



How charity leaders govern social media globally to thrive online

Brent Kennerley and Barry Baker
NFP Specialist Partners

“Social media is a game changer. Charities looking to engage with a more technology literate audience need to harness the power of this rapidly evolving environment. Without an informed social media strategy – and the internal governance and operations to support it – funding may erode.”

Carol Rudge | Global leader of Not for Profit | Grant Thornton



@CarolRudge



[linkd.in/1inDAzG](https://www.linkedin.com/company/grantthornton)

Tweet this

Key findings

Strategy: The charity's strategy should drive social media use. The board must help formulate this strategy from a position of knowledge.

Governance: Charities should document their social media governance approach and share guidelines with everyone involved in their work. Clear guidance and understanding improves self-moderation.

Education and training: Formal education programmes should be used at every level of the organisation, including volunteers when it is relevant. Internal social networks, such as Yammer and Jive, can also provide opportunities for people to gain confidence and working knowledge of social media.

Risk: For many charities, non-engagement is a risk in itself, although each organisation has to weigh up the cost of social media against its benefits.

Impact: It is vital to measure impact, engagement and outcomes to justify investment in social media. Metrics should always be linked to a strategic goal and monitored to find the real value over time to beneficiaries.




questions every board should ask

- 1 What part does social media play** in our strategic plan, who reports to the board about social media strategy and outcomes, and what is their level of experience?
- 2 Do we have guidelines** to issue to staff and volunteers using social media and how do we encourage usage while mitigating risk?
- 3 How can social networks help** to aid internal communications and break down silos across a charity?
- 4 What resources have we allocated** to social media projects and how do we measure our return on investment?
- 5 How can we monitor online discussions** that our charity should be involved in?
- 6 Can any of our services be delivered** through social media to reach new beneficiaries?

As well as supplementing traditional messaging channels, social media can:

- 1 Open up** new funding streams as traditional donations shrink.
- 2 Target** beneficiaries that traditional media struggles to reach, especially the younger generation who expect information to be delivered online.
- 3 Boost** collaborative approaches to service delivery.
- 4 Act** as a transparent, accountable, accessible face of the charity.



“Social media breaks down the capacity for people to be siloed. Our closed Facebook group lets 900 staff share what they’re doing and board members can congratulate people directly. It flattens the organisation beautifully.”

Peter Burns | Chief executive officer |
YMCA Victoria, Australia




@pbymca



[inkd.in/1mH5UOI](https://www.linkedin.com/company/yymca-victoria)

Tweet this

Many charities admit that there is a lack of understanding of social media at board level.



“It’s about making our leaders accessible and being transparent. Nowadays, people expect to be able to ask questions and to challenge. So it’s really important for us that people have that ability.”

Richard Hawkes | Chief executive officer |
Scope, UK



@R_Hawkes



[linkd.in/1hOkrMx](https://www.linkedin.com/company/scope-uk/)

[Tweet this](#)

Only 53% of US non-profits post thought leadership content on social media¹

[Tweet this](#)

Only 1 in 10 Australian non-profits use Twitter hashtags²

[Tweet this](#)



“We have social media guidelines that we use for staff and volunteers. In the guidelines that we have, even the heading says ‘Tweet, share and ping’. So we really encourage our staff and volunteers.”

Ronan Ryan | Head of fundraising and communications | Irish Red Cross, Ireland




@karunadaka



linkd.in/1l9lUMK

[Tweet this](#)

The dangers of social media are clear, but the risk to a charity of not getting involved is far greater.



“They are your voice. We lost our last Twitter operator shortly after I joined, and suddenly our tailored personality and presence was altered.”

Richard Parry | Chief executive officer
| Canal & River Trust, UK




@CanalRiverTrust

[Tweet this](#)

Selfies & identity crisis

The #nomakeupselfie viral campaign raised over £8m for Cancer Research UK in 2014, translating well to text-based phone communications thanks to its donor text code. There were a few cases where predictive text, or a wrong number, resulted in UNICEF or the WWF receiving donations in error. The two charities were quick to correct the problem, but the ease of virality slipping into risk exposure is clear.

Measurements give the board an indication of benefits: investment in social media should be based upon proof of how effective it is at achieving a charity's goals. Income is only one such indicator.



“We’re really excited by a tool called SumAll, which allows you to pull analytics from Google, Facebook, Twitter, your shop and your blog and collect them all into a timeline that you can make notes on. You can see spikes where blog posts have triggered interest and responses.”

Peter Derrick | Chief executive director |
The Leprosy Mission, Canada

 @effecthope  [linkd.in/1l89EaJ](https://www.linkedin.com/company/effecthope)

[Tweet this](#)

CALLS TO ACTION

1 Strategy

- Wider business strategy
- Workshops and training
- Stay current

2 Governance

- Guidance is needed at every level, from board to operational staff
- Keeping guidance simple
- Monitoring conversations may lead to new opportunities

3 Education and training

- Protocols for individual and corporate use
- Internal social networks
- Formalise the training

4 Managing risk

- Non-engagement is a risk
- Clear and consistent guidelines

5 Measuring impact

- Metrics your charity uses should always link to a strategic goal
- Knowing the numbers is important
- Measure engagement, not just followers

QUESTIONS?



Grant Thornton

An instinct for growth™

© 2014 Grant Thornton International Ltd. All rights reserved

"Grant Thornton" refers to the brand under which the Grant Thornton member firms provide assurance, tax and advisory services to their clients and/or refers to one or more member firms, as the context requires. Grant Thornton International Ltd (GTIL) and the member firms are not a worldwide partnership. GTIL and each member firm is a separate legal entity. Services are delivered by the member firms. GTIL does not provide services to clients. GTIL and its member firms are not agents of, and do not obligate, one another and are not liable for one another's acts or omissions. www.gti.org