

Technology for Nonprofits Helps Groups Expand Charitable Reach



According to the National Council of Nonprofits, the more than 1.2 million nonprofit organizations in the United States work in every community. Charitable organizations advance social missions ranging from saving endangered animals to providing healthcare and job services. Creatively applying technology for nonprofits can empower those missions.

Unlike businesses that focus on profit and product, nonprofits bear the burden of winning donors and volunteers with a vision of the good they can support. However, both types of organizations must boost brand recognition while carefully managing budgets and addressing competition.

By definition, charitable organizations dedicate all revenue to advancing the declared mission. Quite frequently, that revenue falls short of objectives. Consequently, nonprofits must weigh budget decisions carefully. All too often, technology falls far down the priority list. But, when leveraged in key areas, technology can both increase revenue and expand charitable reach.

Use Social Media Wisely

The success of any nonprofit depends on its continued ability to engage the public. You cannot simply publish a website, create a Facebook page and then cross digital marketing off your checklist. Just as

with any business, nonprofits need to carefully design and frequently evaluate their [digital marketing strategies](#) for maximum effect.

Consider the following best practices for social media technology in nonprofits:

- **Focus on the right channel** – Each social media channel, from Facebook to LinkedIn, appeals to a different audience. Identify your target audience and concentrate your efforts on the digital neighborhoods that audience visits.
- **Post regularly** – Determine a posting schedule to keep the content on your social media fresh. Blog about relevant topics or post photos of a recent event or conference.
- **Use images and video to engage** – Articles and posts that contain photos and video capture the readers' attention and invite them to share your posts. But be careful to use relevant, high quality images.
- **Use chatbots** – With chatbots, you can answer common questions quickly, without the necessity of posting a human on digital watch round the clock.
- **Implement a Donate Now button** – You may have already added a donation button to your website. Now, you can also make it possible for viewers to donate directly from your Facebook post or YouTube video.



Quantify Impact with Data Analytics

Everything in a nonprofit revolves around the mission, be it saving dolphins or equipping educational institutions. To continue engaging donors and volunteers, you need to be able to demonstrate your impact against that mission. And to quantify impact, you need data.

Consider, for example, a nonprofit with the mission to provide school supplies to an underprivileged region. You can easily quantify the number of supplies donated and generally show the number of students affected. More importantly, by analyzing additional data over time, you can potentially show increases in literacy and job placement rates.

In addition to demonstrating impact, analytics can also provide a measure of the effectiveness of tools and campaigns. For instance, data can help you compare click-through rates of ads placed on various social media platforms. With that data, you can target future campaigns more efficiently, saving precious marketing dollars.



Turbo charge fundraising with emerging technologies

Typically, nonprofits rank among late adopters of new technologies. With slim operating budgets and competing demands, using funds for tried and true techniques may feel more responsible. However, wise use of new technology for nonprofits can pay substantial dividends.

One striking example involves using virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR) to build empathy in potential donors. To that end, UNICEF released a VR film in 2015 that highlighted the Syrian refugee crisis. When people experienced the film, they donated to relief efforts at twice the typical rate. VR filmmaker Chris Milk accurately calls VR the “ultimate empathy machine.”

Implementing Technology for Nonprofits

Whether extending the effectiveness of social media, demonstrating impact with data analysis or helping donors experience a life they can barely imagine, technology plays a crucial role for nonprofits. But choosing and implementing technology strategies that deliver the greatest return on investment can prove challenging.

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