



Social by Stelter

3 Insights for Building Purpose-Driven Communities

What's This About?

Nonprofits today have more tools than ever before to engage their supporters ... yet many donors still don't feel connected enough to the cause.

Communication Redux

In decades past, people relied upon the handwritten word – often in the form of carefully crafted letters – to maintain a connection with others. Letters not only served as correspondence, they were time capsules of daily life. People also learned about the world, near and far, through phone conversations with loved ones and treasured experiences with books, newspapers and magazines. Communication was thoughtful and it took time. Because back then, we had time.

Today, we chronicle our lives in 140-character bursts and parse through information with an editor's eye. Regardless of physical separation, we can connect with each other more easily than ever before. But, oddly, we often find ourselves at a distance – hungry to truly connect.



Community = Opportunity

→  ←

3,000

The number of
branded messages
a person passively
consumes a day.¹

Social networks are simple, transparent and cooperative places where the conversation is raw, unfiltered and emotional. Social communication is live, real time and viral, and it takes us back to a time where word of mouth reigned. Yet, unlike the ancient tribes formed by a shared geography, today's tribes are online communities of people who share interests and values.

Building a social media community – not just gathering fans – is a way to create an environment where ideas are born and fostered. Your supporters can participate – virtually – with your mission whenever they desire.

The following insights can help you navigate the emerging paradigm of online and offline communication, connect with advocates and form lasting partnerships with your most engaged supporters.

INSIGHT No. 1:

Life is an open book.

Social media hasn't just created an outlet for cat videos and casual dialogues about last night's episode of *Modern Family* – it's a community-wide diary where ideas evolve, a perpetual conversation, a real-time brainstorm.

“People share, read and generally engage more with any type of content when it's surfaced through friends and people they know and trust,” says Malorie Lucich, a communications manager at Facebook.

In the spirit of this new era of openness, donors expect charities to fall in line – drop their guard and reveal more of themselves.

- » About 67 percent of donors say a charity's level of accountability and transparency is crucial when considering a donation.²
- » Three quarters of donors say charities must “demonstrate sound business and operations practices.”³
- » Affluent young donors, in particular, unlike their parents or grandparents, want charities to produce a “measurable impact.”⁴

The Implication: *You can't be too transparent.*

Today, an annual report isn't enough to satisfy a donor's curiosity about your business. They want more. They require consistent and thoughtful engagement.

Key Questions: *What happened today? What problem did you solve?*

For example, GE – using the multimedia sharing site, Tumblr – has done just that.⁵ They post amateur photos from the assembly line showing how some of the world's most awesome machines are built. This type of story is part of the “humanization” of brands because they reveal themselves in an unpolished light.

Your Next Step: *Transport donors behind the scenes.*

Use YouTube, Flickr and Pinterest to help your supporters connect the dots by sharing snippets of your organization's daily life in the field, the office or at play. Show your supporters the work in action – beyond the camera-ready, dictionary-perfect versions you save for the annual report.



1 in 4

Almost one-fourth of major donors, current planned givers and best prospects in their 40s

would like to connect with nonprofits on Facebook.⁶

Some ideas:

- » Mountain of coats and boots gathered at the annual clothing drive
- » A dog being shampooed and scrubbed after his rescue
- » A staff member's car stuck in the mud during a donor visit

INSIGHT No. 2:

Your planned giving pipeline is bigger than you think it is.

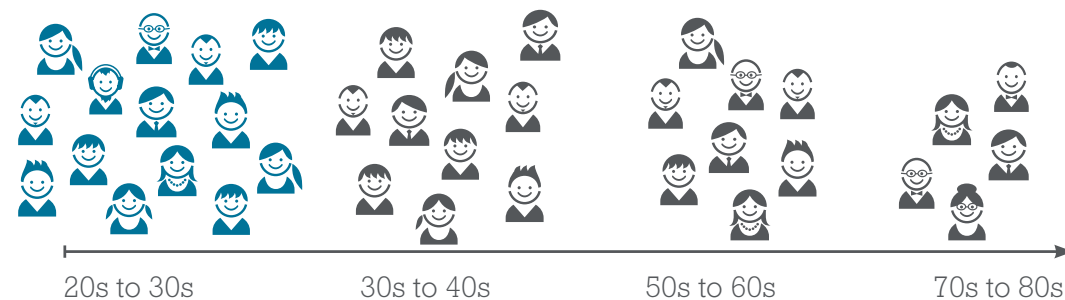
Historically, planned giving prospects have been plucked from a nonprofit's pool of most loyal donors. Stelter's latest research confirms this approach, but also provides a deeper perspective.

Among people who have a planned gift in place, 40 percent had been donating to a nonprofit for 10 or more years at the time of their gift. An additional 20 percent, however, say they had been donating to the nonprofit for less than five years at the time of their gift. Another one in five (21 percent) say they never donated to the charity before putting a planned gift in place. Indeed, the annual giving patterns of 41 percent of current planned givers defy the traditional loyalty model.

Social media provides an opportunity to tap into a wider audience of supporters, identify those who seem the most engaged and accelerate the relationship.

Key Questions: What types of activity – beyond donations – could signal engagement with your mission? Which are the outlets (Pinterest, YouTube, Facebook) where you might best connect with a wider audience of supporters

Need for Engagement





30%

The percentage of donors who say they **stop giving to a charity if they were not treated like a partner** in the charity's mission.⁸

The Implication: Social networks widen your footprint and turn supporters into partners.

Partnering with supporters early and often puts your organization in the position to be their outlet for change. Social media communities, in particular, are an extension of a donor's values and ultimately a reflection of their personal brand – the way they want to be perceived by others. For example, several studies show that charity can help satisfy people's yearning for personal growth and improved self-perception.⁷

Your Next Step: Find your advocates.

Social networks often provide nonprofits with resources and metrics that can help you understand what content is appealing to your supporters. Facebook offers a resource center for nonprofits at www.facebook.com/nonprofits. For help on advanced user data and insights, visit www.facebook.com/insights/.

Resources and tutorials for YouTube can be found at www.youtube.com/nonprofits. For Twitter, visit support.twitter.com and click on “Twitter basics.”

Key Questions: *Who is most active in your social communities? Who advocates on your behalf when you are not in the room? What do they talk about? Why do they care?*

Not only can these questions help identify “under-the-radar” prospects, their contributions in social can also help drive future conversation. Your closest advocates want to grow your organization as well as collaborate with you to shape its future.

Observe and listen. Here's how:

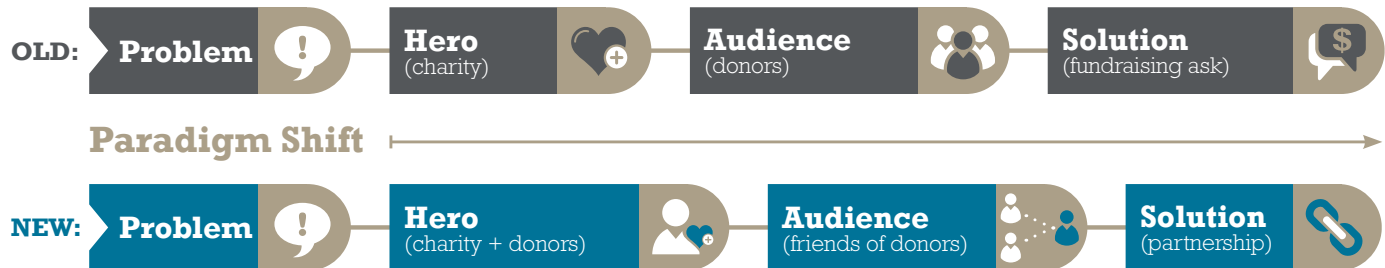
- » Pay attention to the conversations taking place on your nonprofit's Facebook wall or Twitter feed.
- » Run Twitter searches using your organization's name to find out what people are saying outside your official pages about you.
- » Set up an alert at google.com/alerts to inform you of conversations about your organization. Social Mention is another powerful tool that works similarly.
- » Monitor social media pages similar to your cause for shared and contrasting perspectives.

INSIGHT No. 3:

Your supporters can manage your brand as well as you do.

Recently, Proctor & Gamble's Pampers disposable diapers division flew in 15 influential mommy bloggers to the company's Cincinnati headquarters for a brainstorm and tour of the facilities. P&G gained insight as to why mothers would endorse their products, reject their products and where improvement was needed.⁹

This event illustrates a new understanding of the customer-brand relationship today: A community is defined by its leaders. In the era of social media, your leaders are not only the people on your payroll, they're the brand ambassadors – your version of the “mommy bloggers” – who engage with your mission on a grass roots level. Let them promote your cause on your behalf.



The Implication: An army of advocates is within your reach.

Stelter's research identifies family as the most persuasive influence in a donor's decision to make a planned gift. Families, friends and close networks are now the gatekeepers, the trust authority. Identifying your top advocates and empowering them to speak on your behalf makes the message authentic and tangible.

Social + Direct Mail = Impact

One study found that when people touch a direct mail piece, it leaves a deeper impression on the brain than its digital counterpart.¹⁰ According to Stelter research, 24 percent of best prospects would welcome more written communication; increasing to 39 percent of those aged 40 to 49.

By identifying your best prospects through social communities and extending the conversation through offline channels (e.g. direct mail) you can further deepen your relationship with donors.

Your Next Step: Leverage user-generated content to amplify your voice.

Social communities are a valuable source of intelligence and can generate content for use across multiple communication channels. Some ideas:

Cracking the social media code isn't complicated. Donors want to be heard. They want to be connected to other agents of change. And they want to collaborate with your organization to do something meaningful together.



- » Print the comments from Facebook fans in your direct mail pieces.
- » Surface social media posts (i.e. Facebook, Twitter) on your planned giving site.
- » Repurpose shared social media photos (with users' permission) in print and email campaigns.*
- » Publish the results of social media campaigns – such as caption contests, favorite school memories, funniest photo submissions – in print newsletters.

*Be sure to check social media outlet's terms of service policy for attribution purposes.



Enjoy the Ride!

If you're willing to give your supporters access to your organization's day-to-day successes and struggles, converse with them over time and rely on a core group of advocates to sell your cause, you can leverage the power of a purpose-driven community.

Put more simply: Your donors already share aspects of their lives online and use social networks to follow matters of importance to them. It's up to your organization to join the conversation.

Resources

1 "The Converged Media Imperative: How Brands Must Combine, Paid, Owned & Earned"– Media, Altimeter Group Network **2** "Year-End Giving Trends 2012"– Charity Navigator **3** "2012 Bank of America Study of High Net Worth Philanthropy" **4** "Next Gen Donors: Shaping the Future of Philanthropy"– 21/64 and the Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University **5** <http://generalelectric.tumblr.com/> **6** "2012 Stelter Donor Insight Report" **7** "The Hedonistic Paradox: Is Homo Economicus Happier?"– Loyola Marymount University; "Some Key Differences between a Happy Life and a Meaningful Life"– Journal of Positive Psychology **8** *The Disappearing Donor* (Berkey Brendel Sheline, 2005) by Dr. Dale Berkey, Doug Brendel and Dirk Rinker **9** *Advertising Age*; 7/14/2008, Vol. 79 Issue 27, page four **10** "Using Neuroscience to Understand the Role of Direct Mail"– research firm Millward Brown

Let's Talk

If you're unsure where to start, **Social by Stelter** can help. Contact us at 800-331-6881 or social@stelter.com to discuss social media strategies that can bring clarity to your organization while inspiring your community.



The Stelter Company, in business since 1962, provides personal philanthropy marketing services to more than 2,000 leading nonprofits nationwide, leveraging its understanding of philanthropic behavior to micro-target prospects through direct mail, email, Web and social media solutions. Headquartered in Des Moines, Iowa, Stelter is recognized for its deep understanding of donor behavior and how gift planning mechanics, taxes and financial factors affect donors.

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