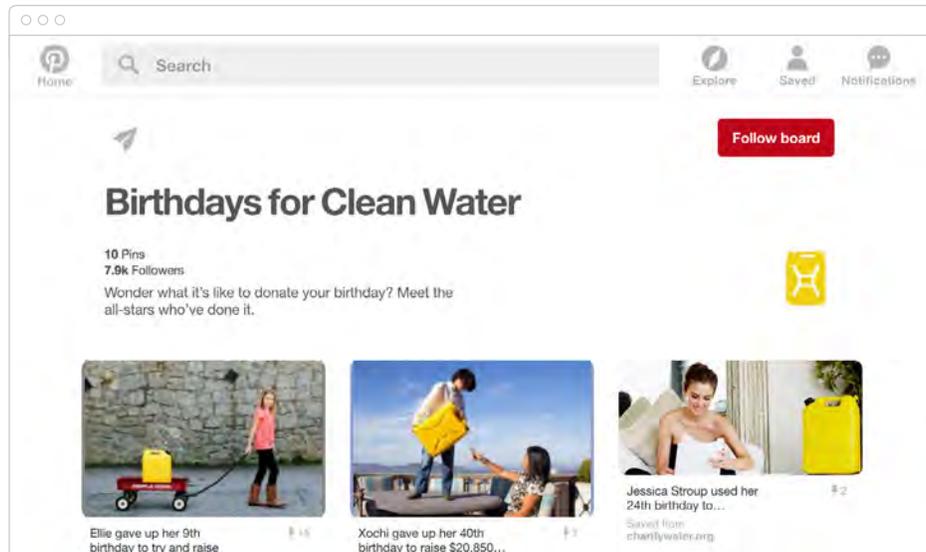
Oxfam has a board dedicated to their Oxfam Unwrapped fundraising campaign, which features gifts you can make in honor of a loved one for any holiday. Your organization can follow suit and create boards of any online or offline fundraising events and campaigns.





Feature Ambassadors, Supporters, and Fundraisers

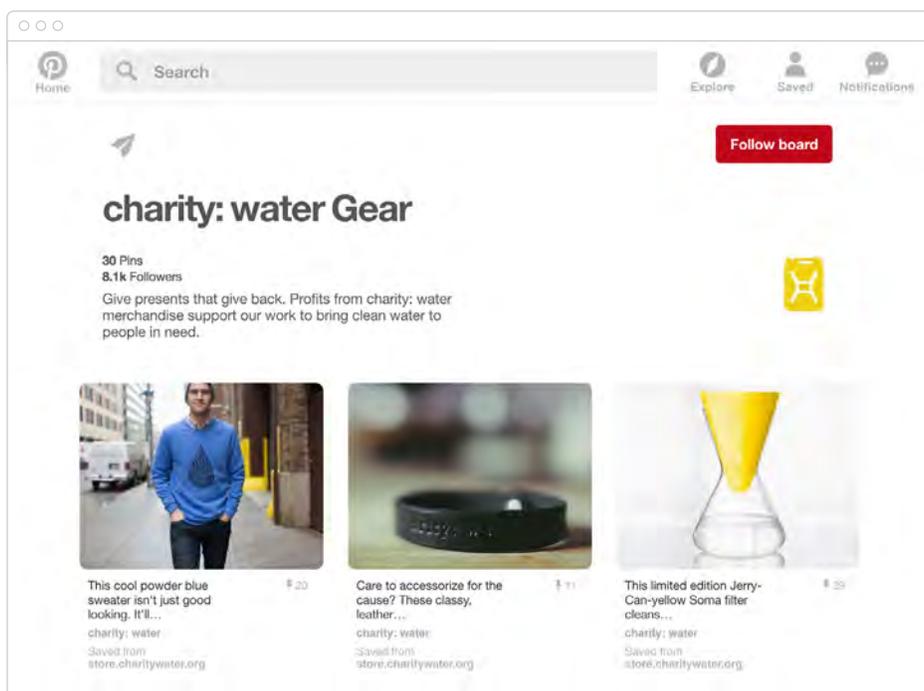
You can also create a board featuring your supporters for a specific campaign, or separate boards for power fundraisers or influential advocates. charity: water dedicates a board to fundraisers titled “Birthdays for Clean Water.”





Show Off Your Swag

Pinterest users spend more money, more often, and on more items than any of the other top five social media sites' user bases.⁵² If your organization has merchandise, create a board that displays your swag and clarify where the profits will go in the board description. charity: water's "charity: water Gear" board displays different merchandise items users can purchase to help bring clean water to vulnerable communities.



⁵¹ Saurage Marketing Research. "Social Studies: Pinterest." <http://www.saurageresearch.com/social-studies-pinterest/>



Host a Pinning Contest

If you have an active and enthusiastic following on Pinterest, you can launch a contest asking users to create a board on their own accounts to display what they love most about your organization and services. Ask them to send you a link to their boards so that you can evaluate entries and designate a winner.

Conclusion

Pinterest's importance as a marketing channel has grown immensely in recent years. Make sure your organization is represented on this unique platform in order to reap the benefits and grow your community in the years to come.

In the next chapter, we take a look at YouTube.



YOUTUBE

With more than one billion users worldwide, YouTube is a platform that unites people from all walks of life.⁵³ The advent of video-capable mobile devices and the ease of uploading means that anyone with a smartphone can create and share video content.

Since it's founding in 2005, YouTube has become not just a social platform, but a major media and entertainment outlet. In fact, YouTube now reaches more people between the ages of 18 and 49 than any cable TV channel in the United States.⁵⁴ And more than half of the platform's traffic comes from mobile devices.

Who Nonprofits Can Reach

YouTube has become a valuable platform for nonprofits because it lets you tell your organization's story through short or long form videos that can be shared with the world. With video, you can bring your work to life by featuring the people you serve, the programs you offer, and the impact you've achieved.

Although YouTube is especially popular with younger audiences (82 percent of people ages 14 to 17 are users), it's influence reaches every generation. More than half of people ages 35 to 54 are users.⁵⁵ What's more, YouTube videos are easy to embed and share on other platforms.

⁵³ YouTube. "Statistics." <https://www.youtube.com/yt/press/statistics.html>

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ eMarketer. "Snapchat's Audience Is Teen-y." <https://www.emarketer.com/Article/Snapchats-Audience-Teen-y/1011335>

The Value of YouTube

Awareness and Education

One of the biggest reasons nonprofits use YouTube is to increase awareness of both their cause and organization. It's a perfect way to reach new *and* old audiences. A great video will delight and mobilize existing supporters and can attract new support when found on YouTube or in a social network.

Nonprofits post content to educate people about the problems they are solving and the programs they execute.



The American Heart Association used a humorous video to show how excess salt can sneak into your diet.

Campaign and Event Promotion

YouTube is also a great way to spread the news of your latest fundraising campaign or upcoming event. Your subscribers will be automatically notified when you upload a video and people that search for related content may have your video suggested to them. Your existing supporters can also share your video on other social platforms like Facebook.



For their 10th annual Kiteboard4Cancer event, Athletes4Cancer created a fun, upbeat video to generate buzz and explain their goal for the event. Viewers learned about the cause and saw how much fun the event would be.

Illustrate Impact and Appreciation

Just as you want to inform your audience and motivate them to donate, it's also important to illustrate what they help you to accomplish. That's why you should create YouTube content that shows the impact your programs make and thanks your supporters for their help.



To thank a group of donors and fundraisers, charity: water created this video to show the clean water system their support funded in Rwanda. A member of the charity: water team explained their approach to bringing clean water to the hilly community and viewers see people enjoying the running water.

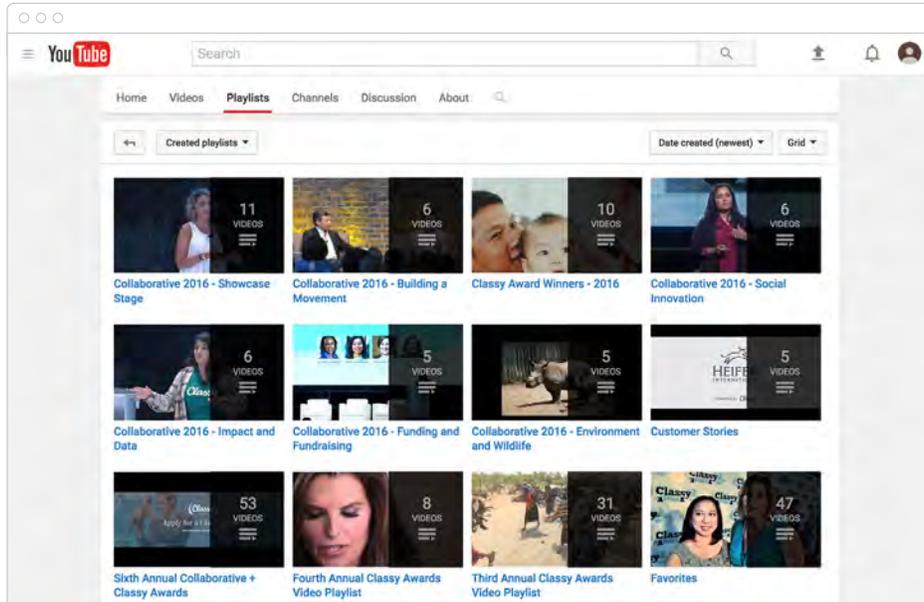
Best Practices

Keywords

Like any content, relevant keywords will help people find your video, whether they are searching within YouTube or Google. In the Tags section you can include many keywords—just be sure to keep them on topic. You should also incorporate keywords into your videos' titles and descriptions to make them easier to find.

Playlists

If you upload frequently to YouTube, create playlists to organize your videos. These make it simple for your viewers to find the content they want and explore your channel. Give your playlists relevant titles that include a descriptive keyword.



Playlists allow users to organize their videos in a way that's easy to navigate. On Classy's YouTube channel, a visitor can quickly identify a category they may want to further explore.

Annotations

Use YouTube's annotations feature to create pop-up ads on your videos. You control the size and placement of the windows, so they can be as subtle or as attention-grabbing as you like. You even control at what point in the video your annotation appears and how long it stays visible. Users can always click an exit button to remove the annotation.



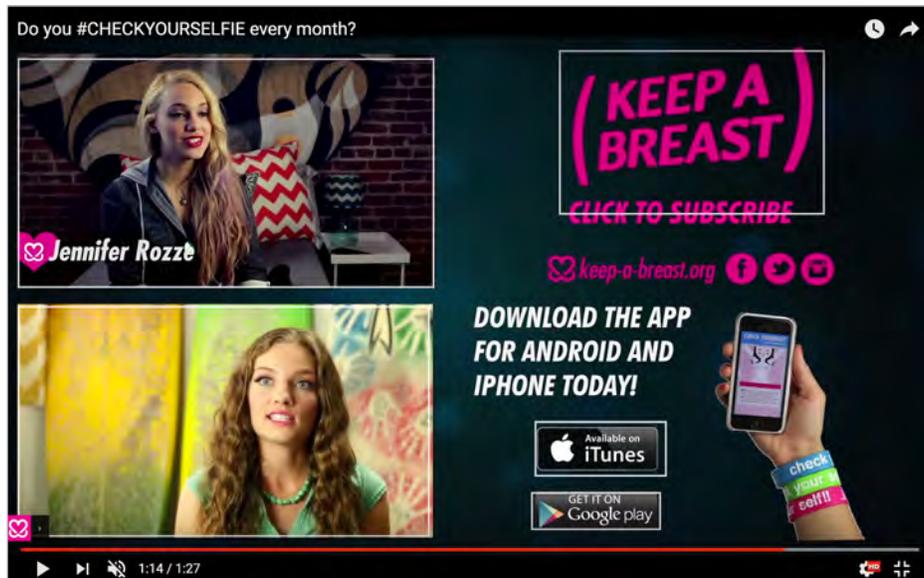
In this video highlighting the achievements of a Classy Award Winner, there is an annotation inviting the audience to nominate their nonprofit for an award.



Cards

You can also add cards to your videos to refer viewers to your channel, other videos, or your website.

You can even add polls to get feedback from your audience.



At the end of Keep A Breast Foundation's video, they used cards to encourage viewers to watch their other videos.

Conclusion

Regardless of your cause or size, YouTube can be a powerful platform to spread your message and garner new support. For more tips on the ins and outs of this channel, download our YouTube Tips Sheet.

For step-by-step instructions and helpful tips, →
check out our YouTube Cheat Sheet for Nonprofits.



LINKEDIN

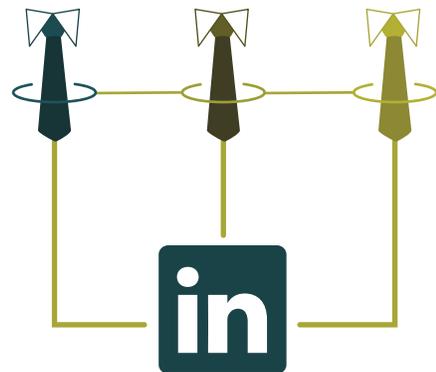
LinkedIn is the world’s largest social network for professionals, with 300 million users in over 200 countries and territories.⁵⁶

Forty-three percent of all marketers found a customer through LinkedIn in 2013.⁵⁷ The network is also known for driving the most customers for B2B organizations. In fact, among B2B businesses’ social media, LinkedIn drives 80 percent of leads.⁵⁸

More so than other social media channels, a LinkedIn presence can be critical for nonprofits looking to establish and expand their web presence as a professional organization. A LinkedIn Company Page can play a valuable role in your nonprofit organization’s social media marketing strategy by growing your professional network and connecting you with others in your sector.

Who Nonprofits Can Reach

With 29 percent of internet-using Americans on LinkedIn, it doesn’t have the wide-ranging popularity of Facebook. But LinkedIn’s focus on professional development and networking make it more pervasive among people ages 30 to 49 (one in three are users) and the affluent and college-educated.⁵⁹



⁵⁶ LinkedIn. "About Us." <https://press.linkedin.com/about-linkedin>

⁵⁷ HubSpot. "18 Fresh Stats." <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/18-fresh-stats-about-social-media-marketing>

⁵⁸ Kissmetrics. "7 Advanced LinkedIn Strategies for B2B Marketing." <https://blog.kissmetrics.com/linkedin-strategies-b2b-marketing/>

⁵⁹ Pew Research Center. "Social Media Update 2016." <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/>



Because the network allows you to see users' employment histories, professional skills, and even volunteer interests, LinkedIn is especially helpful for prospecting board members, skilled volunteers, and new team members. Both growing and well-established organizations can also leverage LinkedIn to find professional partners who want to donate their talents and resources.

The Value of LinkedIn

Your organization's Company Page gives you the opportunity to increase your visibility and engage your audience by sharing updates and news, communicating your story, and building brand awareness.

Here are a few ways to optimize your Company Page content in order to strengthen and expand your professional network:

Use Your Team to Expand Your Reach

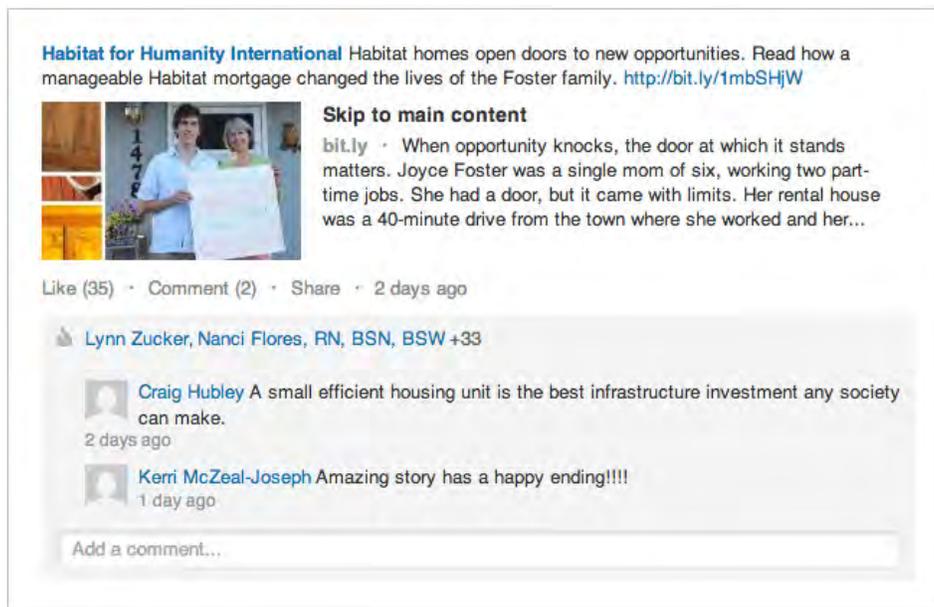
Chances are your staff, current supporters, board members, and volunteers are updating their own LinkedIn pages and employment histories. If you have a Company Page, it enables people in your network to directly link to you on their own profiles, instantly increasing your visibility and potentially driving traffic to your page.



Post Updates to Engage Followers

You can also post your new blog posts, ebooks, or articles as status updates to engage followers. Share relevant facts or helpful content to establish your organization as a knowledgeable resource in your field. You can also ask questions to prompt your followers to interact with your posts.

As a general rule of thumb, keep in mind that quality is more important than quantity. Your posts should only present content that your followers will actually consider valuable.





Build Thought Leadership with Groups

LinkedIn's "Group" pages are the network's most powerful way to connect users with similar interests.

There are thousands of unique discussion pages dedicated to almost every topic under the sun.

Here are a few tips to make the most of LinkedIn groups.

Choose the Right Groups

Participating in a well-moderated group of a few hundred members can often provide more value than a several thousand-member group. Proactively visit and participate in your top groups at least 2 to 3 times a week. It's generally more valuable to seriously invest in a few groups rather than dabble in many.

Build Credibility First

Posting tons of your own content as soon as you join a group can quickly put off group members and moderators. Instead, focus your initial efforts on building a reputation as someone who will add value to the discussion.

Add to Discussions

If you actively participate in groups, it can help to build a sense of authority and trust. Respond to existing comments, ask thought-provoking questions, provide helpful insights, and offer sound opinions to demonstrate the thought leadership of your organization.

Engage With Other Posts

Don't be afraid to promote and engage with other users' posts to help build connections. Like and comment on other group members' posts, and consider sharing valuable ones as a status update on your Company Page. This will strengthen your individual relationships and help others recognize you as a social influencer and sharer.



Locate and Recruit Volunteers

LinkedIn's Volunteer Marketplace is designed to help nonprofit organizations and volunteers find each other. This feature allows nonprofits to post volunteer opportunities in the same way they can post job openings.

While nonprofits have to pay to list their opportunities, it comes at a 90 percent discount to normal job posting fees. The cost of this feature may be worth considering. The 2015 estimated value of volunteer service was \$23.56 per hour, and the specialized skills of some volunteers can be a huge benefit to your organization.⁶⁰

Volunteers are also more likely to remain engaged with your organization and make donations. A 2015 report by Fidelity Charitable found that 87 percent of volunteers also financially supported the nonprofit with which they volunteered. Half of volunteers said they donated more to a nonprofit because they have given their time.⁶¹

It's important to factor the value of these volunteers into your organization's financial statements, fundraising efforts, and hands-on advancement in the field. This can help you gauge whether the Volunteer Marketplace will be a worthwhile investment for your nonprofit organization.

⁶⁰ Independent Sector. "The Value of Volunteer Time." <https://www.independentsector.org/resource/the-value-of-volunteer-time/>

⁶¹ Fidelity Charitable. "Time and Money: The Role of Volunteering in Philanthropy." <https://www.fidelitycharitable.org/docs/volunteering-and-philanthropy.pdf>



Find Your Next New Hire

While nonprofits can and should use LinkedIn to promote their cause and campaigns to volunteers, donors, and fundraisers, don't forget that the network is an important tool for prospecting and recruiting employees.

LinkedIn profiles often give more insight into a candidate's experience and interests than a simple resume. You can also see if you have any contacts in common who might be able to vouch for someone you don't know. Relationships built on LinkedIn can be valuable not only to you personally, but to your organization as well.

Conclusion

LinkedIn is a powerful tool for recruiting talented staff, committed volunteers, and astute board members. Use this platform to cultivate thought leadership and credibility in your space.

CONCLUSION

No matter their size or mission, nonprofits can benefit from investing in their social media presence.

If you identify each platform's distinct value, it will help you to optimize the way your organization communicates and engages with its supporters.

It will also enable you to determine where to focus your efforts in engaging your unique audience. Not all platforms are a good fit for every nonprofit. Track the returns of each channel and allocate your time and resources accordingly.

With an understanding of each network's purpose, along with an arsenal of great content, your nonprofit organization can tap into the value of social media, maximize your online presence, and raise more money for your cause.



Classy

Illustrate Your Impact

Guide to Annual Reports for Nonprofit Organizations

[Read Now →](#)