

Trends Nonprofits Need to Be Aware Of

I came across a brief article the other day while surfing the net looking for trends and issues affecting the nonprofit sector. I liked it because it is short, succinct, interesting and on point (at least I thought so). Here is a summarized version of what I learned. Read it for what it's worth and apply it as you think it might benefit your church or charitable organization.

The Price of Technology

Technology is big, constant and changing. Nonprofits must stay abreast of what's new and understand how technology can be applied to their situations. Things to consider when implementing new technology:

- *Cost* – it can come with a hefty price tag so plan and budget wisely.
- *Execution* – have a detailed plan for implementing any change.
- *Staff readiness and ability to adapt* – the ability of staff to adapt to the change and troubleshoot any technical problems is critical. Outsource for assistance if needed.
- *Ability to Support the Change* – Oftentimes, nonprofits don't have dedicated technical personnel, you must be able to support any change that you adopt, or it will soon be discarded.

Target Your Audience

The more you can target your audience the more effective your message – and budget – will be. Consider delivering your story through a digital marketing platform.

- Solicit blog posts from your members and constituents so the people can get a first-hand look at your organization and gain trust in you. Keep it short and let their passion shine through.
- Build attendance at your upcoming events and activities with a series of posts that are fast and fun. Choose a business-friendly app that lets you put together a quick slideshow video from a series of photos.
- Explore the use of social advertising to augment other traditional methods like print or radio. Don't let the headlines about Facebook advertising scare you off from thinking about cost-effective ad platforms that can integrate directly with user apps or websites.

Who is Carrying Your Message?

Relying on member success stories to engage their friends and the community as a whole is good and there is every reason to continue encouraging your people to share their story but consider other ways to get your message out as well.

- Many nonprofits have a local or regional footprint, so an effective tactic can be the engagement of a “micro influencer”¹ with a typical reach of 10,000-100,000 engaged followers.
- Research suggests² that people are looking toward businesses and nonprofits to take the lead in positively affecting societal change. Your nonprofit can dial in on this by seeking out partners that share the same values or belief system. Partnerships can help boost the message, elevate funding support and increase volunteers, but choose your messenger wisely.

There is Power in Data

While nonprofits have long understood the use of data as it relates to tracking and analyzing programmatic results, its application has not been universally applied to marketing and fundraising.

Gathering and harnessing data on your organization can be both expensive and time-consuming, but it is extremely valuable and will serve as the key to unlocking greater success. Focus on the data that help inform you of the big picture and don’t get too wrapped up in the minutia with things that have little impact on your overall success.

Source: <https://www.martingroup.co>

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¹ Not exactly sure what this is but it sounds like someone with a Facebook page with lots of followers ©

² 2017 Cone Communications Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Report