



# Social Media for Nonprofits

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## ABOUT NETWORK FOR GOOD

Since 2001 Network for Good has been instrumental at helping tens of thousands of nonprofits raise more funds by engaging supporters and donors in a more meaningful and impactful way. Refreshingly easy to use Donor Management Software, Fundraising Pages, and Personal Fundraising Coaches provide nonprofits with a complete fundraising solution, reducing their need for disparate systems, saving them time and enabling them to raise more funds to support their mission.



# “Life moves pretty fast. If you don’t stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it.”

–Ferris Bueller’s Day Off

There’s no denying it. Social media is the fastest-growing phenomenon of the modern age.

Since Facebook launched in 2004 it has grown to over two billion users. Twitter and Instagram are close behind. According to the Pew Research Center’s report, “Social Media Use in 2018,” approximately **69% of Americans are on social media**.

The impact of social media is both immediate and international. There is no faster or broader-reaching communication method. Major news breaks on social media. We celebrate, mourn, and follow revolutions as part of an online community. Alerts and notifications keep users informed and entertained in real-time.

From our social circles to professional networking to news, politics, and advocacy; social media is a hub of activity that has become part of our daily lives. Most users are on social media every day; many check multiple times each day.

Whether you jumped on board back in the early days of Facebook, or are relatively new to these online communities, the advantages of social media are undeniable. No other method of communication is as effective at instantly putting your message in front of thousands of people.

## **How do you choose which sites to be on?**

This guide offers facts and insights about some of the top social media sites, how to use them to your advantage, proven post ideas, and a social media strategy checklist.

# Social Media Benefits

Like every other aspect of nonprofit marketing and fundraising, the purpose of social media is to increase and deepen your relationships.

**25%**  
**OF DONORS**  
say social media  
most often inspires  
them to give

**62%**  
**OF DONORS**  
in this group say  
facebook is the  
most inspiring

2018 Global NGO Technology Report

## Social Media Helps Nonprofits

- Build trust within your community.
- Deepen your relationship with your audience.
- Expand your outreach and network.
- Promote your events.
- Drive people to your website.
- Add personality to your organization.
- Provide real-time engagement with your followers.

Your social media followers can do for your nonprofit what your personal networks do for you—applaud your successes, support you in times of need, spread the word about your projects and events, and encourage others to get involved. It is also a way to get instant feedback from your community, and respond to it in real time.

# Creating Your Social Media Presence

## Your Profile

Your profile is the first thing people see when they search for you on social media. Keep your name and profile picture consistent across platforms. That way, people who like you on Facebook can easily find you on Twitter or Instagram. Best practice for your profile image is to use your nonprofit's logo. This image accompanies all of your posts, so it's a great way to build brand awareness.

- Set your location and add a website address.
- Add company info or a brief bio.
- Set your cover or header image. Update this image periodically to highlight events, programs, organizational news, or just for a change of pace.

## What to Post

The old adage applies...content is king. Post content that drives engagement and conversation, and builds trust in your organization. From your mission to programs and events, you have plenty of material to talk about at your disposal. Be personable, approachable, and fun. What is your organization's personality? How much do you enjoy coming to the office every day? Share that energy with your followers. Include images in your content. A picture is worth a thousand words. Posts with video or images have a stronger engagement level than text-only posts.

## Shareable Content

- Fundraising campaigns (launches, status updates, fundraising events).
- Non-promotional (holiday party photos, office pot-lucks, candid staff shots, new staff member introductions, trivia, opinion polls, contests).
- Press and Announcements (grants and awards, organization mentioned in news, job postings).
- Events (community events, performances, panel discussions, town halls).
- Program Updates (number of people served, new sponsor information, locations and partners).
- Relevant external news (articles about your area of focus, blogs by experts in the field, community affairs).

Let your content lead. Stay active, but don't post just to post. Create a schedule that includes an item or two a day to stay in your followers' newsfeeds.

## When to Post

When and how often to post throughout the day depends on your audience's schedule just as much as your content. Event announcements are more time-sensitive than trivia. Press, reviews, and interviews depend on when the news outlet is publishing the story. The perfect schedule will differ from organization to organization. The key is to find those times of day when your followers are online. Post at different times of day to discover when your followers are taking breaks. Catch them during their commutes to and from the office. Stay engaged with them in the early evening or after dinner.

- An easy-to-follow schedule is to post mid-morning, lunchtime, and late afternoon/early evening.
- Stick to a routine and test it out over time to see what kind of response you receive.
- Once you have a baseline, try out different times of day to see when you get the most engagement.

## Measuring Success

Like any other marketing or fundraising effort, your success on social media will be determined by your goals. It's exciting to watch your number of followers increase, but if they're not engaging with your content, you won't stay in their newsfeed for long. It's crucial to measure success by both quantity and quality. As your numbers grow, are you also seeing a rise in comments and engagement with posts? Are you capturing more email addresses for your e-newsletter? Is your organization being tagged in other people's posts?

## Insights & Analytics

Use your social media channel's individual insights and analytics tools to track how posts are performing. You can learn so much about your audience through these insights. Think of it as your very own Nielsen rating system. Through this data, you can:

- View overall likes, shares, retweets, and comments.
- Learn how, where, and when people are interacting with your posts.
- Measure retention over time.
- View demographics of your followers.
- Segment your audience to target posts.
- View the reach and amount of engagement of individual posts.
- Find influencers in your network.

Use this data to your advantage. Create content that matches your followers' interests, test out your social media schedule for best results, and target like-minded individuals to grow your network.

# Building Your Network

There's a pretty simple formula to building your social media network:  
**Presence + Relevancy + Conversation = Engaged Followers**

## Presence

It may seem obvious, but you can't build a social network if you're not, well, social. You have to be on the sites where your audience (and prospects) frequent. Simply having an account isn't enough. Building a successful social media presence involves posting daily, even multiple times per day. Your followers are checking in at events, posting photos, and sharing thoughts with their friends. Stay engaged with them and encourage participation. That includes weekends.

## Relevancy

More and more people get their news from social media. Posting organizational content that's relevant to your work makes you a trusted source of information. What events do you have coming up? What programs are you currently running? What issues are you working on that are in the news? Relevant, engaging content is all around you. Post photos of your work in the field and community events, link to blog posts, share program updates, and build awareness of your cause.

## Conversation

Avoid the social media equivalent of a dine-and-dash. After you post your content, stick around to see who's responding. Check back during the day to reply to comments and post new content. Using a casual (but professional) tone will invite your followers into your online community, and encourage them to engage with your content. Participate in Throwback Thursday, and post photos from the early days when you were just starting out, using hashtag #tbt. Share trivia, run a contest, post opinion polls, and get to know your followers. Don't shy away from negative feedback. Listen to what they say, post that you'll private message them, and then make the conversation a one-on-one. That negative comment could teach you something and help you improve your community relations in the end.



# Build Engagement on Social Media

Follow these top do's and don'ts to build engagement.

## DO

...include both a link and an image to garner more likes, comments, shares, and click-throughs.

...post a variety of content on all channels: blog posts, photo albums, videos. Mix up your media and content—tell a story, ask for donations, announce an event, etc.

...engage with your followers. Answer questions. Respond to feedback. Wish donors a happy birthday. Thank volunteers by name. We all love to be acknowledged, and we often share those posts with friends.

...focus on one to three platforms—and test everything. Keep it simple. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are great places to start. Post different types of content to see what gets the most likes, shares, retweets, and comments. Learn where your audiences are and optimize your content for each platform.

## DON'T

...include just a link in your posts. When sharing a link, make sure a photo auto-populates from that webpage, or post an image of your own.

...post the same type of content over and over again. Variety is the spice of life, and that goes double for social media.

...use stock images. Photos don't need to be professionally taken; they just need to be interesting. Gather snapshots from events or in the field, and develop a good library of images you can use with various types of content.

...ignore comments and tweets. It's not called "social" media for nothing. Reply to your followers.

...delete negative comments, unless clearly offensive or inappropriate. Reply to your follower, address their concern, and clear up the issue. You'll win points for professionalism and empathy!






The Ultimate Do: Above all, make sure every post is shareable, engaging, and unique.



# Top Social Media Sites

Social media is an ever-changing medium. The number of sites to choose from is rapidly increasing, and each has its own personality. Understanding who your audience is and what content works on each platform will allow you to harness the popularity of these various sites, increase the success of your organization, and maximize the good you do in the community. We've chosen the top five sites for an overview of the best spots to spend your time.

## SOCIAL MEDIA USE DEMOGRAPHICS *% of U.S. adults who say they use...*

	 FACEBOOK	 TWITTER	 INSTAGRAM	 LINKEDIN	 YOUTUBE
Total	68%	24%	35%	25%	73%
Men	62	23	30	25	75
Women	74	24	39	25	72
Ages 18–29	81	40	64	29	91
30–49	78	27	40	33	85
50–64	65	19	21	24	68
65+	41	8	10	9	40
White	67	24	32	26	71
Black	70	26	43	28	76
Hispanic	73	20	38	13	78

Pew Research Center, "[Social Media Use in 2018](#)"

# facebook

**Given the sheer number of people on Facebook, not having a Page and regularly updating your activity is simply bad business.** Your Facebook Page offers your followers real-time interaction with your organization. Next to your website, it's the best way to share information with the public. The more a user engages with your content or visits your Facebook page, the more your posts will appear in their newsfeed. The more your followers like, share, and comment on your posts; the more updates they'll see from you.

## PROFILE\*

Launched in 2004

2.20 billion active monthly users

1.45 billion active daily users

48% of users age 18-34  
check Facebook as soon as  
they wake up

## TIPS

- Posts with images perform much better than text-only posts. Photos of your work in the community create an immediate, emotional response for your followers.
- Share links to drive traffic to your website.
- Track which posts are performing well and create similar content.
- Promote your Facebook Page on your website and in your e-newsletter.
- Promote your e-newsletter on Facebook to increase sign-ups.
- Pin important posts so they stay at the top of your page for the first thing people see.

## CONTENT

- Post a story from a recent e-newsletter and invite followers to join your email list.
- Create a photo album from a program site and show your work in action.
- Share photos of events and tag guests so the photo appears in their newsfeed, too.
- Share fun facts and photos from your organization's history for Throwback Thursday (#tbt).
- Post video of patron testimonials and let your community brag for you.
- Post positive reviews and press coverage.

\*Sources: [Facebook](#) and [Omnicores Agency](#)



Twitter connects users with world events, social causes, celebrities, and breaking news in real-time. Tweets come in at breakneck speed. Keeping up is part of the attraction. Though Twitter recently increased its maximum character length to 280 (up from 140), shorter tweets still perform better. Twitter is a great source for what's trending in your community, and globally. Incorporate hashtags to engage with a particular group or add to a specific conversation. For an example of how a hashtag can boost your success rate, look no further than #GivingTuesday.

## PROFILE\*

Launched in 2006

330 million active monthly users

100 million active daily users

500 million tweets daily

Tweets can now be up to 280 characters in length (originally limited to 140)

## TIPS

- Create a hashtag (#) for your organization and specific events, and encourage your followers to tweet using that hashtag.
- Retweet relevant content from reputable sources to inform your audience.
- Follow influencers in your field.
- Include your Twitter handle on your website and in all communications to build followers.
- Invite your e-newsletter subscribers to follow you on Twitter.
- Pin an important tweet to keep it at the top of your feed, so all visitors to your account will see it first.
- Reply to all tweets and direct messages within an hour (if not sooner).

## CONTENT

- Focus on text that is catchy and concise.
- Use images for more engagement.
- Link to your website to drive traffic. Use a site like [bitly](https://bitly.com) to shorten links and save space.
- Post photos from your early years, with hashtag #tbt, for Throwback Thursday.
- Live-Tweet an event such as a panel discussion, rally, or fundraising auction.
- Tag donors and volunteers in shout-outs to show your gratitude for their support.

\*Sources: [Twitter](https://twitter.com) and [Omnicore Agency](https://www.omnicoreagency.com)

# Instagram

**One of the fastest-growing social media sites, Instagram is the site where you can show the most personality.**

Capture photos and short videos with your smartphone and upload them directly to the site. Stream live videos to your followers. Use the story feature to post photos and videos that vanish after 24 hours. Use images to strengthen your fundraising campaigns. Donations increase when donors come face-to-face with the human impact their gift can have.

## PROFILE\*

Launched in 2010

800 million active monthly users

500 million active daily users

95 million photos shared daily

Instagram filters offensive comments and bullying to foster an inclusive online community

## TIPS

- Share candid images as well as professional photos from events (no stock photos).
- Keep videos short to meet Instagram's 60-second limit.
- Add hashtags to your stories to show up in keyword searches.
- Stories are only visible for 24-hours, so save your story in your Story Archive to use again.
- Use Instagram's Live Video feature to connect with your followers in real time. Save your videos and share them again later.
- Play with filters to change the look of your photos.

## CONTENT

- Post behind-the-scenes photos of events.
- Share pictures of thank you notes, holiday parties, gorgeous sunsets outside your office.
- Have one of your outgoing staff members or volunteers Live Video from an event or rally.
- Highlight your volunteers with photos of their work on-site.
- Promote events, campaigns, programs, and merchandise with images of invitations, venues, logos, etc.
- Share testimonial videos from your followers about why they support your work.

\*Sources: [Instagram](#) and [Omnicores Agency](#)

# LinkedIn

**LinkedIn is the largest social media site for professional networking.** You can post your business profile, connect to other organizations and peers, share blog articles and ebooks to increase your influence and build thought leadership, and search resumes for potential employees. For a small fee, you can also use LinkedIn's Volunteer Marketplace to recruit volunteers or even board members for your organization. On LinkedIn, frequency isn't as high a priority. Keep up a regular presence, but you don't have to post every day. Only share content that is relevant to your audience and adds to your position as an authority in your field.

## PROFILE\*

Launched in 2003

500 million users

250 million active monthly users

40% of LinkedIn users access their account daily

\*Source: [Omnico Agency](#)

# YouTube

**YouTube is the leading video-sharing site on the internet,** hosting everything from movie trailers to music videos, livestream events, video blogs, classes and tutorials, cooking videos, town hall discussions, social movements, and political debates. Videos can be long or short, professionally shot or filmed on a smartphone, edited highlight reels or full-length events. Users can upload, view, share, and comment on videos. Followers who like your content can subscribe to your channel. YouTube lets you tell your story, build awareness, and celebrate successes. Keywords help people find your videos in their search, and YouTube links are easy to embed and share on other sites.

## PROFILE\*

Launched in 2005

1.57 million active monthly users

30+ million active daily users

5 billion videos watched daily

\*Source: [Omnico Agency](#)

# Social Advertising

With roughly 69% of people on social media, there's powerful competition to contend with in order to stand out in someone's newsfeed. Social media sites employ algorithms to try and show users the content that's most relevant to them. As a result, your organic reach is no longer enough to ensure you're being seen by as many followers and prospects as possible.

Strategic social advertising—or paid social— can maximize your organic social media reach. Whether your goal is to advertise events, sell merchandise, share special publications, or simply build organization and brand awareness; promoting engaging content on social media ensures your nonprofit stays at the forefront of people's minds.

Unlike print ads or content marketing, which need time to yield results, social media advertising offers an immediate return on your investment. Which social media channel is your nonprofit most actively using to interact with your supporters? Whether you focus on Facebook for the largest amount of users, or distribute your advertising across your social media platforms, there is really no limit to how far your reach can go.

**Facebook and Instagram are the most popular sites to advertise on; while LinkedIn is good for identifying and targeting people by job title, company, industry, seniority, and more. You can promote an individual tweet, boost a specific Facebook post, or run a general awareness campaign to increase followers or website traffic.**

Pricing varies across channels, and typically revolves around cost-per-click or cost-per-impression. A perk of social advertising is that sites allow you to set your budget for each campaign. For as little (or as much) as you want to spend, you can promote your organization, and reach a greater audience.

Each platform offers the ability to choose your audience based on demographics, interests, or other filters. Select from a variety of photo and video ad formats, link your ad to a dedicated page on your website, and use the platform's ad reporting tools to track your results. Eye-catching images and videos see the best results. Linking to a specific, relevant page of your website simplifies the advertising process for your audience.



## Engage Your Donors with Network For Good

[SCHEDULE A DEMO NOW](#)



Home

About

Posts

Photos

Videos

Events

Community

Create a Page



Like



Follow



Share



Contact Us

## Posts



Network for Good

12 mins · 🌐

Stories make a cause relatable, tangible, and touching. Moving stories tug at donors' heartstrings and motivate them to give. But crafting a compelling story isn't always easy, and not all stories are created equal. <http://bit.ly/2Jlk1XM>

Very responsive to m

Software Company in  
of Columbia

## Community

Invite your friends

0 people like

9 people follow

## Social Advertising Tips

- **Instagram** is all about photos and video. Organizations that use eye-catching imagery in their ads have a higher engagement level. Make use of your event or community photos in your next ad. Instagram's largest user group is 18–29 year-olds, making the site the perfect place to reach young professionals, students, and recent college graduates.
- **Twitter** fans love to engage with breaking news, social movements, political activism, business announcements, and of course, celebrities and influencers. Target your ad to capture those interests for best results.
- **LinkedIn** offers a choice between Sponsored Content, Sponsored InMail, and Text Ads; depending on if you want to be featured in a newsfeed or as a direct message.
- **Facebook** also lets you "boost" special posts and reach targeted audiences. Select from your followers; or target by location, demographics, or interests.

Following  
4,298

## Tweets &amp; replies

## Media

**Network for Good** @Network4Good · 1h  
There is no perfect way to thank someone. Whether your method of choice is an email, a letter, or a phone call—thank you—go a long way in making [#donors](#) feel appreciated. A thank you can be the difference between a first-time donor and a lifelong donor: [bit.ly/2IRasIt](http://bit.ly/2IRasIt)



**Network for Good** @Network4Good · 5h  
Ways To Improve [#MidLevelDonor](#) Engagement: [bit.ly/2LrQVfJ](http://bit.ly/2LrQVfJ)

Network for Good offers innovative management software for nonprofit expertise, training, and support campaigns. The company distributes from donors to good causes everywhere. Network for Good has processed more than over 100,000 charities through its platform. Network for Good is a member of the Network for Good Donor Advisory Board and the Better Business Bureau Wisconsin. 20 of its standards for charity a



# Social Media Strategy Checklist

Your social media strategy is the key to your engagement. What you post—and when—can be the difference between connecting with your followers and missing the mark entirely. Coordinating your message across social media channels amplifies your voice and impact in the community.

## Assess Current Social Media Presence

*TIP: Ask a few members of your staff, board, and trusted volunteers to review your social media presence and give you feedback.*

- ☐ What sites are you on (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc)?
- ☐ How much do you know about your followers?
- ☐ How often do you post (daily, weekly, sporadically, etc)?
- ☐ How engaged are your followers (regular comments, likes but no comments, very quiet)?
- ☐ How welcoming (or stuffy) do you come across on each channel?
- ☐ How much traffic is social media driving to your website?
- ☐ How balanced is your content (promotion/advertising, thought-sharing, community engagement, fun)?

## Branding Yourself

*TIP: Use a more casual voice on social media than on your website. Create one that can be carried over from social media site to site, but can be varied to match that particular audience.*

- ☐ What do you want your company's personality to be?
- ☐ Is your profile picture and name the same across platforms?
- ☐ Have you established a hashtag (or a few) for your organization?
- ☐ Are you sharing photos on every site?
- ☐ Share these style guidelines with everyone who posts on your social media to build consistency.

## Set Specific Goals

**TIP:** *Add a timeframe to your goals to help track progress, measure success, and adjust future goals.*

- ☐ Start posting on Facebook and Twitter every day.
- ☐ Launch an Instagram account and post daily.
- ☐ Increase number of Facebook followers.
- ☐ Track engagement to increase comments and retweets.
- ☐ Drive traffic to your website from social media.
- ☐ Acquire new subscribers to e-newsletter.

## Create Content

**TIP:** *Plan out weeks or even months in advance so you don't have to scramble to find something to post.*

- ☐ Include date of post, time of day, and any photos or links to include.
- ☐ Repurpose content as needed for sharing across different social media sites.
- ☐ Schedule time (and recruit coworkers) to create videos, blog posts, Q&As.
- ☐ Proofread everything and check your links.

## Measure Success

**TIP:** *Use the analytic tools on each social media channel to track your results.*

- ☐ Track both quantitative and qualitative outcomes.
- ☐ Are you on course to hit your monthly goal of increasing your number of followers?
- ☐ Engagement is about both quantity and quality. Are more followers commenting, sharing, or retweeting your posts? Are you being tagged in other posts? What posts had the most interaction? How can you recreate similar content?
- ☐ Is your content driving people to your website? Once there, are they subscribing to your e-newsletter or donating to your organization?