2016

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NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA: MAXIMIZING AND MEASURING RETURN ON INVESTMENT

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Abstract

With billions of global users, the successful utilization of social media platforms is becoming an essential task for the nonprofit sector. Organizations that successfully implement strategic social media campaigns experience significant improvements to their organizational capacity. Navigating the implementation of a social media campaign is a challenging process, specifically, maximizing and measuring return on investment. This comprehensive literature review was conducted to gain deeper understanding of the challenges associated with maximizing and measuring return on investment in social media campaigns and to identify emerging best practices for addressing these issues. Existing literature from multiple fields including marketing, business, communications, and nonprofit management was analyzed to develop a step-by-step guide for nonprofit organizations to successfully implement and evaluate strategic social media utilization. This literature review indicates that there is consensus among authors regarding the specific practices necessary to maximize benefits from investing in social media campaigns. While the body of research specific to nonprofit organizations measuring return on investment in social media is relatively small, promising models and tools are emerging for nonprofits to quantify and interpret the results of their investments in meaningful ways.

INTRODUCTION

Technological advancements represent a significant source of opportunity and challenge for the nonprofit sector. According to Salamon (2012), nonprofit organizations

(NPOs) face increased pressure to incorporate new technology into their operations. Salamon (2012) further characterizes technological innovation as a *wildcard* in regards to the future direction of NPOs. According to existing literature, there are significant challenges and opportunities for NPOs embracing and incorporating technological innovations into their structure and function, specifically social media channels. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as a group of internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content. There are several types of social media channels. They are categorized as collaborative projects, or *Wikis*; blogs and micro blogs, like *Twitter*; content communities like *Youtube*; and social/professional networking sites, like *Facebook* or *Linked In* (Gupta, Tyagi & Sharma, 2013). Social media channels are widely recognized tools in the corporate and nonprofit sectors for creating a web presence and becoming successfully networked. This presence entails having an informational website, pages or groups on social networking sites, and/or participation in a content community.

My previous research on healthcare organizations adapting to social media has identified that NPOs are realizing significant benefits, both financial and nonfinancial, from investing in social media campaigns utilizing the various channels available in this new media age. This research also revealed that the foremost challenges identified by participants were the maximization and measurement of return on investment (Appleby, 2014). In order to gain deeper understanding of these challenges and methods for addressing them, a deep review of existing literature has been conducted. This review focuses on the central question: How can NPOs maximize and measure their return on investment (ROI) in social media campaigns?

Existing knowledge from the fields of marketing, business, communications, and nonprofit management was analyzed to answer this question and attempt to form a consolidated guide for NPOs wanting to successfully implement and evaluate social media campaigns. This conclusive analysis will be organized into the following

three sections; 1) the demonstrated benefits and contextual factors contributing to the increased urgency for NPOs to implement strategic social media utilization, 2) viable methods and emerging best practices for maximizing the benefits of social media investment, and 3) tools and metrics for measuring return on investment and evaluating success will be examined. This information will be consolidated into a literature supported, step-by-step guide for NPOs to successfully implement and evaluate social media campaigns. Case studies of exemplary organizations, namely Planned Parenthood Federation of America, will be analyzed to demonstrate these steps in action. The discussion of gaps and research implications will conclude this literature review.

Benefits of Strategic Social Media Utilization

There is a consensus among existing literature that utilization of a diverse portfolio social media channels can produce multifaceted benefits for nonprofit organizations (Dighe, 2012; Gupta, et al., 2013; Govette, 2014). These benefits are extensive and can be separated into two interrelated categories: nonfinancial and financial.

Nonfinancial Benefits. Strategic utilization of social media channels can produce a variety of nonfinancial benefits for NPO's, which include access to a global audience, increases in productivity of managers and professionals, provision of continuous feedback channels, and increased web presence.

The nonfinancial benefits are largely centered on the most fundamental characteristic of social media, that of instant global communication. Social media channels facilitate the dissemination of information quickly and to a vast audience (McKinsey Global Institute, 2015; Kanter & Paine, 2012). Specifically, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) exemplifies the utilization of social media's content communities in their dissemination of public health information (Gupta, et al., 2013). The CDC used YouTube and Flickr during an outbreak of H1N1 in 2009 to post videos of symptoms, warning signs, and recommendations for medical attention. It was reported that

approximately 8 million different viewers visited CDC's site in a single day following the upload of their first video on YouTube on April 30, 2009. This use of social media allowed the CDC access to a vast global audience and in turn had a significant impact on public health by enhancing public knowledge of treatment seeking and containment of this outbreak.

This ability to share information has broad implications for both intra and inter-organizational communications. Using social media channels is a tool to enhance communication, collaboration, and knowledge sharing. This provides organizations with the opportunity to benefit from increases in productivity of managers and professionals as high as 25% (McKinsey Global Institute, 2015). This increased productivity is possible because knowledge or messages become content that is instantly communicated and allows for remote professionals to collaborate more efficiently. Collaboration is an essential function of NPOs within themselves, with other organizations, and with their broader communities, so this is an impactful benefit.

Another nonfinancial benefit of social media channels is their provision of continuous feedback channels. They offer a multi-directional flow of information to develop and monitor conversations of interest to NPOs (McKinsey Global Institute, 2015; Foster, 2011; Kabani, 2012; Kahn, 2014; Kanter & Paine, 2012). Organizations can generate content to create a *buzz* and monitor the spread of awareness of their mission and issues. The broader online community is able to respond directly to the organizations and spread information to their personal networks. Feedback channels facilitate the creation of new and deepening of existing relationships with stakeholders including donors, volunteers, clients, and advocates (Kanter & Paine, 2012). Sharing information and participating in conversations through social media channels offers organizations the opportunity to reach previously untapped individuals and groups to enhance engagement in their causes. In addition to influencing the external community, the feedback channels provided by social media can also allow the public to influence organizations. Consumer reviews and insights

provided by external stakeholders can aid organizations in creating and improving their programs and services (McKinsey Global Institute, 2015). These benefits illustrate the power of communication channels made possible by social media.

Social media channels are a key tool for developing an organization's web presence. Developing a web presence is a highly effective marketing technique for NPOs to inexpensively develop and promote their *brand,* or mission and causes. This provides a mode of increasing their visibility to the general public and thus influences the perception of their credibility and status as experts. For example, research based on consumer surveys has shown that individuals are more likely to seek services from and recommend to others an organization that they recognize as having a strong web presence (McCaughey, Baumgardner, Gaudes, LaRochelle, Wu & Raichura, (2014); Govette, 2014). These communication based benefits have significant implications for organizations because of their ability to facilitate relationship building. The building of strong relationships allows organizations to leverage social capitol to enhance their capacity to perform public goods and create social change. The nonfinancial benefits of enhanced communication, engagement, relationships, visibility and credibility are essential building blocks for organizational effectiveness and as such have a positive impact on organizational finances. While the nonfinancial benefits do positively impact the finances of organizations, there are some benefits that directly affect their financial resources.

Financial Benefits. The financial benefits of social media include utilization costs, time savings, fundraising opportunities, and visibility of support. Utilization is relatively inexpensive when compared to traditional media like print, billboards, television, and radio. This allows NPOs with notoriously tight budgets to participate in marketing their services and programs to a new, larger, and younger audience of potential donors and clients (Saxton, 2013). Another financial benefit is the time saving characteristic of social media use. Quicker methods of marketing require less staff and devoted hours.

Organizations provide content to their network and network members then share said content with their respective networks and so on; thus proliferating their message with relatively little effort on behalf of the NPO.

Utilizing social media applications for fund development allows organizations to capitalize on social network effect, social proof, peer pressure, and impulse donations (Saxton, 2013; Axelrad, 2015). These constructs are somewhat unique to the new media environment. Particularly attractive revenue development can be performed using crowd-funding applications. Applications like *Go Fund Me* and *Crowd Rise* allow organizations to reach a vast network of potential individual donors and offer an online platform for easily donating directly to causes and organizations. The quick and easy nature of online giving through crowd funding, social networking, and organizational website applications elicits impulse based donations (Saxton, 2013).

Furthermore, social networking applications allow individuals to publicize their organizational allegiances and support to their online network of friends, especially their donations to causes. This visibility of support contributes to a perceived pressure and increased likelihood of other members of the individuals' networks of friends to follow suit in charitable giving, this is referred to as the social network effect (Saxton, 2013) or social proof (Axelrad, 2015). Additionally, individuals can operate as solicitors for causes they support in peer-to-peer fundraising. When people are solicited for donations by someone that they have an existing connection to there is a higher level of trust and greater likelihood of giving (Saxton, 2013). The visibility and public transparency of individual responses to solicitations for donations from members of their social network leads to peer pressure and impulses that increase the likelihood of people exposed to online *asks* making a donation.

Pressure from the For Profit Sector

Social media utilization strategies have been widely implemented in the private sector and are now relied on

heavily for efficient corporate functioning. Private social media users represent a massive audience of potential customers to the for profit sector. As online commerce through social media continues to grow in popularity and ease of use, it is becoming essential for nonprofit organizations to adopt similar strategies. Nonprofit organizations can learn from the corporate sector's strategic use of social media to enhance their financial and nonfinancial resources.

In the for profit sector web based presence, branding, and marketing through social media channels have become essential to reach consumers. The Harvard Business Review reports that 78% of for profit companies use some form of social media. Munoz and Wood (2015) report that the level of engagement in social media among the general public, currently 1.4 billion active Facebook users and 500 million *Tweets* sent per day, greatly influences how companies are structuring their marketing strategies. The McKinsey Global Institute estimates that online social interactions influence up to a third of consumer spending, which translates to 940 billion dollars in just the United States and Europe. The size of the audience and amount of spending generated through social media platforms are huge resources that nonprofit organizations can capitalize on to enhance their capacities.

Although they are acting more slowly than the private sector, nonprofits are beginning to acknowledge the importance of adopting strategic social media utilization so they too can capitalize on the benefits already being reaped by the corporate sector. According to Barnes (2010), all 200 of the United States largest charities were engaged in some form of social media utilization by 2009. This could be influenced by the phenomenon known as mimetic isomorphism. According to Anheier (2014), mimetic isomorphism, which can occur in situations of environmental or technological uncertainty, is characterized by NPOs adopting techniques and tools used by businesses and other successful organizations. For better or for worse, the for-profit and nonprofit organizations become increasingly similar through pressures of professionalization to sustain their credibility and competitive edge.

There seems to be agreement among sources that the next generations of consumers will require nonprofit institutions to become accessible in the same ways other products are. Gupta et al. (2013) site the aging baby boomers and the following generations' propensity for technology and social media as a driving force behind nonprofit organizations seeking to adopt these web-based methods. Adapting to the technological propensities of the general population is an important task for organizations that want to remain relevant in the digital age. As such it is essential for nonprofit organizations to understand how to effectively implement and evaluate social media strategies that both benefit the organization and meet the needs of their stakeholders.

Methods for Maximizing Benefits

Upon examining the existing literature on the financial and nonfinancial benefits and urgency for NPOs to utilize social media, it is clear that there are several important tasks for maximizing an organization's return on investment. Organizations can reap great benefits from implementing a series of emerging best practices. The most prominent methods are: develop a strategy; focus on building relationships and engagement; maintain a constituent centered perspective; telling a story; use visual communication; and evaluate effectiveness and adjust implementation. Each of these methods will be discussed in further detail.

Develop a Strategy. It is essential for NPOs to approach their social media utilization in a strategic and well-planned manner in order to be successful. To do this, Saxton (2013) recommends examining the organization's current capacities and internal capabilities so that they can capitalize on their strengths. Beginning the NPO's strategy means identifying the social media team. This includes taking inventory of the expertise and comfort levels of staff that will be involved. In larger organizations the responsibility for social media implementation largely falls on the communications department (Saxton, 2015). In smaller organizations the

executive director and other management staff usually assume these responsibilities. Regardless of the size of the organization, all employees should be informed of the strategy and goals for the social media campaign even if they are not directly responsible for implementation. There must be consensus among involved staff as to the content and overarching messages of the content the organization will be producing.

Congruent to Saxton (2013), Axelrad (2015) emphasizes the importance of examining capacity, but also recommends examining how the NPO would like to see their social media capacity change. Organizations must examine where they are, where they want to be, and what goals and objectives will help them get there in regards to social media.

Kanter & Paine (2012) also emphasize the importance of identifying goals and setting measurable objectives to facilitate implementation and evaluation of the social media strategy. This is intended to assist organizations in choosing diverse and appropriate social media channels to meet their needs. Forming a clear and well understood plan would help maintain a consistent message and help the organization stay on task towards realizing their goals. Adherence to the strategy can aid NPOs in capitalizing on *cross channel synergy* and the *echo channel effect*. These phenomena occur when the content provided by an NPO on each channel is consistent, cohesive, and complementary (Saxton, 2013).

Overall there is consensus that ideal strategies identify team members' roles and responsibilities and select multiple channels to be used to disseminate messages that reinforce each other and the organizational mission. Organizations should also map the social networks and potential audiences to be reached and ensure that social media strategies are integrated with the strategic plan and direction of the organization.

Build Relationships and Engagement. In order to foster the building of relationships and engagement with new and existing networks NPOs must emphasize reciprocal communication. It is essential for success that NPOs

regularly provide content through their social media channels. They must go beyond simply providing the content, they must also respond to feedback, comments and questions from members of their online networks in a timely manner (Axelrad, 2015; Kanter & Fine, 2010; Kanter & Paine, 2012). It is also beneficial to respond to and comment on happenings in their specific field and current events affecting their work and the general public. By emphasizing multi-directional flows of conversation NPOs can be a major player in online dialogues that make connections to other organizations, communities, interest groups that they may not have been able to access through traditional media, marketing, and face-to-face networking (Kanter & Fine, 2010). Dedicated participation in online dialogues allows NPOs to connect to influencers and broader networks of constituents and stakeholders, not only to raise awareness of the public, but also engage potential supporters of the organization's causes.

Being mindful of reciprocity in these relationships is a key task. Reciprocity is a key element of marketing techniques and the psychology of persuasion. NPOs must be mindful of the phrase *give to get.* Organizations can maximize financial and human support benefits by giving before asking. This means that NPOs should regularly provide their audience with information, participation opportunities, and expressions of value and gratitude that precede their asks for donations and online promotion to audience members' personal networks (Axelrad, 2015). NPOs can also use the phenomena of social proof. This is in the same category as the social network effect that has been previously discussed. When providing the audience with opportunities to participate, NPOs must not forget to encourage participants to broadcast their participation to their personal networks. When individuals broadcast their support it creates social proof of legitimacy and need and in turn increases the likelihood of their contacts following suit in participating through donations or information sharing.

In these processes it is key for NPOs to do more than tell their audience that they value them. Organizations must show their value by responding to feedback and using it to inform their practices. NPOs must be feedback

informed and report to their social media channels how audience feedback has been utilized. Through actively and effectively engaging social media audiences in relationships, NPOs can begin to develop a big picture view of how groups and individuals are connected to issues across industries and disciplines to better inform not only their social media strategy, but also fund, program, and service development as well. These social media relationships allow NPOs to better harness social capitol of their audiences to further their provision of public good, Kanter and Paine (2012) refer to this as networked nonprofits using data to drive social change.

Maintain a Constituent Centered Perspective. A key characteristic that facilitates the building of relationships and engagement is organizations knowing the audience they will be communicating with and targeting their content to best appeal to their constituents and potential stakeholders. This task goes back to strategizing the campaign by mapping the NPO's social networks and identifying key audience groups and their values. The content the NPO provides through social media channels must be targeted to their key audience groups (Axelrad, 2015).

Tell a Story and Use Visual Communication. NPOs will need to tell a story with their content that appeals on an emotional level and communicates how the values of the organization and the viewer intersect. Topics that are most appealing to the public on an emotional level are related to health, emergencies, and demonstrate an immediate need that they can help address (Saxton, 2013). Particularly effective stories include visual aids like images and info graphics that convey a story more quickly and sometimes more effectively that the written word (Axelrad, 2015). These aids add visual interest to their content and can effectively capture attention of viewers and draw them in to be more receptive of textual content. A key part of the story presented should include donors and how they have positively impacted the NPOs provision of public good, which allows viewers to identify with and mirror the

donating behaviors your NPO wants to elicit (Axelrad, 2015).

Increasing donating behaviors and action responses should be one of the ideal goals of the social media campaign and as such must be monitored and analyzed. These practices make up one of the most important characteristics of NPOs who successfully implement social media utilization.

Evaluate Effectiveness and Adjust Accordingly. While measurement and evaluation will be discussed more in-depth in the following section, it is important to give these practices credit for their ability to maximize NPO's benefit from social media utilization. The most effective and successfully networked NPOs engage in monitoring their social media efforts for effectiveness and use this information to form insights and adjust their tactics (Axelrad, 2015; Kanter & Fine, 2010; Kanter & Paine, 2012; Saxton, 2013). Successfully networked nonprofits are characteristically data informed and continuously tweak their social media tactics to improve their effectiveness and evolve their impact. If NPOs do not adopt a culture of learning through implementing evaluation they will not know if their social media campaign is helping them reach their goals and objectives. They will not be harnessing the full benefits of social media channels as tools if they fail to analyze the effectiveness of their tactics to continuously improve. Evaluating social media utilization is one of the most essential tasks for NPOs but as identified in my previous research, is also one of the most challenging. The following section will delve further into actual tools and methods NPOs can use to determine the impact of their social media campaign by measuring return on investment.

Measuring and Evaluating the Return on Investment of Social Media

Although industry standards and best practices for measuring benefits and return on investment in social media platforms are currently lacking, current literature includes examples of innovative methods that can be used to this end.

Kanter and Paine (2012) point out that easily quantifiable metrics are not always the most meaningful indicators of success. They posit that meaningful indicators of success are often difficult to quantify, but not impossible. These meaningful indicators include both quantitative and qualitative metrics for perception, reputation, social change, increased capacity, and deeper engagement.

NPOs differ from the corporate sector because their return on investment is not solely financial returns. Any value derived from social media campaigns is considered a return for NPOs (Foster, 2011; Holmboe, 2011; MacNamara, 2014; McCaughey, 2014; Shattuck, 2014; Spiller & Tuten, 2015). These authors propose three separate categories of returns. First, the financial category, includes conversions or when a viewer is converted into a supporter or donor; second, the behavioral category, includes the recency and frequency of activity; and third, the attitudinal category, includes changes in attitude, perception, and loyalty of the online community.

In addition to categories of returns, the literature espouses categories of metrics. NPOs should pick a variety of metrics from each category in order to gain more comprehensive insights to improve their tactics and gage their return. These metrics will make up the key performance indicators that the social media team agrees are necessary to achieve success on their goals and objectives. They are mileposts or benchmarks that will tell a data-informed organization how well they are performing on progress towards their goals (Kanter & Paine, 2012).

Table 1 illustrates categories of metrics and respective examples of metric options derived from the work of several authors (Foster, 2011; Holmboe, 2011; MacNamara, 2014; McCaughey, 2014; Shattuck, 2014; Spiller & Tuten, 2015).

Table 1. *Categories of Metrics*

Activity: Input from NPO	Interaction: Process or Reaction from Audience Members	Returns: Outcome
• Posts • Updates • Comments • Channel Use • Videos, Photos	• Registration • Email Subscription • Comments • Reposts, mentions • Content contribution • Viral-ity • Sentiment • Reviews, Recommendations	• Conversions • New Revenue • Shifts in Traffic • Share of Voice

Survey type tools can be used to measure perception from topically coding qualitative data sets. Content analysis tools can be used to determine share of conversation and what individuals and group are saying online. Web and social analytic tools can measure the NPOs specific efforts and their results. NPOs should choose appropriate analysis tools that meet their budgets and the size and scope of their social media campaign. There are many ways for NPOs to collect and use insightful data; some authors at the cutting edge of social media evaluation are constructing their own recommendations for measuring returns. However, the organization needs to take into consideration the personnel costs for conducting these measurements: can an NP afford to hire the personnel or contract out the work? In order to address the personnel costs, organizations should integrate social media staffing costs into their social media strategy.

Next, two examples of organizations that have successfully implemented return on investment for social media metrics will be discussed.

Return on Investment Examples

McCaughey et al. (2014) have introduced the use of a social media value matrix. The value matrix compares different levels of social media channel use of 106 hospitals to their respective scores on the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAPS). Analysis using the value matrix demonstrated positive correlation between outcomes of HCAPS scores and complexity of the hospitals' usage of social media channels. Because HCAPS scores are often tied to hospital reimbursements, this study demonstrates significant promise for both utilizing social media and quantifying its financial benefits. While a promising approach for measuring return, this matrix is not yet generalizable to non-health based NPOs.

Owyang (2010) suggests the use of a return on investment pyramid (ROIP). In his ROIP, each level of the organization or business has a distinct area of metrics on which to focus that is based on data gathered from the social media being utilized. On the largest, bottom level it is suggested that community managers and agencies focus on engagement metrics including data such as followers, fans, clicks, retweets, check-ins, etc. The mid level of business/organization stakeholders should focus on analyzing this social media data into bodies of data that reveal share of voice, resonation, word of mouth, and support response. The highest level of business/organization executives should focus on business metrics such as revenue, brand reputation, and cost reduction. The pyramid proposed by Owyang (2010) shows how organizations utilizing social media can begin with a large pool of engagement data and consolidate it into meaningful information about how their web presence is impacting their finances and reputation. These can be useful tools for non-profit health organizations in both developing a new social media strategy and evaluating an existing one.

Both of these tools seem promising and highly useful, but may be problematic for non-profit organizations if they lack funds for research and development, grant seeking/writing experience, a strong capacity for internal

evaluation. These methods for evaluating seem to be better suited for NPO who have a larger human and financial capacity. However, there is agreement among authors that in order to benefit from evaluation, NPOs must do more than simply accrue data; they must analyze it to gain deeper insight into how the data can be used to inform and improve their social media campaigns (Kanter and Paine, 2012). In order to consolidate the knowledge gained from this literature review, a guide for NPOs to successfully implement social media campaigns has been developed. Based on the existing body of literature and the practices of organizations successfully pioneering social media utilization in the nonprofit sector, the following steps have been developed.

Process to Guide Organizations Towards Successful Utilization

1. Identify Social Media Team and Assign Roles/Responsibilities
2. Define Investment Capacity (both financial and time)
3. Identify and Map Social Network and Key Audiences
4. Identify Goals and Set Measurable Objectives of Social Media Campaign
5. Identify Benchmarks and Timeframes
6. Choose Social Media Channels
7. Choose Metrics in Each Return Category (Appropriately Suited to Goals and Objectives)
8. Choose Data Collection Tools
9. Inform all NPO Staff
10. Implement Strategy and Begin Collecting Data
11. Analyze Data and Take Appropriate Action
12. Periodically Revisit Each Step to Adjust as Campaign Evolves and Goals are Achieved

Exemplary Organization: Planned Parenthood Federation of America

Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) is undisputedly one of the most successful NPOs at leveraging social media campaigns to achieve mission goals and influence public behavior (Sundstrom, 2012). As a healthcare provider and advocacy group, they began with a core of supporters made up of service users and others who wanted to ensure the availability of their services to themselves and others. In 2011 they had only 100,000 Facebook supporters but grew that number to over 300,000 by the year 2012. PPFA's posts on Facebook and Twitter often generate more than 10,000 comments and shares in a single day. In 2015 PPFA has reached 750,000 followers of their Facebook Causes page. This presence allows them to do more than spread their message to vast networks, their social media campaigns translate into millions of dollars in funding and support. According to their 2012-2013 Annual Report, individual donations totaled in excess of 315.5 million dollars. Their social media campaigns, specifically Get Yourself Tested (GYT), Real Life. Real Talk., ManPhone, and #ISTANDWITHPLANNEDPARENTHOOD have had a significant impact on public reproductive health practices; reducing stigma of healthy sexuality; increased public openness, acceptance, and engagement in sexual health behaviors and conversations; and ultimately made significant gains in changing public policy to be more supportive of reproductive healthcare for women and families.

In examining the tactics and strategies of PPFA it is clear that their successful campaigns utilize practices that are congruent with the literature discussed in this review (Foster, 2011; Holmboe, 2011; Kanter & Fine, 2010; Kanter & Paine, 2012; MacNamara, 2014; McCaughey, 2014; Saxton, 2013; Shattuck, 2014; Spiller & Tuten, 2015).

Sundstrom (2012) examined the workings of PPFA's social media campaigns through interviews while conducting an in depth case study of this NPOs success. Her findings identified several key characteristics that contribute

to PPFA's considerable success in the realm of social media. PPFA designates a team and informs and trains their staff in their strategy for implementation and desired outcomes. PPFA continuously assesses their audiences and social networks and uses this awareness to target the context and content of their campaigns. Consistent with the strategies presented by Kanter and Paine (2012), they use a variety of public relations and marketing techniques, like visual aids and emotionally appealing stories, to facilitate national conversations and public interest. Their stories, particularly those presented in their annual report, show the impact of their donors and supporters by quantifying the actual amount of specific services they were able to provide as a result of ongoing support. PPFA's story telling tactics are congruent with strategies highlighted by Axelrad (2015) and Saxton (2013) in their ability to appeal emotionally to audiences, convey a sense of urgency, and quantify the impact donors and supporters have contributed to their causes. They utilize multiple channels to disseminate consistent and reinforced messages that are contextually relevant to their audience and their organization objectives. They use reciprocity and multidirectional flows of information to generate national conversations and a sense of urgency that translates to higher adoption of their viewpoints, enduring relationships, and converts viewers into donors and advocates**.** The practices implemented by PPFA exemplify the key characteristics presented in current literature as necessary for successful utilization of social media.

Gaps and Implications for Research

Although research is beginning to broaden the amount of knowledge on maximizing and measuring returns on social media investment, there are some significant gaps. Widely applicable ROI models are lacking, which could be due to the uniqueness of each organization but may also be a result of insufficient research on samples of organizations with diverse sizes and purposes. Current literature seems to focus on larger corporations in the private sector and large national and multinational NPOs. Furthermore, there is a lack of collaboration and consensus between the disciplines

of PR, marketing, finance, and NP sectors. This lack of interdisciplinary research is creating discourse silos where each field conducts separate research with separate definitions and un-generalizable gains in knowledge and methodology. This separation does not move the practices of social media utilization forward as effectively as it could.

More research is needed to examine the small and medium nonprofits that are rarely included in this realm of research. Even further research is needed to illuminate promising methods for specific subsectors of nonprofits. Research on these topics will contribute to the field of nonprofit work by increasing knowledge on best practices for implementing social media strategies, maximizing their benefits, and measuring returns. These are important tasks for the nonprofit sector in order to stay relevant to the technological propensities of the general public and continue to harness social capitol in innovative ways to enhance their ability to elicit social change and perform public goods.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this literature review has included studies from multiple fields of research to better inform NPOs in their utilization of social media. This work has revealed the benefits of social media use and the contextual factors contributing to the necessity of NPO adoption. Research supported methods for maximizing successful use of social media campaigns have been presented. Emerging methods for monitoring and evaluating return on investment in social media channels have been examined and critiqued. These methods have been further demonstrated using exemplary case studies and consolidated into a useful guide for nonprofits to successfully develop social media campaigns.

There is still a need for greater knowledge in this emerging arena of new media. More research is needed to assist NPOs in effectively adapting to the challenges of Web 2.0, which is crucial for the sector to remain relevant and effective as stewards of public good. Positive implications for organizational capacity depend on increasing the sector's understanding and competence for successfully

implementing, monitoring, and evaluating social media campaigns.

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