

Social Media Planning Considerations for Non-Profit and Social Justice Organizations

What should we use Social Media for?

You could think about 3 primary strategies for your social media work. Which you choose or what combination of the three depends on your goals, your audiences (what kind of internet and social media user is each group in your target audience list?), and your organizational capacity.

1. Sharing news, actions, events or “Join us by joining our list” - The purpose of this strategy is to fulfill the goal of being an information resource to your audiences and to turn audiences into engaged stakeholders by including periodic asks and invites. This can look like sharing content through e-newsletters, posting blogs, updates announcements etc. on facebook, twitter and other social media sites, and live-streaming events through your website.
2. Engaging audiences in your work or “Join in by joining our groups” - The purpose of this strategy is to engage audiences in online dialogue, sharing and action within the structure of workgroups that match your program work. This can look like creating and maintaining facebook groups, encouraging blogging commentary, hosting group videoconferences, and live-streaming events with a facilitated chatroom.
3. Facilitating networks between audiences to amplify your work or “Join up by creating networks” - The purpose of this strategy is to amplify your work by allowing audiences to share information related to your organization and issue amongst themselves and their own networks. This involves providing your social media audiences with the tools to share information that engages their networks - this includes widgets, smartphone apps, “share with a friend” buttons, downloadable artwork, and invitations to crowdsource content like creating a video or poster competition and allowing networks to comment and vote for the winners.

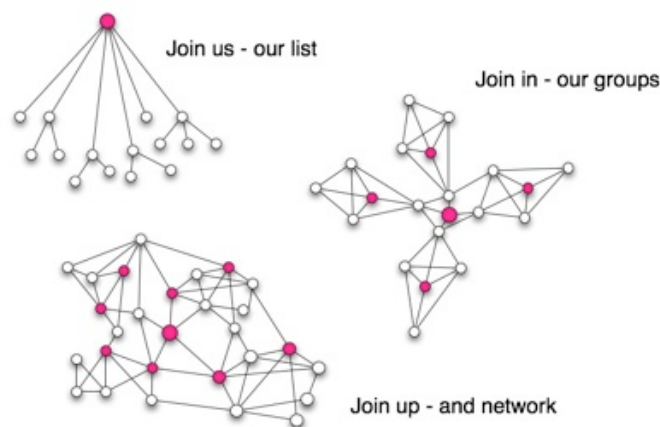


Diagram Source: <http://socialreporter.com/>

There's one more important way to use social media that takes very little time or resources: finding out how your organization and issue is being talked about. This could look like following key groups and individuals who work on your issue on facebook and twitter, setting up google alerts for your organization and issue, and doing a blog search to see what bloggers are saying at the local, and if appropriate, national and international levels about your organizations and issue.

How do we make a plan?

Check out these links for approaches to creating a social media plan:

<http://impactmax.wordpress.com/2009/09/01/a-5-step-guide-to-social-media-strategy-for-nonprofits/>

http://beth.typepad.com/beths_blog/2009/01/creating-your-organizations-social-media-strategy-map.html

How do we staff social media work?

Check out this link for some useful tips on planning for a realistic social media plan given staff capacity:

<http://change4yourdollar.com/nonprofits/3-ways-nonprofits-can-staff-social-media/>

Some lucky organizations are also able to find dedicated volunteers to maintain their social media on a regular basis. These volunteers have to know your organization inside and out and be highly trusted and aligned with your organizational identity.

Member-based organizations and alliances can consider making their social media accounts available to trusted leaders to share organizational related developments, especially when these leaders are involved in a key event or action that you want to share timely updates about.

How do we know what tools to use?

Here are a few links that can help you build up a toolbox and the basic skills to use the tools you choose:

<http://www.socialtechnologyreview.com/articles/social-media-sites-strategies-tools-non-profits>

<http://www.wearemedia.org/Tool+Box>

<http://newmediatoolkit.org/>