

Blood: Water Technical eUpdate Vol. 11 – Get Started (or Re-Started) with Social Media

Dear All,

Some of us may be too young to even remember what it was like to work in a world before social media. But for those of us <cough> who do, we can attest that it has dramatically changed the way the world does business. In every sector, social media has become a powerful tool for communication, engagement, advocacy and getting buy-in. Government agencies have their twitter handles to share policy updates and get feedback from its citizens. Corporates use their Facebook pages to promote products and offers. Foundations and CSR initiatives use instagram contests to find new and exciting causes to donate big money towards. And in the case of Egypt: People used social media to coordinate the start of a revolution- Talk about major social change! As you can see the examples are endless!

Internet costs are consistently dropping and smart phones of different makes and models have become more affordable; Making connectivity cheaper to more consistent in almost every corner of the world. Social Networking is now considered to be a core and critical component for all institutional marketing and communication strategies. Social Networking sites when used well, have immense benefits and can help an organization showcase their work. It's a cost-effective way to promote activities and events, connect and engage with persons of influence and even fundraise! It can also be used as a platform for direct implementation of diverse public health programs, particularly among youth.

But just setting up shop and collecting “Likes,” “Friends” or “Followers” will not necessarily get the result you are looking for. Sarah DiJulio and Marc Ruben co-authored a chapter in the book, *People to People Fundraising: Social Networking and Web 2.0 for Charities*, Wiley, 2007. They provide information from a guide to the “lingo” of social sites, to an approach to planning your entry into social networking. We have adapted DiJulio and Ruben's guide to getting started with social networking and summarized a few quick tips for you to consider below:

1. Pick the right social networks.

Don't just pick sites based on the size of the network. Think deliberately about the audience you are trying to reach and what you want out of your interactions with them. Choose online communities that will be most effective for your organization, based on this. It may pay to start small, with one to three social networks, rather than trying to take the entire virtual world by storm all at once.

2. Find an “expert” to help you.

Look around your organization or community for someone who has experience with social networking. It might be a young staffer, an intern, a volunteer. Get that person involved so you won't be starting from “scratch.”

3. Prepare to lose control.

There is no way you can vet every word of every person who wants to be your friend or join your social networking group. If you or your lawyers are not comfortable with that fact,

social networking probably is not for you. You can set up an approval process for “comments” that people post but if you go this route, make sure the approval process is reasonable and fast.

4. Make a good first impression.

Try to impress your “friends” right off the bat. Make your profile look good and professional at the same time. Be consistent with your organization’s branding. Be clear about who you are, i.e. your mission, vision, values. Control what your organization will look like on other people’s friend lists—pick a great picture and title that will get noticed. Look around, see what others are doing.

5. Find out which of your supporters and influencers are already on social networks.

Survey your partner networks and find out who has Twitter handles, Facebook accounts, or belong to other social networks. Influencers are industry leaders and experts who are the ones talking about specific topics with the most authority. Find the influencers which align most with your line of work. Send them an e-mail inviting them to become your friend or to join your group.

6. Communicate with your social network friends on a regular basis.

Update your pages with new content. Consistency is critical. You can use tools like [Hoot Suite](#), which create schedules for posting content on multiple platforms automatically. Get the word out on important issues and drive people to your page. Don't be “static.” Be dynamic!

7. Devote staff time to making your social networking effort a success.

Social media accounts, like email accounts, need to be managed. Assign a staff person to accept friend requests, post comments on other people's pages, and invite others to become friends. That is what social networking is all about. It must be deliberate.

8. Activate your social network supporters.

Eventually you will want to start turning your “friends” into activists, donors, and volunteers. Make sure your social networking pages always feature lots of opportunities to get involved.

Also include donation opportunities on your social networking pages. Even if you do not raise much in the short run, it helps to set expectations for the future.

Be specific when you do ask your friends to do something for your organization. And always let people know what happened at an event or with a campaign even if they did not participate. They might get involved the next time.

These are just a few quick tips to get your minds churning. ***Below are some really useful tools and resources for you to dig deeper into.*** It spans the use of social media for organizational functions as well as programmatic. Consider both and how each can serve your work.

Social Media Resources for Organizational Functions:

Getting Started with Social Media: Toolkit:

This toolkit from the Rita Allen Foundation will provide the guidance and step-by-step processes required to establish deliberate and effective social media platforms for your organization. This resource will provide the structured guide you need to start (for the first time) or re-start (with strategic vision) using social media as a tool that yields results

http://www.ritaallenfoundation.org/docs/RAFMediaKit5_17.pdf

Free Courses at the Influencer Marketing Academy:

FREE TRAINING ALERT: Traackr is a technology company that focuses on mapping social media influencers for the purpose of marketing. They have set up a free online education platform offering courses to build capacity on becoming an expert at influencer Marketing. You can enroll in their courses below. Additional free resources and toolkits can be found on their [website](#):

<http://education.traackr.com/>

6 Creative Ways to Use Twitter For Your Nonprofit Marketing Campaigns

<https://www.salsalabs.com/blog/6-creative-ways-to-use-twitter-for-your-nonprofit-marketing-campaigns>

Community Organizer 2.0:

This online blog and forum aims to promote discussion and opinions about the intersection of social media, technology and non-profits. Subscribe to this blog to receive up-to-date discussions, research and best practices on the use of social media for various functions in the non-profit sector.

<http://www.communityorganizer20.com/abouttheblog/>

Social Media as Program Tools:

Preventing HIV with Social Media and Mobile Phones:

<http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2011/may/20110502sm>

Global Hand Washing Social Media Toolkit:

<http://globalhandwashing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Global-Handwashing-Day-2015-Social-Media-Toolkit.pdf>

More to Come!