



How to Fundraise on Social Media

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Introduction

Introduction:

I do not have a passion for fundraising.

Never had. Never will.

Has that stopped me from being tasked with organizing holiday events to raise money for my non-profit organization? Nope. Has it saved me from spearheading online fundraising campaigns? Not a chance.

All over the non-profit world, there are people like me.

People who cringe when it's time to ask folks for money -- no matter how worthy the cause. People who abhor writing (and reading) dry, dull fundraising letters.

People who wish that working in the non-profit world was never synonymous with

fundraising.

It may be hard to admit. But it sure is true.

Fundraising is difficult.

Fundraising is not necessarily fun.

And some people (me included) are worse at it than others.

If you struggle with raising the funds you need for your non-profit organization, this book is for you. If you already *know* that social media can help you raise funds, but you're not quite sure how to best navigate it, this book is also for you. If you're a social media expert, but your fundraising campaigns have raised you a whole lot of nothing (so far), this book is for you.

And, finally, if you already excel at fundraising via social media, more power to you, but don't throw this book out the digital window. Instead, if you stick with us, I bet you'll still learn a few things on the journey.

Let's begin.

PART 1:

The Return on Investment of Fundraising on Social Media

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It's Not About the Money

Every day, I immerse myself in the real life stories of individuals and organizations using Twitter, Facebook, You Tube, Pinterest and other forms of new media to make a difference in the world around them. Nevertheless, it wasn't until researching and writing my book, [Twitter for Good](#), that I took a long, hard look at fundraising on the platform.

In my efforts to explain my [5-step TWEET model for success on Twitter](#), I wanted to make sure to address the main concerns non-profits and social enterprises have – and fundraising always topped the list. In conferences and in 1:1 sessions with non-profit organizations around the world, I get the same questions again and again. Individuals and organizations want to know how to fundraise: how it works, why it works, and when it doesn't.

As I dug deeper into fundraising on social media, I came to a rather startling

conclusion.

Here goes: It's not about the money.

That's right. Fundraising on social media isn't about the money, but the relationships.

What do I mean?

Let's look at a few examples so that you immediately understand this (bold) claim.

If they fly by, don't worry, as we'll go into greater depth later on in the book on each of these case studies.

Born2Fly

We'll talk about this organization later in the book, because they have an interesting fundraising story of using social media to meet their goals. [Born2Fly](#) is an organization dedicated to banishing sex trafficking, and they've worked hard on social media to do so. On September 9 of 2009 (09-09-09), Diana Scimone led a

Twitterthon to raise \$81,000. Did it work? In a word, no. Only hitting a fraction of her goal, Scimone regrouped before her 2010 fundraising campaign to figure out what she could have done better. [Her key insights](#) showed that using the online relationships she had cultivated would make 2010 a better year.

Global Citizen Year

One of my favorite organizations – and one which I share about extensively in [Twitter for Good](#) - Global Citizen Year has an incredibly powerful story of how they were able to garner support using social media.

Global Citizen Year (GCY) (www.globalcitizenyear.org) encourages high school graduates to spend a “gap year” apprenticing for a social enterprise in a developing nation. Some of the best support they ever received came from cultivating a relationship (on Twitter) with Pulitzer Prize winner (and now GCY-supporter) Nick Kristof. Did Kristof write GCY a check? Who knows. But surely one of his thousands of readers did when he wrote about them in his New York Times column.

Overwhelming, in my research for [Twitter for Good](#) I found that – in life – as on

social networks, fundraising is all about the relationships we develop and cultivate.

I've now become so convinced of this fact that I tell everyone. It's time to shout it from the rooftops: The real ROI (return on investment) of fundraising on social media is in the relationships.

Yup. Those messy, blurry, grey area, in-person and online relationships that you develop and cultivate every moment in your waking life. *Those* are the key to fundraising success, and unpacking these relationships can teach us about the real ROI of relationships on social media and how we can harness such relationships to help us raise the funds our organizations need.

How to Measure the ROI of Relationships

Saying that the ROI of fundraising is in the relationships is one thing, but measuring it is a different story.

Although it may sound impossible, it's not – and I've got an idea.

First, let's step back and remind ourselves how we would typically measure the ROI

of a fundraising campaign. Sure, measuring the ROI of a fundraising campaign can be time-consuming, but it's always straightforward. We spent \$1,200 to send out 500 pieces of mail in our direct mail campaign and we netted \$4,500 in donations. Done. We spent \$50,000 to host our annual fundraiser and we received \$200,000 in donations. Understood.

But *relationships*?

How can you possibly measure the intangible? How can I place a value on the intangible connections I make with people in-person or online that lead to untold opportunities, ideas, and collaborations in the years to come?

What was the value of my first meeting with the lovely Beth Kanter a few years ago at the old Twitter offices, where we chatted for far too long about the highs and lows of adoption (and, a little bit about nonprofits and social media)? Who knows. But we still show up in each other's inboxes, so I guess she doesn't hate me.

What is the *value* of the strong connection I've built with [Amanda Rose](#) from Twestival (almost exclusively virtual save the frantic annual "we're in the same

place let's have lunch!" phone call) over the years? Don't ask me. But she gave me a book endorsement when I wrote *Twitter for Good*.

What is the value of Amy Neumann's (<http://www.twitter.com/charityideas>) ongoing, selfless offers to provide support on anything non-profit related on Twitter? Got me. As far as I know she's never made a donation to Hope Runs, the non-profit I started (<http://www.hoperuns.org>), but I'm sure she's told some folks about it.

What is the *value* of one of my most valued relationships in life, my dear friend Lara Vogel? With whom I've traveled the world, worked to change it? Unclear. She does let me crash at her place, though.

Relationships are the key to our lives, and it's no secret that every day of our lives we are in motion (whether we know it or not) to build and foster relationships?

When trying to promote our cause to the world, we yearn for relationships. And to some extent, we all have relationships like this, relationships that we are cultivating or have cultivated or hope to cultivate. We know we need them, we know we

should spend time with them, but we're not entirely clear on how much, or why, especially when it comes to fundraising.

Or are we?

I'm going to go out on a limb and say that we *can* quantify these relationships (to some extent).

I repeat, we *can* break down the real ROI of fundraising on social media.

And here's how.

If you know me, you know I'm fan of simple acronyms that help people remember and implement what I'm teaching.

Heck, I did create the obvious T.W.E.E.T model (Target, Write, Engage, Excel, Track) (<http://clairediazortiz.com/how-to-use-twitter/>) for excelling on Twitter, didn't I?

And now I'm going to do it again.

How to Measure the ROI of Fundraising on Social Media:

Fundraising on social media is about relationships, and we can measure the ROI of those relationships by breaking down the return on investment into three parts.

Return on Investment = Reach, Outcome, Influence

- **Reach:** A relationship you develop becomes more important the larger the reach is. If Susie P has 6 friends on Facebook, and Susie Q has 900, Susie P is probably your better bet. But remember, reach isn't always about numbers. See "Influence" below to better understand.
- **Outcome:** Any relationship that yields tangible benefits is working. Did a three-hour dinner in London with an international aid worker bring you one quality application (the aid worker's Facebook friend, no less) for an outstanding position at your non-profit that you've been trying to fill? Did

you have a blast at the dinner to boot? Even better.

- **Influence:** Is a person merely “popular”, or do they actually have sway in your given area of interest? In one example I share in Twitter for Good, Scott Stratten’s @unmarketing (<http://twitter.com/unmarketing>) Twitter following (which was then about 40,000 followers) clicked more times on the link he sent out of him singing than Ashton Kutcher’s million followers did. Why? Perhaps Ashton’s followers are more interested in watching *Ashton* sing. Likewise, if @Claire (<http://twitter.com/claire>) were to tweet about sports, no one would bat an eyelash. In fact, they would likely run the other direction. Targeted reach is what you’re after.

Specific case studies back up these three points.

Diana Scimone’s organization, Born2Fly (<http://born2fly.org/>), the one I mentioned that is dedicated to banishing sex trafficking, wrote an excellent guest post (<http://www.bethkanter.org/twitterthon/>) on Beth Kanter’s blog (which was reproduced in Twitter for Good) that tells the story of learning from a fundraising

campaign that didn't meet expectations. Her take-away? Build relationships with bloggers to better promote the next fundraiser. It's called REACH.

Fireside International (<http://www.firesidepictures.com/wordpress/>), a non-profit media company in Haiti, needed English-language learning materials for a new school they were building. They reach out to Rosetta Stone, and scored \$18,000 worth of materials. Query a hundred individuals or companies, and one hit may just come through. It's called OUTCOME.

Global Citizen Year (<http://www.globalcitizenyear.org>) is another. The key support they received from Nick Kristof convinced them of the power of Twitter to build relationships in order to garner support. It's called INFLUENCE.

Measuring these specific points will bring you an ROI with all the shiny numbers you've been hoping for. And will teach you immensely about the intangible value of these relationships in the process. In the end, it's a learning curve, and we are all seeking to find the best places to spend the limited time and energy we have to meet our aims.

Ultimately, the success of fundraising on social media highlights what we have always known: to fundraise effectively (in the virtual or the brick-and-mortar world), you need relationships. Be smart about building them, cultivating them, and maximizing them.

Measure them as well. It doesn't make you mean, it makes you smart.

But first, one caveat.

Should We Measure the ROI of Relationships?

I've told you how to do it, and I've made a case for doing it. Now, though, I want to be clear on when you should, and when you shouldn't attempt to measure the ROI of a relationship in your life.

Should

You *should* measure the ROI of relationships when your organization is attempting to justify the time it spends using social media to fundraise, raise awareness, and market its cause. You should measure the ROI of relationships when your board members question having a full time social media manager when you could hire another fundraiser or project manager. You should measure the ROI of relationships any time you want to ensure that you are spending your time in online marketing in productive, mission-critical ways.

These are all times you *should* measure the ROI of relationships on social media, and when doing so can truly give you valuable information that will remind you or enlighten you about the strategies your organization should be engaging in.

Should Not:

But there are also times when you don't want to measure the ROI of relationships on social media, because doing so won't help your aim. Measuring the ROI of my relationship with my brother as carried out via Facebook wall posts, or the

relationship with my best friend as per our Twitter direct messages, is neither effective nor useful. By the same token, measuring the ROI of the time you spend with a donor that contributes 60% of your organization's annual operating budget is also not terribly useful (unless you have another good way to make up for that lost 60%).

Do Personal Relationships Need ROI #s?

Measuring the ROI of relationships is a professional exercise that can prove to help you in determining the strategic direction of your time or energy in fundraising and in relationship building as it can be aided by social media. But measuring the ROI of relationships is not likely a very productive exercise for your personal relationships on social media.

I am all about being productive and ensuring that I am maximizing my time every minute of every day. But maximizing time to achieve my life goals also includes social interaction, and building and deepening personal relationships via social media. In identifying a way to measure the ROI of relationships on social media, I wanted to separate this from my personal use of social media. I did not want this to

turn into an exercise in self-flagellation for the time that I (or you) spend on social media for personal reasons.

If productivity is your aim, and reducing time on social media is your predicted prescription, don't turn to measuring the ROI of your personal relationships on social media to help you eliminate you friends. Instead, choose ways to uplift those relationships while (perhaps) finding ways to cut down your screen-time.

Part 2: Practical Tips

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In this second half of the book we'll be exploring the specific fundraising challenges you or your organization might be confronting in your attempts to tell the world about your cause and gain the financial support you need. In this section, we'll cover a diverse array of topics and scenarios that apply to different organizations of wildly different missions. Remember that although the basics of fundraising on social media may apply to all causes and all organizations, we can learn immensely from specific case studies and tips tailored exactly to a particular situation, and this half of the book aims to provide you these insights.

Importantly, please don't ignore the sections that don't seem to apply to you. Scan them if you wish, but remember that they hold valuable information that you can learn from – even if you don't see yourself in that particularly fundraising “category”. I encourage you to read the other sections, as there is much to be learned even in the activities of others. Even if you are not a sports-related organization seeking to fundraise through a laps walked/run/swum/jumped fundraiser, you can learn from the section on fundraising for sporting events. Why? Because sporting event fundraisers are excellent models for metrics-based fundraising. And the tips and ideas in that section can truly help organizations who may not ever dream of making volunteers strap on a pair of soccer cleats.

Let's see what we can learn.

Cash Fundraising

A non-profit organization that isn't seeking a cash donation is a needle in a haystack. (Or a needle in a field of haystacks.) For this reason, learning how to raise cold, hard, cash is one of the most important skills that individuals on your

team should be working to cultivate and strengthen.

Raising cash on social media is different than raising cash in person or via direct mail, and we want to make sure to acknowledge those large differences while also remembering the extensive similarities. Let's start by taking a look at one of the most successful examples of a non-profit organization using social media to fundraise -- charity:water. If you're a non-profit organization using social media, you've surely heard of this super-star organization. The first non-profit on Twitter to get to one million followers, charity:water has consistently wowed their fans, followers, and online tribes with their innovative approaches to fundraising. Here's a great interview that Beth Kanter did with Paull Young of Charity:Water about exactly what charity:water does to win with online fundraising.

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An Interview With Paull Young from Charity:Water

By Beth Kanter

I first came across [@paullyoung](#) in [September, 2008](#) when he implemented a birthday campaign

as part of [charity:water's September campaign](#). Fast forward a couple of years, and Paull is following his passion for clean water around the world and is the director of digital for charity:water. charity:water continues to be an innovator in the area of online fundraising. Earlier this month, I stumbled upon their [brilliant personalized thank you videos](#). It got me curious about the overall campaign strategy, how they measure success and learning more about what works. [Paull Young](#) agreed to this interview sharing his insights:

1. Share the organization's elevator speech:

[charity: water](#) provides clean and safe drinking water in the developing world, we direct 100% of money we raise to projects. Every September we launch the [September Campaign](#), an online grassroots fundraising campaign targeting a specific issue. This year is our 5th anniversary and we're funding a drilling rig for our partner in Ethiopia that can provide access to clean and safe drinking water to 40,000 people a year. [The 2011 September Campaign. Our 5-year-anniversary video](#) from [charity: water](#) on [Vimeo](#).

2. Can you give me a thumbnail sketch of your strategy and how has it changed over the years?

On September 7, 2006, [Scott Harrison](#) launched charity: water by throwing a birthday party, charging people \$20 to attend, sending 100% of the money to build wells in a refugee camp in Uganda and then proving the work by sending photos and GPS coordinates to every guests. In 2007, 92 people gave up their [September birthdays](#) to bring water to a hospital in Kenya. In 2008, even more people joined and raised over \$1 million for [clean water projects in Ethiopia](#).

In September 2009, we launched [mycharitywater.org](#), a website where anyone could give up a birthday, or run any type of fundraising campaign, for clean water any time of the year. Since then, over 10,000 individual fundraisers have raised more than \$11 million – including over \$1 million for Central African Republic as part of the [2010 September Campaign](#) to bring clean water to all of the Bayaka

people.

3. Tell me about this year's campaign? What are your SMART objectives? What are your key performance indicators? Obviously \$. But how are you measuring along the ladder of engagement – from awareness to conversion to donor?

The overall goal is to raise \$1.2 million online before the end of the year. This will trigger the purchase of a matching rig by a longtime donor Virginia Clay and effectively double the contributions of all our campaigners.

To pass our \$1.2 million target I know we'll need to trigger over 1,200 individual fundraising campaigns. The campaigns will form a long tail, ranging from a few campaigns that can raise tens of thousands, to 2 year olds raising over \$2000.

The most important metric is dollars raised and it is public on our September Campaign site, you can see how much money has been raised against our target and exactly how many fundraising campaigns have been launched. Right now we're just over halfway to our goal of 1,200 fundraising campaigns by October 31.

We're also keeping a close eye on our Google Analytics to ensure that enough people are visiting the campaign page and the conversion rate. We also keep a close eye on the video views for the campaign trailer as well as referrals – we think it's a great piece of content so we hope a lot of people will watch it!

4. Tell me a little about your strategy and tactics. Is this a multi channel campaign? How do you use social media for social fundraising?

Our September Campaign approach mirrors our overall strategy which revolves around building a grassroots movement for clean water based on the power of word-of-mouth. First, we aim to inspire with content. We have two videos on the campaign page that had a great reaction, along with

infographics explaining the campaign and images, banners and other content available for campaigners.

We're then using a variety of predominantly online tools to spread the message to our audience: emails to our supporters using Silverpop, personal outreach to supporters through Facebook and Twitter, and placement of ads in donated media spots such as AOL's Cause Module, Hulu and Meebo. Once we drive people to the September Campaign page, our hope is that they'll be inspired to fundraise. In doing so, they'll set up their own page and begin their own grassroots marketing campaign for the drilling rig. So 1200 September Campaigns become 1200 word-of-mouth efforts. For example, for my personal birthday fundraiser, I've been communicating regularly with my closest friends and family to connect them with the story of the rig.

5. Tell me about charity:water's approach/philosophy to measurement?

It is one thing to collect data, but it is another thing to transform that information in actions and improvements on strategy. How does charity:water do that? How do you report, reflect, and revise what you're doing?

charity: water is a nimble and fast moving organization and our approach to measurement reflects this. We don't spend a lot of time developing formal metrics reports that wind up sitting on a shelf, instead we keep a close eye on key metrics on a daily and monthly basis and use them to guide decision making.

My three person digital team provides data to the rest of the organization to align our team with the progress of the campaign. Right now we send a daily email to our executive team pointing out the campaigns started and funds raised the day before, as well as our progress towards the goal trended against last years campaign. One good example we had with this campaign was using Optimizely to run a test of three different video thumbnails on the page to see which one would drive more engagement from users. We tested an image of our Founder, one of the rig and a shot of a clean water well and then chose a winner after two weeks that remains on the page.

6. What is your advice to other nonprofits that want to integrate social

media into their fundraising campaigns and use measurement to make it more successful?

Do it wrong quickly! If you are set up to measure something the right way every test is valuable, even if you don't get the result you hoped for. Define clear objectives that tie directly your mission and monitor them rigorously.

Understand what levers you have to influence results – in the case of the September Campaign for us this includes: Increase traffic to the pag, Increase number of campaigns started, Raise the average amount raised by campaigns, Identify major donors and other revenue opportunities that can contribute to our goal.

There are a plethora of free tools you can use for online measurement but it is easy to get lost in the details. Identify the key metrics that matter for you and remember: the greatest analytics engine of all is the human brain!

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We can all learn from successes, and charity:water is just such a success. Again and again, they win at their campaigns, meet (and surpass) their lofty goals, and live to tell about it. But in the world of online fundraising, remember that we can also learn from campaigns that aren't as successful. As I mentioned earlier, I want to take a look at an important lesson about the challenges of raising cash on social media from Diana Scimone, founder of Born2Fly (www.born2fly.org).

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Lessons Learned from a Twitterthon

by Diana Scimone, founder of Born2Fly

Born2Fly launched the 09/09/09 Twitterthon to raise money to stop child trafficking. Our goal was 9,000 people giving \$9 each on 09/09/09—or \$81,000. We didn't come close to raising that amount, but learned a lot about using social media tools like Twitter to promote and raise money for a cause. We used those insights to design our Twitterthon on 10/10/10. Our goal this time around was—you guessed it—10,000 people giving \$10 each on 10/10/10. Here are the lessons we have learned:

Build Your Base First

That's a key for any kind of fundraising, and it's no different for a social media fundraiser. We tried a very limited Twitterthon a few years ago, and it ended up with a big fail-whale on it—because I was new to Twitter and hadn't built any relationships. So I spent a year getting to know people and letting them know me. When it was time for 09/09/09, I didn't have to scramble to find retweeters or bloggers; they were there.

Think Big, But Don't Set Your Goal in Concrete

Aim for somewhere between “gutter” and “Are you out of your mind?” On 09/09/09, I was so focused on raising \$81,000 that I missed the amazing point that raising over \$20,000 in one day via social media was phenomenal. Those funds allowed us to pay for the pre-prep for the wordless book that's the centerpiece of The Born2Fly Project—illustrations, design work, professional scanning, and a lot more.

Don't Focus on Your Goal

So we didn't raise \$81,000 the first time out. What we got was even more valuable: an entirely new group of donors, many of whom have continued to give all year long. You can't get that kind of loyalty or enthusiasm by buying a mailing list.

Widgets Work

ChipIn worked great for us in 2010. If someone makes a donation via the ChipIn widget on, for example, the Born2Fly website, the totals update on all the widgets throughout cyberspace.

Don't Assume People Know What You've Been Working on 24x7

Late in the evening on 09/09/09, I DM'd a few people I assumed followed my every breath—and I was shocked to find they didn't even know about the Twitterthon. I thought I'd Tweeted about it so much that Twitter was going to suspend my account for spamming—yet many of my followers didn't even know about it. So this year I DM'd and emailed my best contacts well ahead of time and asked if they would help retweet before the event and the day of the event.

People Love Information

I knew people needed information about what child trafficking is, so I put together an info sheet. It gave them plenty of material to post on their blogs—or to use when writing their own stories. I did the same thing the following year, but incorporated it all into a news release format.

Everyone Loves a Good Logo

Having our own 09/09/09 Twitterthon logo worked great (thank you, @CathleenKwas), and we did an update of it for 10/10/10 using the same font and overall design. We sent it to bloggers, media, and anyone who'd open the file. I started a separate Twitter account for the first event (@09-09-09), but it proved more trouble than it was worth, so I didn't do that again.

People Need to Know What the Funds Will Be Used For

The more specific we can be about describing that, the better. We emphasized that once we finished testing the B2F educational materials in the Dominican Republic, we would begin distributing them all over the world to schools and organizations that have been patiently waiting for them. So we needed money to print and money to ship.

Get Professional Help When You Need It

For 09/09/09 I worked with Christine Moore (@epiphanymediapr), who crafted an excellent, targeted news release that gained us a lot of exposure. For 10/10/10, I updated her release (and also worked with her to send it out to media). In September, @HelpaReporter (HARO) ran an ad for @PRWeb offering a free news release for new users. We jumped right on it, used most of what Christine wrote for us, and then scheduled it for release the week before the Twitterthon.

Don't Sweat the Small Stuff

For 09/09/09, I spent far too much time getting prizes and then blogging about them to try to create

excitement about the Twitterthon. For thirty days leading up to the event, I blogged about one of the prizes, linking back to the donating company and somehow connecting it to the fight to stop child trafficking. It was great to have prizes, and they did draw people, but when I factored in my time, the ROI was low.

Major in Media

For 09/09/09, I spent a lot of time contacting digital media and got some excellent coverage. Having so much media coverage was huge and allowed us to go way beyond my own two-thousand-plus Twitter followers and the people on our mailing list. The following year I followed up with many of those same reporters; in some cases it worked and we got a repeat story, and in other cases it didn't.

Ask What You Did Right—And What You Did Wrong

The week after 09/09/09, I emailed Tweeps (mutual followers) and bloggers who were especially helpful promoting the Twitterthon and asked for their feedback:

1. In your opinion, what worked? What didn't?
2. Any suggestions or ideas you'd like to share about B2F, the Twitterthon, or our future direction?
3. Would you like to stay involved with B2F—and if so, how?

When I was planning 10/10/10, I read through their replies and tried to incorporate them. The best piece of advice? From @JonSwanson: "Celebrate what happened; it's a huge deal."

Jon is right. Although we didn't hit our financial goal, we hit many others we didn't even realize at the time. It was a huge deal.

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I believe this fundraising story is so powerful primarily because it acknowledges what happens when it doesn't work the way you wanted it to. In 2009, Born to Fly simply did not raise the funds they hoped to. Ultimately, however, this helped them to develop a stronger strategy for the future. When 2010 came around, Born to Fly was able to take on a tougher challenge, with greater confidence.

The Born to Fly story also tells us about the importance of tracking. In [Twitter for Good](#), I share a five-step model for success on Twitter. The last step in this five-step model, is Track. Ultimately, you will never know if you have reached your goals in life you are measuring them. As the Born to Fly story shows, tracking is essential to learning what you did right and what you did wrong.

As Scimone explains in her piece above, there were a couple of key factors that prevented them from raising all the funds they had hoped for. One factor, as we have mentioned or, relates to influence. Influencers are critical parts of any fundraising campaign, and no matter what you are fundraising for, you need to ensure that there are influencers involved who can help you reach your goals.

All About Influencers

What is an Influencer?

Influencers—in the traditional sense—are often thought of as celebrities. But this is not always the case. Sure, many philanthropic celebrities like Mia Farrow or Matt Damon would be clear cache for a fund-raising gala, but ultimately an influencer is someone who helps you find interested donors and supporters. If a high-profile celebrity is only going to show up at your event for ten minutes – and not lend their name to the event beforehand – it may not be very useful. In contrast, a well-connected businessman you have never heard of may be just the ticket to helping you find the donors who are truly interested in your cause. The key, of course, is in making sure that you as a fundraiser are always looking out for your influencers.

This includes two things.

How to Take Care of an Influencer:

Firstly, you need to be taking care of existing influencers. Every organization has key individuals who regularly provide support – by giving new donors, providing you with great contacts to media, or by volunteering regularly. These are the people that you need to ensure you are always thinking about.

Secondly, you need to find new and existing supporters. The people who already support you, and who already have power, are the most likely to help you find new supporters, and you never want to ignore them. Additionally, you want to ensure that you are always looking out for new supporters on your own as well. Are you mining lists of interested celebrities passionate about your cause? Are you following up with such individuals? These are key steps that should be taken by any non-profit organization or foundation eager to gain high profile support. These actions must be taken year in and year out. Just because you have a couple influencers on your board of advisors does not mean you should stop reaching out for more.

The Hidden Influencer:

Finally, you need to remember that influencers are not always wearing a bright pink hat reading “influencer” on the front – and so being carefully aware of who you are dealing with – and how you are treating them – is essential. I love the story I once heard someone tell at a conference. The speaker was explaining the importance of paying attention – kind attention – to everyone you come into contact with, and told the story of a friend who showed up at a party to find a man struggling across the threshold with an oversized water jug. Although many individuals ignored the awkward difficulties of the massive load he was carrying, the speaker’s friend didn’t. Turns out, the man carrying the water jug was a powerful one – one of the founders of Twitter, no less.

You never know who you are talking with, and it’s always important to be as respectful, courteous and on your game as possible.

Here are some more strategies that apply in general to cash fundraising.

Never Say No (or, never take no for answer)

Part of the key in getting a cash donation is making sure not to say no. One day, I was walking down the street in San Francisco on my way home from work. A block ahead of me I saw a girl with headphones in her ears dancing by herself. She seemed to be gesticulating towards me – and I was, well, confused. As it got closer, I realized that she wanted me to take off my headphones (I was also wearing headphones) to talk to her. So I did. Immediately thereafter, I realized she was fundraising.

As soon as she began to ask me for money for the orphans and vulnerable children she was representing, I said to her something along the lines of “I’m sorry but I’m not going to be giving you any cash today.” What I meant – but what I didn’t say - had something to do with the fact that I was also passionate about her cause but my current donations were being directed to my own non-profit organization helping specific children in a similar situation.

She knew how to do her job, though, and had a great answer for the brief comment I had handed. “That’s okay–I’m not asking for cash,” she said. And then she handed

me a credit card form I could fill out at leisure. Although mildly annoyed to have been accosted on the streets and then to have my NOs rebuked, I had to admire her. She was persistent, good at her job, and definitely didn't take no for an answer. When you're looking for someone who's good at fundraising, or you are looking to follow through fund-raising skills, these are critical talents.

Ultimately, whether on social media or in the real world, fundraising is – to some extent – about not taking no for an answer. However, it is key to know how this concept of not taking no for an answer differs on social media. Again, social niceties do apply – but the logistics may be different.

When you're seeking cash online, don't throw all the social norms you know about in-person fundraising out the window.

How to Be Social About Fundraising On Social Media

Let's look at one example: Martin is trying to raise funds for his environmental non-profit organization, which works to help clean up California beaches, a topic he is passionate about. Social media, he has found, is one great way to raise funds for

their beach cleanup volunteer days and other critical programming.

Martin decides to run a holiday fundraising campaign on Facebook and Twitter. For 25 days leading up to Christmas, Martin will be writing three messages (in the form of Tweets or Facebook status updates) each day. Each message will be one fact about a California beach, and one specific tip for how you can help take action on getting it clean. This act will come in the form of a dollar amount tied to a particular action the nonprofit can take with the funds. For example, one past tip reads, "It cost five dollars a day or volunteer to help us clean up the beach. Can you help pay for a volunteer today?" Although Martin understands the concept of persistence and following up when fundraising in person or over the telephone, he's not sure how that applies to social media. Might it be too invasive to keep sending the same ask again and again?

Given the challenges Martin is facing, and the goals he has (to raise money to clean up California's beaches on social media), here are a few specific things Martin can do to win:

1. It is essential that Martin realizes he needs to send out his asks – all three

per day – more than once. When people think of social media as a way to talk with others, this may sound counter-intuitive at first. After all, you don't call up your best friend three times in a day to say exactly the same thing, right? However, when fundraising on social media you have to remember that you are never sure if your audience is listening at that exact moment. To account for this, it works to repeat your message.

2. Worried about annoying your followers (the ones that were listening) by repeating your message? Change up your wording. Specific wording of a message is an essential element to getting someone to make a donation. For that reason, non-profit organizations spend time copy-writing fundraising pleas – whether verbal or written. Use this time spent copy-writing to your advantage by varying up the same message so that it can come across in different ways. This will help you convey your message as many times as possible so that all your followers and friends can see, without being worried about annoying others with the exact same ask.
3. Finally it is essential to remember that even when fundraising on social media (and not “in person”) you can make it personal. We've all heard fundraising statistics that show that the percentages of folks that will respond to a personal letter or personal verbal request for a donation are

higher than those who get a generic ask. When using social media as our means of making the fundraising ask, we need to remember this. Although social media is inherently virtual and not face to face, you can still make that personal ask of someone you know *personally*.

Action steps:

- Have your fundraising campaigns on Facebook, Twitter, and other new media platforms been great successes or minor let-downs? If they succeeded, what factors contributed?
- If not, can you re-measure the “success” of a campaign in influencers reached and relationships made (with the long-term eye towards cash) to

change the picture?

In-Kind Donations

Do Charities Want Your Cast-Offs?

When my non-profit organization, [Hope Runs](#), received our first batch of 200 donated running shoes, I screamed with excitement. Within six months, though, we had enough running shoes to outfit all the AIDS orphans participating in athletic programs in all the East African orphanages we worked in until 2015. “No more donated shoes!” It was my co-founder screaming this time. “We simply can’t afford them!”

The problem that Hope Runs has faced in recent years – having too many shoes – is an interesting one, one that many non profit organizations run up against, and one that former President Clinton forgot to mention in his recent tome on philanthropy.

As the co-founder of a non-profit organization, I love to get people involved in our cause – implementing extracurricular programs in athletics, education, and business for orphans living in AIDS orphanages. I genuinely enjoy making donors feel involved, and encouraging them to care about the greater issues that our organization attempts to address. But over time, I have seen that the burden of making people feel they have contributed may be taxing our own organization and

non-profit organizations everywhere.

Here's why.

People give us running shoes because it takes them time – not too much, but just enough – to find their old running shoes, wash them (hopefully), perhaps collect others, and then mail them to our handy US postal address. It's just enough of a task to make anyone think they've done their daily good deed. People also give shoes because it doesn't involve spending money – when we've encouraged individuals to foot the measly four-dollar cost of shipping to Africa, the shoes stop pouring in. Money, it turns out, is hard to get people to part with.

By the same token, we ask for shoes because it doesn't mean asking for money. In what is hardly a shocker, it turns out **it is far easier to ask people for what they were planning on putting in the trash anyway**. "Please wash them first," I pathetically request when I'm being pushy.

And we're not alone. Organizations everywhere beg for your cast-offs: the hair you cut for cancer patients, the canned foods in the back of your cupboards for

someone else's Thanksgiving dinner. But no matter what donors think, these organizations are rarely asking for these things because they need them. Really, if given the choice, 99% of such non-profit organizations would beg you for money instead, and buy their own canned goods at a fraction of what you're paying. But the reason they don't is that you wouldn't listen. Case in point? They are asking, loud and clear, for money, and you're not giving.

In the worst care scenario – and the most frequent scenario – what you're giving is actually costing the organization – in money, time, or manpower to care for the “things” that they don't really need but will try to find a way to put to use. For every pair of shoes that Hope Runs gets, it costs us four dollars to get them to East Africa. Without shipping, airline or military contracts, this is the best we can do. And it doesn't take a genius to guess that we're not getting four dollars a pair from our trusty shoe donors.

Even though all the kids in Hope Runs programs are outfitted, we do love sending the shoes to Africa and passing them out to others. Good Nikes simply can't be bought for four dollars in Kenya, and it's great to put them on the foot of a child who will use them. When we can afford it. But we usually can't, and so the good

shoes you worked hard to collect just go sitting in a New Hampshire barn until we get a windfall of cash.

One winter day in 2007, when my cofounder realized that her parents' barn – the one housing the shoes – couldn't hold any more, she told me we should stop. Put a sign on our website, she suggested. "Thank you, but we can't handle any more shoes."

We didn't, of course, as we didn't want to alienate donors. By being nice, and letting donors give, we hoped that in a few years they'd write us the check we really need.

*

I have long held a strong opinion on in-kind donations. Of course, they are valuable. But to what extent? To make a gross generalization, in-kind donations are usually less valuable to the organization than the donor believes. To make another gross generalization, the individual donating an in-kind donation typically values the item more than it should be valued.

Sure, there are exceptions, but this is the (sad) reality. Let my story of the years I've spent immersed in used running shoes be a lesson (and a warning). If you are a non-profit organization soliciting in-kind donations, you have an amazing chance to receive great items – because people part much easier with discarded items than with cash. But you *must* proceed with caution.

Let's look at one great example of how individuals love giving specific items when they know those when and how those exact items (and not their general donation) will be used.

Fireside International and Rosetta Stone

Fireside International is a non-profit media organization based in Haiti. When they were planning a new English class for their language school, they wanted to serve their students with the best: Rosetta Stone. Unfortunately, at a price tag of more than \$18,000 for the licenses they needed, it was out of reach. That's when Luke Renner, founder of Fireside International, came up with a great idea. Read his words as he describes the generosity of Rosetta Stone in meeting a need.

Best part? It all started with a tweet.

*

TECH SUPPORT: Rosetta Stone in Haiti (<http://www.firesidepictures.com/wordpress/?p=888>)

By Luke Renner

Corporate Social Responsibility is one of those things that sets companies apart.

In the past few weeks, we have been overwhelmed with the goodwill of certain companies. One of those companies is Rosetta Stone (www.RosettaStone.com), a company that provides the absolute best language-learning tools available today.

With Rosetta Stone's unique tools, students can learn in a very intuitive and natural way, much like you learned your own native language when you were a child. And it's not just happy chatter . . . this software really works! As if that weren't enough, in addition to delivering the best language-learning software on the market, Rosetta Stone cares for people around the world who are in need.

Thanks to a generous contribution of software to The Caribbean Institute of Media

Technologies, some of the people of Haiti are now in a much better position to succeed.

Already, hundreds of people have signed up to take the course, with more signing up every single day. Each is incredibly grateful for the opportunity to learn American English in such a vibrant and powerful way!

It's companies like Rosetta Stone that help to make the world a better place.

For that we say, "Thanks so much!"

*

Although examples like this show the incredible generosity that large companies like Rosetta Stone, keep in mind that in-kind donations can also come from private individuals. Here's another story from Mark Horvath, a chief evangelist in empowering homeless communities throughout the US.

Mark Horvath and a Homeless Christmas

This post was originally written by Mark Horvath on December 21, 2009 and published on The Huffington Post.

([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-horvath/twitter-magic-brings-mira b 398669.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-horvath/twitter-magic-brings-mira-b-398669.html))

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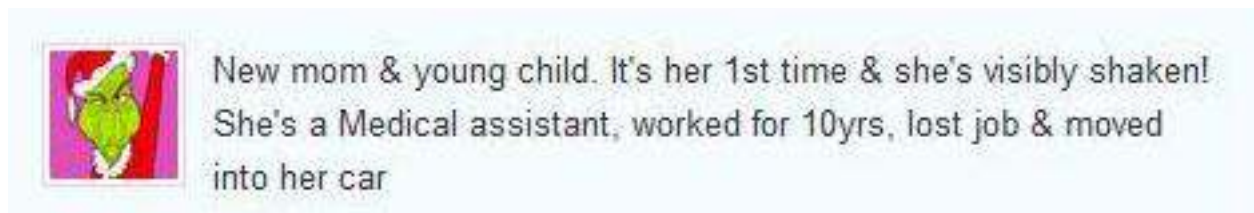
Twitter Magic Brings Miracle to Homeless Family

By Mark Horvath

On Saturday night, I was part of a miracle that I still cannot believe happened. When I woke up the next morning I had to [watch this video](#) several times for it all to sink in (I also have it later on in this post).

This miracle was broadcast to the world in real-time via social media. Twitter played a monumental role in bringing smiles to the faces of a homeless family on their first night in the shelter system.

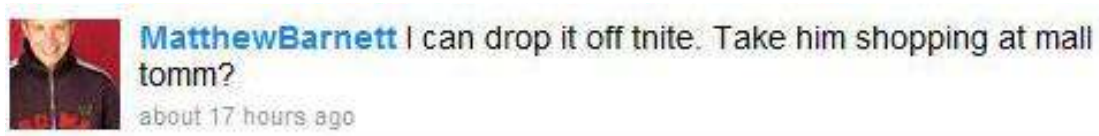
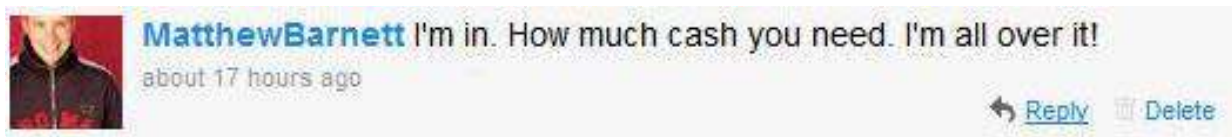
Below are a few tweets that will allow you to witness the miracle unfold for yourself:



The winter shelter is no place for children so we drive families to a hotel and voucher them until we can find a more permanent solution. This single mom was living in a van with her 9 year-old son. When the city towed their van they lost EVERYTHING. I checked the family into hotel and then took them grocery shopping. Mom told me that they desperately needed a change of clothes. Another woman at the shelter has an urgent need for clothes so I broadcast the needs via [twitter](#).



Almost instantly [Pastor Matthew Barnett](#) from [Los Angeles Dream Center](#) sent me the following direct messages:



Because the only clothes this mother and child had were on their backs I didn't feel we could wait another day. I searched the GPS on my phone and the closest store was Walmart. I tweet I was headed there. Soon I received this:



Pastor Matthew called me. He asked me to pick out a nice toy for the boy and suggested a [Nintendo](#)

[DS](#). The Los Angeles Dream Center is the church that helped me off the streets. Matthew Barnett has been caring for homeless people for over a decade. He knows people without housing cannot carry lots of stuff so a portable video game is a perfect gift. Even typing this now thinking about last night I get emotional. Last night I was a wreck!



I'm holding back tears! [@matthewbarnett](#) is on his way to meet us at walmart to bless this family! Oh crap, too late can't hold em back :)



The family is shopping for clothes, [@matthewbarnett](#) asked us to pick out a NICE toy for boy, family doesn't know ! Gonna be a WOW night :)



[@hardlynormal](#) almost there buddy! Tell him to get his favorite. Spare no expense.



[@MatthewBarnett](#) have a 'gift' at register waiting. Mom is grabbing clothes! They dont know! You're gonna make us all cry



Mom just said she hasn't bought clothes in a long time she wants to cry. Wait until we get to register we'll all cry. Maybe I can live steam

I opened the [Ustream](#) app. and started to [broadcast over the net](#). Ustream cuts up the clips so I edited them together. The following YouTube video is what I broadcast from my phone last night:

Response was immediate and overwhelming. Here are just a very few:



markvanbaale Hey [#invppi](#) [@hardlynormal](#) Thanks for sharing this moment with us over the live stream (InvisiblePeople.tv live > <http://ustre.am/3Ht5>)

1 day ago from Ustream



KatArmstrong Hey [#invppi](#) Mark - I am crying. PLEASE hug Jordan and his mom from me. TY for sharing this (InvisiblePeople.tv live > <http://ustre.am/3Ht5>)

1 day ago from Ustream



jval2009 Hey [#invppi](#) [#invppi](#) awesome live now <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/invisiblepeople-tv> (InvisiblePeople.tv live > <http://ustre.am/3Ht5>)

1 day ago from Ustream



DKdanielkim RT [@hardlynormal](#): Hey! I'm live on Ustream from my iPhone - <http://ustre.am/3Ht5> // watching Mark in action, live. Compassion live. [#invppi](#)

1 day ago from TweetDeck

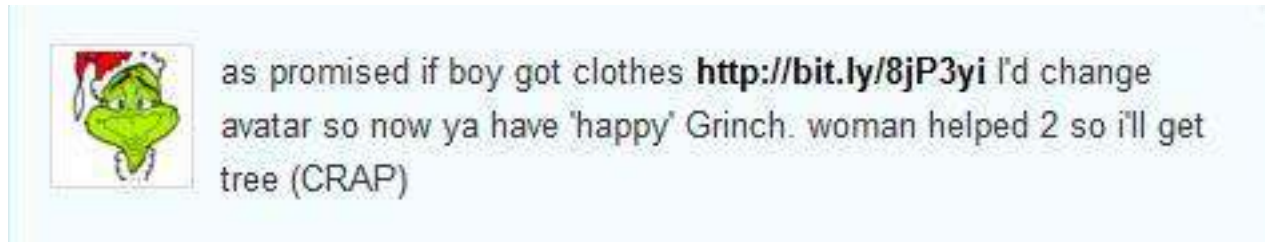


KatArmstrong **THE most amazing and moving thing I've seen in my life.** I HAD to blog. <http://bit.ly/8q3E7O> THANK YOU [@hardlynormal](#) and [@MatthewBarnett](#)

My friend [Kat Armstrong](#) wrote a post before we all got home. Please read her [powerful post here](#).

For as long as I can remember I have hated this time of year. As a tradition I keep wherever I live 'Christmas free' to escape the holiday madness. No Christmas music, no Christmas decorations, and especially NO CHRISTMAS TREES! To reflect my holiday 'mood' I even change my avatar to the mean

Grinch. While rushing to Walmart I must have been out of my mind and tweet that if someone helped this 9 year-old boy I'd change my avatar, and if someone helped the woman with clothes I'd get a tree.



I will be getting a tree this weekend! Merry Christmas! Last night I learned that to see miracles one must be in a place where miracles happen - that place is helping other people.

*

These stories are powerful reminders of the importance of in-kind donations, and the downside to them for a large organization.

Action Items for In-Kind Donations:

- Does your organization regularly receive in-kind donations? If so, which of these are actually put to good use by your organization, and which are not? Is there one category of in-kind donation (say, used clothes) that consistently prove of low value and you simply end up donating? If so, think seriously about no longer accepting this class of goods. If it's taking up too much of your organization's time, and isn't proving useful, it's a good time to say no.
- What kind of in-kind donations could you use, and how could you best find ways to procure them. Instead of spending time seeking used shoes (that are comparatively inexpensive) what about putting your hours towards trying to find used computers from companies seeking to upgrade? Are there any examples in your organization of "big-win" in-kind donations that

would really help move the needle on your programming?

Fundraising for Sponsorships

The world of sponsorships as a form of fundraising is an interesting and dynamic one that plays into the very strengths of fundraising at its best – forming personal relationships. Sponsorships (the act of giving a specific donation to a specific beneficiary that a non-profit organization is serving) is appealing to donors, and has had great success for generations.

New media opens wide the doors for sponsorships as a form of effective

fundraising because it allows the individual donor to connect with the individual beneficiary that much easier. As a result, a number of successful sponsorship campaigns are launched and carried out via social media and new media each year. Bloggers are ripe to host such campaigns, and more and more we see bloggers using their power on new media to promote the work and causes of non-profit organizations.

When a blogger develops relationship with someone they want to help, they develop a connection that conveys itself to the blogger's readers – promising the readers themselves the same such connection if they engage in a like sponsorship.

The effect of seeing someone else help, and then being inspired to do it yourself, works. More than works, it works well.

When Tsh Oxenrieder, author of Organized Simplicity and Editor of Simple Mom (simplemom.net) and the Simple Living Media family of websites joined Compassion International on a blogger's trip to the Philippines in May of 2010, she knew that she would be tasked with blogging about her journey.

Alongside other high profile bloggers also on the journey, Tsh provided her readers with honest, powerful insights into the world of Compassion International on the ground in Manila, and as a result was able to garner great support for Compassion International from her readers. I watched along with the rest the world as the bloggers had powerful experiences with the Compassion International sponsored children and their families, and was moved by the many excellent stories they told about their time in Manila.

Compassion International was the clear sponsor of the trip, and the organization was careful to choose bloggers who had supported them in the past, and were likely to do so in the future. During the week they spent in the field, Compassion asked the bloggers to write daily. This meant that these bloggers were creating new, original, powerful content on a daily basis while in the Philippines. Given that their days consisted of meeting with Compassion International grantees and their families, this meant that their blog posts clearly centered on Compassion International. Here is an example of a just such a post. In this post on Simple Mom (simplemom.net), Tsh Oxenreider shares about her day while also encouraging her readers to help support Compassion International:

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So That Others May Simply Live

By Tsh Oxenreider

June, 1, 2011

I went to Kim and Moises' house today. These two teenage brothers live in a neighborhood on top of a marsh — as in, there's a concrete sidewalk leading to their house, with putrid water under floating rafts of trash on either side.

Their mother works as a seamstress in a factory, and their father is in Saudi Arabia. They also have a younger sister, who was napping in a neighbor's home upstairs earlier this afternoon.

These two young men are a great example of how the organization does so much more than give their family money each month.

[Stephanie](#), [Shaun](#), and I went to their home to say hello and hear how [Compassion](#) has affected their lives.

See, Compassion is an organization that [focuses specifically on developing the whole child](#). Poverty affects so much more than the ability to get rice on the table. It affects your ability to think well, to find your place in the community, and to have hope.

And Compassion cares about those things, too.

1. Cognitive Needs

Kim and Moises live in squalor, but they go to college. It's not quite like "college" like you and I know, but it's a good education, one that provides the chance at a future.

The elder brother is studying education to become a teacher.

The younger is studying civic engineering.

As a seamstress, their mother brings home about \$100 per month, yet these boys' tuition is much more than that. **Compassion helps pay for their tuition and books.**

I mentally fast-forwarded to the future when Moises said he wanted to design houses. He told us this as he stood mere inches from the warped and mildewed cardboard ceiling in his own. **Maybe in a few years, he could design and build a more stable home for his family.** Maybe for his neighbors, too.

2. Social and Emotional Needs

When [a child is sponsored through Compassion](#), they're part of a local Child Development Center. Here, they go to a weekly "meeting" of sorts where they have classes, sing music, learn life skills, and eat lunch. Sometimes, they learn how to play guitar or [to paint as a means of expression](#).

Today, the kids had classes about what it means to be a genuine friend. They talked about what it meant to be trustworthy and honest. They also drew pictures as an object lesson on how we're all created equally unique.

Other times, they may hold classes on how to share their feelings appropriately, or who they can trust as a "safe person" in their life. **And because this is all taught from local Compassion staff and volunteers, it's automatically culturally-appropriate.**

3. Physical Needs

Food, clothing, and shelter. These are things that come relatively easy for most of us. Moises and Kim have stepped out of their large box of a home and into a swamp for the past 10 years. They get their water from a faucet shared by multiple neighbors. They sleep on the floor on pieces of cardboard.

These boys both have sponsors from Australia, and **their \$38 support provides them with these basic physical needs**, along with the tuition and books mentioned above. They also

receive [occasional Christmas gifts of around \\$20](#) from their sponsors, and their mother uses this extra money to buy their clothes for the year.

4. Spiritual Needs

All these things happen through the local church. [Compassion unabashedly works through indigenous churches](#), and Kim, Moises, and 300 other children all find care through a neighborhood church. There is a remarkable difference between the kids with Compassion sponsors and the myriad children we passed today, equally stuck in poverty.

That difference is hope.

Today, Kim and Moises prayed for Stephanie and her family. They prayed for the Langfords.

And why not, after all? We are brothers and sisters in Christ. We share the same hope.

No child is ever required to be a Christian in order to be sponsored. In fact, many sponsored children around the world aren't. **Jesus healed, fed and loved without discrimination, and so does Compassion.**

A reader asked a good question on Twitter yesterday:



@SimpleMom Do you know how much the family actually gets from what you donate every month?

Compassion has made a commitment to always give, at **minimum**, 80% of all sponsor funds directly for the child's needs. The four things mentioned above are provided to Kim and Moises because their two sponsors in Australia give \$38 monthly. Head [here](#) to see how Compassion breaks it all down. I've been around a lot of non-profits and ministries, and I'm honestly blown away by the financial integrity

I've seen this week from Compassion.

If you care about [holistic child development](#), and want to provide these four types of needs for a child like Moises or Kim, or [Emily](#), or [Mary Rose](#), or [John Mark](#), or [Denise](#), or [Stacey](#), or [Precious](#), head [here](#) to find the ones waiting for **you**.

It's cliché, yes, but \$38 per month is like nine lattes for us. [Totally doable](#).

*

Tsh's evangelism of Compassion International didn't end with the blog posts during their trip.

Long after the trip, Tsh and other bloggers are still talking about their experiences.

In this podcast

(<http://homefries.com/2011/09/the-simple-mom-podcast-episode-8-compassion/>

), you can hear Tsh explain what it was like to be a blogger writing about such

powerful experiences at the same time as such experiences were actually

happening to her. In the podcast, she also brings up the very issue of how much

she as a blogger fervently hoped that her blog posts would encourage

sponsorships – an obvious but important point. Interestingly, she also mentions

how Compassion International never specifically told each specific blogger how

many individuals signed up to sponsor a child as a result of their posts. One could argue that this would be motivating for bloggers.

Ultimately, sponsorship organizations are making a long tail bet when they send bloggers internationally to write about their experiences. They believe that, in the long run, this will pay off in the form of more sponsorships. In the case of Compassion International, even if any given blogger does not get five people to sign up to sponsor Compassion International children as a result of one particular blog post, that doesn't leave out the possibility that six months down the line their readers might *then* learn about Compassion International and thus come aboard to be a child sponsor.

Although many might wonder how it could be worth the cost for a nonprofit organization (like Compassion International) to bring so many bloggers on an international trip, I can see quite clearly how it proves smart for the organization. Powerful bloggers with strong networks on new media can give critical endorsement to an organization that can lead to untold new supporters and activists. The endorsements these bloggers may provide – in the form of posting their genuine thoughts about their experiences, as well as in-kind donated media

on their websites (like banner ads) are incredibly valuable. Perhaps more valuable is the long-term relationships with these bloggers that Compassion International is creating and cultivating through such a bloggers trip. Ultimately, Compassion International is smart in reaching out to bloggers, and providing them with a powerful experience they will surely never forget.

In the world of fundraising, Compassion International and the blogger trips they organize are a great example of how individual bloggers can work to promote the sponsorship model of a nonprofit organization – and how a non-profit organization recognizes the value of their endorsement. As Compassion International found through their trip in the Philippines and in many such blogger trips they have coordinated and sponsored before, bloggers with a strong voice can play a huge part in finding new sponsors for the Compassion International children.

Action Items for Sponsorship Fundraising:

- If your organization already uses a sponsorship program, are there any creative ideas you can think of to better engage existing sponsors in sharing

the word about your cause? People who are already supporting you (and enjoying it) are your best evangelizers. Can you think of a way to better highlight the sponsor's experiences in a way that also manages to reach their own friends and family?

- If your organization does not yet use a sponsorship model to raise donations, is there one that couple be implemented with ease that would help better connect donors with the specific beneficiaries they are helping? Be careful to think of high-value partnerships that would prove big wins here. Creating a peer-to-peer (or child-to-child) pen-pal program is a common idea that many non-profit organizations have, but does not always prove terribly practical. Why? Oftentimes the cost -- in time spent asking kids to write letters and in stamps purchase to send them -- can far exceed the benefit to the organization. Consider what would work for your organization.

Holiday Fundraisers and Special Event Galas

Holiday Fundraisers

It is an oft-quoted statistic that retail establishments in the United States earn more during the holiday season (from Thanksgiving through New Years) than they do throughout the entire rest of the year. Although some non-profit organizations may not make as bold of a claim, many of them *almost* can. Indeed, the holidays are huge time for folks to give back to their favorite charities and to new ones they have just learned about. There are two main reasons people give more at the holidays. Let's explore them.

Why individuals give more to non-profit organizations during the holiday season:

1. Firstly, as individuals approach the end of the fiscal year (at least for most companies) they firm up their philanthropic commitments to ensure tax deductibility in the coming tax season. This is the cause of many a November and December donation pledge, and one that non-profit organizations are

- sensitive to and help cater to. Have you ever noticed a well-timed fundraising request mailing encouraging you to “tie up your financial obligations to charities by the year’s end”?
2. Secondly (and I believe this cannot be underestimated) the holidays bring with it a true spirit of giving. People simply feel more charitable as they join together with their nearest and dearest – and studies show this. The spirit of giving is no more alive than at the holidays. Don’t forget the families that forego Christmas in favor of giving donations to their favorite charities.

When we understand these two points, we can better try to target our fundraising during the holiday season. As I have said before, the same social rules that apply in real life also apply on social media. In the same way that you might not ask a stranger for \$100 (although some individuals who work for organizations do this on street corners around the nation), you wouldn’t join Twitter, say, simply to ask a new Twitter follower to throw you a cash donation. The holidays are no different, and this is one guiding principle that we need to remember when thinking about how to best ask folks for their hard-earned generosity (even in this season of giving).

Important things to remember about organizing holiday fundraisers:

There are some clear realities that fundraising during the holiday season brings up, and it's important to remember these things as you think about fundraising during this busy time.

People are Busy During the Holidays

During the holiday season it is more important than ever to remember that *people are busy*. Scheduling a large fundraising event for December 24 just isn't going to work. If you read that sentence, and laughed at the absurdity of the timing on that, good. But don't think you and your organization are above such antics! For many during the holiday season, scheduling anything on a Thursday, Friday, or Saturday night the week before Christmas festivities would be just as silly (holiday office parties, anyone)?

The success of a holiday gala is directly related to the number of committed folks you get to show up, and to maximize this number you need to carefully choose a date that falls within the "season of giving" and yet also doesn't likely conflict with

eight other more important events your potential donors have to be at that same night.

You want committed attendees to come, not just “anyone”

Remember that you are looking for committed folks to attend your fundraiser, not just any warm body. I love tiny children as much as the next person, but (unless they are my target group for a fundraiser or they have diamonds in their pockets) I’m not going to be wooing them to come to my holiday fundraiser. Instead, I’m going to try to get my tickets in the hands of those who are likely to make a donation to my cause.

When Biz Stone, the co-founder of Twitter launched his new foundation, my friend Jenna (@jennadawn) went to the opening event. When she told me about it later, she explained that it was an “intimate” affair – and that it was great because of the small size. Some might immediately think that the foundation lost an opportunity by not making it large. But I disagree.

Since the entry tickets were \$500, fifty attendees could bring in \$25,000 – before

any auctions or donations sought at the event itself – and all of the attendees would come away surely feeling more intimately connected to the new foundation. (Obviously there are costs involved with putting on an event that might chip away at that \$25,000, but as we'll discuss later, this is the number one area in which you should ask for favors, in-kind donations, and massive discounts.)

Doing a small event can be very smart strategy. Most medium sized non profit organizations have at least 50 individuals in a major metropolitan city that are regular donors who would show up for a once or twice yearly event at high cost (say, \$500). Such events bringing in like contributions would not only chip away at the organization's annual budget, but help to build connections with donors – the number one activity that most non-profit organizations in the business of personal fundraising should be spending time on.

Additionally, think of the cost involved with having someone stop by and *not* donate. Sure – there will always be these folks at events, but given that any non-profit is cutting costs, you want to make sure to avoid bringing attendees who likely aren't going to contribute to your bottom line.

One of those “darn!” moments in my fundraising psyche happened a few years after college when my good friend was on the board of an excellent organization helping refugees in San Francisco. I happened to be in town for a holiday lunch they were having and she invited me. It wasn’t tiny – there were maybe 150 folks there – but when the donation envelopes came I left mine empty – instead opting for information about volunteering. Looking back, this is one of those hanging regrets in my life. Sure I had reasons – I was poor, I was starting my own non-profit organization – but ultimately it was silly that I had made the trek to attend a lunch and couldn’t pony up \$25. I regretted it immediately, and I still regret it.

Moral of the story?

Don’t be me. First, don’t be me as a donor. If someone invites you to a fundraising event and you decide to go, be prepared to spend some cash for the worthy case.

Secondly, as an organizer, don’t *invite* me.

A holiday gala/lunch/fundraising event is not the equivalent of inviting your friend

for “free” nachos on your futon while you watch The Bachelor Pad. There are costs involved, and you want to be selective in inviting folks who you think are likely to make a donation.

But don’t misunderstand me. It’s also important not to ignore your small donors at gala events.

I was home for the holidays with my parents once when my mother was complaining about a recent fundraising event she and my father had gone to. Billed a “cocktail party” and promoting a cause my parents care about, the party had a number of organizers my parents knew well. My parents had supported the organization for years, and while they may not have been huge donors, they were nevertheless regular supporters. A few incidents had happened that night that had my mother a bit upset --- ultimately leaving the event feeling that she had been ignored in favor of the potential big donors at the party.

This is no good, all around.

Sure, business smarts are essential when hosting a holiday gala. It is a business

event – and if there are any two hours all year where you shouldn't be noshing the brie with your BFF and talking about her dating woes – it's now. At the same time, if you neighbor regularly gives a couple hundred dollars a year, even though it's not a couple thousand, it's not the time to treat her like chopped liver. Be smart about spreading the love at holiday events. To some extent, all donors are equal. At least tell yourself this to balance out the other predominant feelings that came over you when money-bags walks into the room ready to chat wildlife conservation.

Use Social Media to Secure In-Kind Donations of Space, Food, and Drinks for Holiday Fundraisers

There are a wealth of ways to use social media at holiday fundraisers, and one particular way I want to highlight is often overlooked in the organization's passion to secure donations – as many as possible.

Holiday events cost money to put on, and donated space, waiters, food, wine, goodie bags, and cleaning (post event) should be your topmost priority. However, sometimes organizations spend more time on the guest list than on the donated venue, leaving them in the end shelling out money unnecessarily.

Securing In-Kind Donations with Social Media

When seeking in-kind donations for space, food, wine, cleaning, etc. make sure to remember your cache within social media as something to offer to the potential vendors. Most non-profit organizations do not work in the world of online marketing or blog sponsorships, so this may not come naturally, but it's a key asset you have at your disposal.

If you have a holiday fundraiser coming up and you're having trouble finding donated wine for the event, consider creating a media kit that explains the donated media and publicity you will offer in exchange for the in-kind gift.

For great examples of media kits, check out [The Write Market](#), which provides examples of excellent templates you can follow to wow your potential donors.

If you have 4,000 Twitter followers and 10,000 Facebook fans, this is an asset to any company – especially a small one. Explain how you will tweet, post on Facebook, and include their information in all your printed material as a way to

sway them to making the in-kind donation. After all, you have control over your social media channels – and you can offer this at no cost (aside the time involved). It's a smart way to broker with an asset you have.

You can also think of other, creative ways to take this to the next level. Remember that holiday events are great ways to highlight companies in your social media platforms to help give them immediate return (the shopping season is 'nigh), and make sure to market to in-kind donors in this way. Additionally, remember that these points work just as well for non-holiday fundraisers, or, events that take place any time of year.

In general, galas are great ways to fundraise, and great events to broadcast on social media. Here are a few more essential points to remember about hosting fundraising events throughout the year.

At a Gala or Event, Your Strongest Asset is Your Attendee List

A good attendee list is not necessarily chock full of potential cash donors, however. Importantly, you also need to think about inviting the right influencers who can

help spread your message. Yes, you want to invite people with pocketbooks are willing to hear about your cause and donate to it. However, you also want folks there who are eager to tell others about the event and your cause. That may mean the loud mouth or your book club or the unofficial office party planner. Or, it may be the introvert with the large social media presence.

Take me, for example.

Although there are few qualities in life I claim to master, one of them is Twitter, and I manage to have secured a large number of followers in my many years tweeting. As my friend Scott Stratten says in his Twitter profile about himself, “I am a fairly big deal on a fairly irrelevant social media site.”

So, what use does an anti-social introvert have at a non-profit fundraising gala?

Lots, it turns out, if she’s active on the interwebs.

Inviting someone who is a social media maven, and has followers and friends who listen to him or her, is a great way to make sure that your event is catapulted beyond the four walls the streamers are hung on.

Although you don't want to be the person inviting folks to your event simply because they are popular on the Internet (Yes, Guy Kawasaki is influential. But do you know him at all?), you do want to think strategically for at least some of the invitations you extend. For instance, say you are having a fundraising event and your tickets cost \$300. Think about extending a no-cost invitation to someone passionate about your cause who also is a big social media user. Take this a step further and purposely invite bloggers in your niche, as I discuss below.

Host a Tweet-Up and Ask People to Post About It

Even if the sum total of Twitter followers at your event of 100 people tops out at 200 (yes, that's 2 followers a person for you math majors), you want to make sure that you are encouraging those 100 folks with their 2 followers each to spread the news about their attendance at your event. Ultimately, the easiest outreach and relationship building a non-profit can do is with *current* supporters. This is the most forgotten aspect of non-profit fundraising, and the most likely thing that any organizational fundraiser is guilty of: ignoring their existing donor base.

Anyone who attends your fundraiser is one of these people – a **current supporter**. Even if they don't give a lot in terms of cash, they are giving of their time, and they care about you and your cause to do so. (As long as your attendees are not made up of college students, the percentage of folks attending only for free appetizers will be very small, I promise.)

Don't waste your most valued resource – word-of mouth marketing – at the very moment your current supporters like you best. Give them a cheese plate and a glass of wine and bring them together for a Tweet-Up. Use a smart hashtag to bring everyone together, and encourage folks to take photos and post to Facebook, shoot videos and post to Youtube, weave a celebratory scarf in the moment and put on Etsy, or do anything interesting and pin it on Pinterest. (Any LARPer in your attendee list can likely also find their own online outlets to share their joy.)

Importantly, though, you want to make sure when you encourage folks to talk about you online that *they don't think that is your ask*. This is an important point, so I want to highlight it. If you host a gala, and the culminating moment of the whole night is a tweet up, the attendees will think that is what you are asking them to do. Now, if the attendee is Guy Kawasaki, it might be more valuable for him to blog

and tweet than to give you a \$500 donation. However, if we're talking about most donors, you don't want them to think that the "ask" you are making of them is to publish their excitement about your cause on their social media networks.

Instead, make sure you make a clear financial ask, and *then* follow up with a Tweet-up.

Have a Bloggers-Only Gala or Pre-Party

A great idea that works for any organization interested in hosting a fundraiser relates back to the concept of the value of marketing versus the value of a donation. In the case of Guy Kawasaki, I made the suggestion that a \$500 dollar one-time donation from him may be less valuable than a blog post, tweet, or Facebook update. I'll now go out on a limb and stand behind this conviction wholeheartedly. An endorsement from an influencer can be worth far more than a one-time donation, and you should make sure to seek out such endorsements whenever possible.

All fundraising events could benefit from inviting more bloggers, journalists, and

media folk to come, as critical publicity is oftentimes far more important than a donation. My first experience of this came in 2006, when my young non-profit organization, Hope Runs, made it in Runner's World Magazine, immediately changing the trajectory of our non-profit history, and convincing me of the power of press and buzz to help spread your message.

Action Items:

- Make a list of the key cities where you think you could reasonably host an event that 25-50 supportive donors would pay money to attend. Think about if hosting an event inviting only these donors would be worth it. If so, then it's likely time to go ahead planning, as you can surely invite some newbies to the event as well.
- Do you have the statistics for your "reach" readily at hand for potential in-kind sponsors? Get together a list of your most obvious digital assets: unique blog visitors, Twitter followers, Facebook fans, etc. so that they are ready to offer to inquiring minds. Better yet, start a media kit that displays such information that you can proactively send to folks.

Fundraising for Religious Organizations

The religious industry in the USA is a \$100 billion dollar industry – more than twice the size of the television industry and more than four times the size of the box-office movie industry. The fact that this industry runs on donations means that throughout the country, Americans are opening their pocketbooks to donate to religious causes.

If you are a religious organization and you are seeking to raise funds on social

media, there are a couple key insights you can keep in mind as you move forward.

1. Firstly, remember that fundraising for a religious organization must be transparent. Early on with my nonprofit organization Hope Runs, I ran into multiple donors who did not want to donate to a secular organization because we operated in Christian orphanages. Although I had many a biting comment to respond with (More than 95% of East African orphanages are Christian! The kids certainly don't choose the religion of the orphanage that pulls them off the streets!) I tried to bite my tongue. Even if a donor does not want to give me their old running shoes because my organization operates in a place where AIDS orphans might be Christians, it is their prerogative. Be upfront, and be clear.

In a guest post (<http://www.bethkanter.org/twitter-literacy/>) I wrote on Beth Kanter's blog (bethkanter.org) on Literacy Day in 2010, I shared with the world why [Room to Read](#) was an important organization to me, and I shared a particularly sticky literacy-for-development related story that came up during the season of my life when I was running my own non-profit organization in Kenya.

Here's what I said:

*

When Religion Matters at Your Nonprofit

A handful of years ago, I traveled around the world for a year. On the last stop of that trip, I went to Kenya to climb a mountain. The night before climbing, I spent a night in the guesthouse of a nearby orphanage. I never climbed the mountain.

The story of what happened after that trip has been told in [other publications](#). My traveling companion (and best friend) and I lived in that orphanage for the rest of the year, kept coming back, and started a non-profit organization based there: [Hope Runs](#). In different years, we each generously received fellowships from the Skoll Foundation to study for MBAs at [Oxford University's Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship](#). I then went on to lead social innovation at Twitter; she went on to study medicine. Our connection to Kenya remains strong; we are also the guardians for one of the children from that orphanage, [@sammyikua](#), now in the USA.

That first weekend in Kenya, when I didn't climb the mountain, I stayed in the orphanage library. I remember a Spanish-language version of Eva Luna, and a biography of Lance Armstrong. In the years to come, I spent endless hours in that cramped space. Today, if you go through the green gate at [Tumaini Children's Home](#) in Nyeri, Kenya and make a left at the matron's office, you will find the labor of my love of literacy. Alongside dozens of 9-year-old Kenyans in discarded party dresses, I worked diligently for months to organize the books. I wrote the labels in permanent marker. They cut the scotch tape.

No one can dispute: Literacy is important. But this is not what this guest post is about.

On literacy day, I can't help but remember the real-life story of something that happened the year I met Kenya. It is a story of literacy, and I hope it will serve as a powerful question for those of us who think about how we can help on an important day like Literacy Day.

Here is my story:

During the year I lived in the orphanage, I had requested many donated things for the orphanage. Many people, organizations, and churches, had responded, and my parents had the role of boxing and bagging many of these entirely random items. Shipping costs are astronomical, and, depending on the items, it can be far less expensive to check items as excess baggage on flights with travelers coming to Easy Africa.

A group of graduate students from Berkeley were coming to Kenya. A kind acquaintance put us in touch, suggesting the students might be able to carry some things for us to Kenya. I took them up on it.

Some weeks later, we got an email from one of the students, freshly in Kenya. She had a bag for us, a bag which originally had held both running shoes and books. It was there the email veered from the typical logistical information. The group had opened the bag before leaving the US and had noticed that some of the books inside were religious. They had left them behind. They did not want to bring religious materials to Africa.

This is what I thought that day: Religion is already here. Bring them the books.

When history dictates that the vast majority of all East African orphanages are Christian founded and funded, the (obvious) result is Christian children. At the East African orphanages I have worked in, upwards of 75% of the orphanage's annual operating budget has come from North American churches. The children in the orphanage are the lucky ones in their areas; they have a much better shot at a bright future than their peers who do not live inside. Depending on the community the children come from (and excluding Ethiopia as a separate historical case of Christianity sans missionaries), the children are much more likely to be Christian by the time they are young adults (if they were not already Christian when they entered). Some of the most amazing people around are working for social change as Christian missionaries. So are some of the most destructive individuals on the planet.

As I think back on the incident, I am devoid of most of the emotions associated with that day of sitting looking at want and laughing at an email of plenty. On that day, I saw no grey area. I saw empty bookshelves juxtaposed with the impracticality of a Western intellectualism.

Now, I believe I better understand both sides. I am Christian. Lara Vogel, the co-founder of Hope Runs, is

not. Although I might personally cart any and all religious materials that do not represent my personal beliefs to those who already believed in those faiths, I *would* draw lines somewhere in regards to my personal convictions. I would not, for instance, bring books promoting racism.

This is my challenge to you on literacy day: What do you think, and what can we all learn from incidents like this? When you are in the privileged position of being the one to bring the educational items, how do you present a balanced view? And how do you do so with limited resources? If the choice is no book or Christian book, what do you do?

I beg of you: Don't go for the easy answers. The "secular books are better than religious books" answer is obvious. Avoid it. The "missionaries have ruined the Africa" answer is also another easy out.

Push yourself to really test the limits of your beliefs when thinking about our individual roles in extending literacy globally. What is literacy for development when the West has such a hand in deciding the literature behind the developing?

*

As I shared in that guest post, and as I still believe today, religion does matter at your nonprofit organization, and you must be clear about your affiliations.

Particularly in certain areas of interest or locations on the globe, religion can even intersect with secular organizations – perhaps more so than some donors might wish.

2. In the same way that you want to be clear if your organization is in some way affiliated with a religious entity (or operates in one) you also want to be clear what your actual mission is. There are many individuals throughout the world who seek religious organizations as the organizations they want to donate to, and you need to ensure that you are respecting these desires

as well. Names can be deceiving (or not explanatory). If you were seeking to donate to a Christian organization operating in a developing nation, which of these three organizations would you deem in line with your religious convictions?

Free the Children

Feed the Children

Save the Children

Hard to tell which is religious, no?

3. Finally, remember that there are different legal implications to being a religious non-profit organization or non-profit organization with a religious affiliation, and you want to thoroughly understand how this affects your tax-exempt status, your donations, and your marketing efforts. Remember that these restrictions apply for online efforts as well, both in paid and free social media marketing efforts. For example, Google Grants does not allow religious organizations to participate. For religious organizations, these restrictions can throw up some roadblocks – so you want to be aware and

prepared. For more information, check out books like “[Non-Profit Law for Religious Organizations.](#)”

Action Items For Religious Organization Fundraising:

- Do a “religious inventory” of your non-profit organization. If you are a religious organization, are you up-to-date on the necessary rules and regulations of running a religious non-profit organization in your state?

Look for some federal tax information here:

(<http://www.irs.gov/charities/churches/index.html>)

- Put on your “donor” hat and evaluate your organization from the perspective of a potential donor. Do your donors understand your religious affiliations, or is there something you are not clear about? If you are not a religious organization, take a look at some of your newsletters, social media posts, and web pages to ensure that you are maintaining a secular message throughout. Even secular organizations (at times) can incorporate religious

messaging without overtly realizing it. If this isn't your aim, make sure to make changes.

Fundraising with Sporting Events: Race Sponsorships and Sports Fundraisers

Hope Runs (www.hoperuns.org) taught me early what the exciting world of race sponsorship and sports fundraisers could look like.

Many fundraisers believe that some of the earliest fundraising an individual ever encounters is sports-related. In my case, I think of my Emerson School Walkathon. I was five (and then six, seven, and eight) when the fall fundraiser came around.

Although I have no memory of what we were raising funds for, I remember the

process of signing up individual donors, such as parents and neighbors, to pledge.

We asked for ten cents per lap walked -- the equivalent of one Berkeley, CA block around my elementary school. It took about ten minutes to walk and since my best friend at the time lived in a house on the block, I also had a ready spot for breaks.

Year in and year out, this fundraiser was the highlight of my fall. As I got older, I became increasingly more competitive. Though 30 laps was unheard of for a five-year-old, it was near commonplace for a motivated eight-year-old, and motivated I was. By the end of the day, I could be seen racing as fast as possible on the small sidewalk to fit in as many laps as possible, likely knocking down smaller children in my path to win.

Years later, I know that this kind of fundraiser is incredibly motivating for both the participant raising funds (even as a kid I didn't know what I was raising money for, but I still tried my hardest) and the donor. Donors want to provide support to motivated fundraisers, and there is no fundraiser more motivated than a kid (or adult) hell-bent on completing as many laps, miles, or kilometers as possible to get as much money in the bank as they can.

The Psychology of Fundraising on the “Per Lap” Model

In truth, the beauty of sports-related fundraising is that it breaks down the donation into small parts. When asking individuals to commit \$1 per mile – instead of \$100 in total – it seems easier to swallow, and many sign up to help donate as a result. One classic episode of *The Office* has the boss, Michael, unknowingly signing up to sponsor an employee’s nephew’s fundraiser at a rate that was – unbeknownst to him – decidedly generous.

Just as Michael didn’t realize he was bidding per mile (and overbid as a result), some of your donors will likely find themselves feeling a bit more generous when the large donation is broken down into bite-sized parts. Although you always want to be upfront and clear when raising donations in this format, make sure to use the psychological aspect of raising funds in your favor.

Additionally, raising funds for sporting events (especially events in which you are raising money based on distance traveled, miles run, laps swum, etc.) is also particularly successful because it provides a strong motivating factor for the donor. When the donor sees that the fundraiser will work harder and harder to earn their donation even after they’ve made a commitment, they are likely to be more generous with their commitment.

Social media makes such sports-related fundraisers even more successful than

they once were. Ultimately, by providing real-time information about what the fundraiser is doing as they participate in the event, donors can follow along. In this way, they not only get a first-hand view of everything as it happens, but they can choose to change their donations (and hopefully increase their contribution) as a result of the hard work they see the fundraiser exerting.

Social Media and Sports Fundraisers

I long encouraged Sammy, my foster son, to do a fundraiser for Hope Runs with his high school, Maine Central Institute. Let's explore how he could best do so while engaging in social media channels to increase donor participation.

Sammy is a fast runner and has been ever since we first met many years ago at Tumaini Children's Home in Nyeri, Kenya. Although he once ran without shoes for years (and swore by it) he has over time adapted to the heavy soled (and much disputed) running shoes of the Western world.

The shoe debate aside, how can Sammy use social media to engage in a running fundraiser?

Although the scenario with a walkathon is more straightforward (\$1 per mile and

walk as long as you can), other events may require more creative thinking.

Let's say Sammy's school is putting on a regional track and field meet that features no less than 25 events over the course of a three-day period, five of which, in some capacity, Sammy will be participating in. Although the kilometers he is running vary with each race, he has decided to go about a flat kilometer rate in his fundraising. He aims to raise \$2 per kilometer from everyone agreeing to help him. By the end of the weekend, he'll have personally run a total of 25 kilometers, making a \$50 donation likely.

Since the number of kilometers he is likely to run is set (and not unlimited, as in, say, a walkathon), he needs to think of ways to increase how much his donors spend as the three days go on. He comes up with a plan to reward him for placing in the top three. So, for every place he earns in a given race, he'll add an extra \$5.

This helps him to not only encourage his donors to cheer him on, but also to constantly update them about how he is doing throughout the course of the three days.

In doing so, he not only makes himself more accountable for his results (and thus the funds he raises), but he also draws in his donors with a closer bond forged through his regular updates on his progress. The single most disappointing thing for a donor to a non-profit organization is when the organization provides little or

no follow-up or gratitude. By making the donor a part of the event as it is happening, you can beat this tendency before it starts.

Team in Training: The Best of the Best

No discussion of sports fundraisers would be complete without a nod to Team in Training (teamandtraining.org), the huge organization that brings in over \$850 million dollars each year to support blood cancer research and patient services for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society in such sports fundraisers. I came to better understand the workings of Team in Training when, years after college, a former resident at my Stanford dorm began sending emails to our old dorm email list about her Ironman pursuits, as well as posting on Facebook (this was pre-Twitter). Even though years had passed, I (then) felt a direct connection to her through email (and social media) and was interested in her efforts. I had done my first marathon at the time, and was considering an Ironman. I was inspired, for one, but also merely interested in these frequent updates about how training was going for her. We continued to keep in touch, and I continued to follow her efforts. After she had completed one or two marathons and at least one Ironman she decided to

fundraise to come out to Kenya to help train some of the student runners at Hope Runs. In true Team in Training form, as I finished the hardest marathon of my life at the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy Safaricom Marathon in Kenya, she ran back a few miles to “run me in”, a concept that apparently is common in Team in Training and was a much welcome relief to me.

Although Team in Training is a set program that makes it both easy to train for a race and fundraise, you can definitely do these types of fundraisers on your own. The advent and explosion of social media simply makes it easier than ever for you to update your donors with news of your efforts without licking stamps.

Action Items for Sports Fundraisers:

- Is there a way you can bring in the lessons of sports fundraisers into non-sports related events? The motivational aspect of raising a certain number of dollars “per lap” or “per mile” is clear; is there a way to bring this you’re your organization even if you don’t have a sports component. Could you have donors pledge per song sung (for a choir) or car washed (for any organization)? What creative ideas might work for your organization?
- Put on your “donor” hat and evaluate your organization from the perspective of a potential donor. Do your donors understand your religious affiliations, or is there something you are not clear about? If you are not a religious organization, take a look at some of your newsletters, social media posts, and web pages to ensure that you are maintaining a secular message

throughout. Even secular organizations (at times) can incorporate religious messaging without overtly realizing it. If this isn't your aim, make sure to make changes.

Conclusion

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In this book, we've walked through the two most important aspects of fundraising on social media – the WHY, and the HOW.

In the WHY (Part 1), we talked about why social media is a great platform to fundraise on, and what it can offer non-profit organizations who seek funds and donors who want to give.

In the HOW (Part 2), we explored the practical points of the six main kinds of fundraising that individuals and organizations engage in: cash fundraising, in-kind donations, sponsorship models, hosting event fundraisers, religious fundraising, and sports fundraising.

Fundraising is always growing and changing, and there is no doubt that as you read this book there will be new, more exciting, more novel examples of

organizations doing innovative fundraising coming out every day.

Likewise, social media changes with alarming speed. Most of the stories in this book focus on the use of Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, but other platforms like LinkedIn and Groupon, as well as newer ones like Pinterest and Google+ are sure to provide new and exciting ways to create and execute fundraising campaigns. Remember to keep your ear to the ground to learn about new platforms, how they work, and why they work for fundraisers like you. Ultimately, social media is a powerful tool that can work well to bring much-needed funds to your nonprofit organization. The key is to know how to use it, and use it well.

Got a Great Fundraising Story?

Got a great story to share about how your organization is fundraising on social media? I'd love to hear it. Submit your story to Claire@ClaireDiazOrtiz.com.

About the Author



Claire Diaz-Ortiz is the author of [Twitter for Good: Change the World One Tweet at a Time](#) and is known for developing the [TWEET model](#) — a framework to help organizations and individuals best excel on Twitter. Claire leads social innovation at Twitter, Inc., and has been named by Fast Company as one of the 100 Most Creative People in Business.

She is a frequent speaker on topics of social innovation and social change. Claire holds an MBA and other degrees from Stanford and Oxford, and is the co-founder of [Hope Runs](#), a non-profit operating in AIDS orphanages in Kenya.

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