RAISING MONEY AND GENERATING INCOME IN AN INTERCONNECTED WORLD

When it comes to the matter of generating revenues, it would be accurate to state that the current economic climate has imposed some significant challenges and limitations upon association responsibilities tasked with attracting donations. Yet it is equally true to say that there are numerous developments that afford new opportunities for fundraisers, too.

**SOCIAL MEDIA: A REVOLUTION IN FUNDRAISING FOR ASSOCIATIONS?**
Social media was, for several years, the ‘elephant in the room’ in terms of fund raising. Organisations could see its potential to create revenues, but were unable to generate inflows in any meaningful volume. Certainly, these networking features provided unique platforms that enabled faster, wider, and more direct engagement with donors. But, at the same time, there were very few cases of associations being able to convert clicks into significant contributions.

This is the first obstacle that many fundraisers have encountered in the digital space, because increased engagement does not always mean increased revenues. Fundraising for nonprofits is based on converting this engagement into a donation, yet social media has a tendency to promote the former at the expense of the latter. Simply put, believers believe their engagement is of equivalent value to a contribution. Unsurprisingly, even an awareness campaign in 2013 highlighting this very issue, giving the very promise: ‘Like us on Facebook and we will vaccinate zero children against polio’.

It is a problem with very real consequences. The anti-charity charity Heifer International created a viral campaign alongside an app that would allow easy, instant donations. Although the campaign reached 6.4 million Facebook users, they received only thirty instant donations. Although the campaign reached 6.4 million Facebook users, they received only thirty instant donations. It does not take expert analysis to realise that, without any form of cash income, associations of all types will struggle to remain viable.

But this situation is now beginning to change. We can look to notable success stories of recent years, like the Ice Bucket Challenge viral campaign for ALS awareness, and get a clearer picture of the anatomy of a successful social media fundraising campaign. The Ice Bucket Challenge raised more than £600m worth of research donations, and the way it succeeded may be the blueprint for all nonprofits in the future.

**SUCCESSFUL SOCIAL MEDIA FUNDRAISING FOR NONPROFITS**
The disaster of the Heifer International campaign, and the success of the ALS Association, represent the two extremes of the social media experience for fundraisers. But why does one succeed when the other fails? The general consensus is found in two crucial aspects of the Ice Bucket Challenge, both of which come with very handy abbreviations: UX, and UGC.

User Experience (UX) and User-Generated Content (UGC) may be the secret ingredients to a winning fundraising campaign on social media, simply because they address the nature of the medium, and the needs of a campaign’s constituents.

UX plays a crucial factor in improving the primary challenge facing every social media campaign: the inability to convert prospects into members and donors. When the Ice Bucket Challenge launched, there was no quick, easy way to donate. This identified by Facebook as a problem with their own service, and this led them to create the Facebook Donate button. The Facebook Donate button is a feature which allows members to contribute without leaving the site.

When it launched in 2013, the convenience factor of the service helped the Yaiati earthquake campaign secure almost 89% of crowd-funded funding within its first week. When fundraisers talk about the importance of convenience and user experience to achieve higher inflows, this is exactly what they mean.

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