
WORKSHOP

How to Build a Successful Online Presence for Your Nonprofit

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INTRODUCTION

By the end of this tutorial, you should be able to:

1. Create your own Facebook and Twitter pages and add followers/fans to them
2. Understand how to create a consistent online image
3. Understand how to engage with your followers and keep their interest
4. Know ways to track what your followers are interested in and who is following you
5. Know how to start building an online campaign using hashtags (#) and other tools.
6. Understand how to connect with/support other groups that share your mission
7. See examples of successful social media campaigns

(1) 2 KEY POINTS to keep in mind before you get started:

(a) It is important to build **solid in-person relationships** and link up with other like-minded organizations; ask them to add you on social media outlets as friends. This will give you a key critical mass to start with.

(b) You also will need to have a **good website** as a “final destination” for your followers so you can keep engaging audiences through an online headquarters that links up all your social media accounts.

(2) EXAMPLES of nonprofit websites that merge social media with online community-building effectively:

(Example 1) W2 Media Arts <http://creativetechnology.org> (very interactive community)

(Example 2) Pivot Legal <http://pivotlegal.org> (good use of social media and campaigns)

(Example 3) Move On <http://moveon.org> (extremely successful web campaigns for change/ Obama)

FACEBOOK

(1) What is the difference between a fan page and a group page and which should I use?

I recommend that you create a fan page instead of a group page for several reasons: It's the next generation of the Facebook group and is more interactive (people can see it on their news feeds as if it is one of their friends). You can update over 5,000 fan page members while with a group, you can only email up to 5,000 members. Lastly, it involves a complex set of analytics that is not available for groups – to do so, click on “*Insights*” box on left-hand side (see BCCIC page as an example).

(2) Key things you can do with your nonprofit's Facebook fan page:

(a) Give your page a **descriptive user icon** (to do this, hover on the top right-hand side where your page's user image goes. You will see a link entitled 'Edit this Image' which will prompt you to upload a new image. Ideal dimensions for this image are things that are vertical (best size: 200 px wide by 400 px high) Also make sure all info fields are filled out so people can find your page on Facebook.

(b) Add your **videos, photographs, links, favourite pages and events** (to add these, go to 'Edit Page' at top under your user profile and make sure you have each of these enabled under 'Applications.' Once the albums appear on the left-hand side of your Page, you can click on the small pencil icon on the top right to upload new videos/images and to add new links and 'favourite pages' ie other nonprofits.

(c) **Suggest your page to friends and colleagues** you know on Facebook. This will send them a note asking them to become a fan. It's an unobtrusive, easy way to give you a key critical mass for when you make your page public (ideally, best to have at least 50 'fans' before public sees this page.) To do this, click on 'Suggest to Friends' link on left-hand side of page below your user icon.

(d) **Send your followers updates** of what your organization is up to. These updates will show up on your fans' news feeds (the homepage they see when they login.) To do this, write your update in the "What's on your mind?" line at the top of your fan page. Bonus points when you add links or photos in your update. If people like the update, they will give you a "thumbs-up" or comment.

(e) **Monitor your fan page's activity.** The 'Analytics' feature is a very useful part of Facebook's pages. To check out how many people are viewing your page and how popular it is, click on the "Insights" box on your page's left-hand side. You will be taken to the Analytics page where your follower's activities on your page are tracked.

(f) **Advanced features.** You can also do even more with the fan page, including:

- ***creating a Facebook ad*** that will show up on random Facebook user's sidebars based on their location and demographics (for an example of what the ad would look like, go to the upper right-hand side of your fan page – you will see a sample ad posted there for your organization with a green button entitled "Get More Fans" above it.
- ***creating a "Welcome" page*** for your organization that people who are not "fans" yet will see. This is great if you have a staff member with web design experience and want to involve customized images for the public to see when they check your page out. (Examples of this: Tides Canada, BCCIC)

(3) EXAMPLES of highly successful local Facebook fan pages:

(Example 1) Red Tent Campaign (good use of multimedia, thumbs-up)

(Example 2) Tides Canada (many fans, good use of welcome page)

(Example 3) Homelessness Is Over (good user image, multimedia use)

(Example 4) Naomi Klein's Fan Page (example of extremely large amount of user activity/thumbs-up/commenting)

TWITTER

(1) The first thing you need to do with your account:

(a) **Give your account a descriptive user icon and background** (to change these, go to 'Settings' on upper right-hand corner of your Twitter page, and then go to 'Design' tab for the background and 'Profile' for profile photo.) Keep the branding consistent with your other social networks with a few key phrases used on each social media outlet. Ideal image size is 100px by 100px, and ideal background picture size is 1920px by 1040px (size of very large monitors)

(2) Key activities to make your Twitter account successful:

(a) **Work at building followers** for your Twitter account by doing a few things consistently:

- Send out a group email to that critical mass of friends and like-minded organizations asking them to "follow" you on Twitter and by following them in return (to follow someone, go to their Twitter account and then hover over the small square [+] sign at the top of their page below their user name which says "Follow." They will be added to your list of regularly updated tweets to read when you login.
- Ask each staff member to get 10 of their friends to follow your organization – ideal follower number is at least 100 for a nonprofit. Other useful strategies – do some investigative searching of related nonprofits (can search names of nonprofits through Google by typing in "*nonprofit's name + on Twitter*" example: "BCCIC on Twitter").
- Is important when have key events and campaigns to direct those tweets @local media outlets (such as @GeorgiaStraight). Also, try doing Twitter-specific contests and giveaways to give people incentive to follow you.
- Lastly, is of equal importance that you make your Twitter account into a medium for dialogue. Ask followers to RT (*re-tweet*) at you by asking them engaging questions, and be sure to RT and share their tweets with your followers as well – think of it as an ongoing conversation that needs to be maintained daily.

(b) **Use Hashtags (#) to organize your tweets.** A hashtag is an arbitrarily chosen, descriptive phrase or word preceded by the # sign which is created by a group of people that organizes the group's tweets based on that topic. Hashtags are also searchable terms for the public on Twitter. As a group, choose a hashtag that will remind people of your event/campaign in your conversations.

- (see **examples** of this by searching the hashtag #van2010 or #freshie – a hashtag made up by the @FreshMediaMe (<http://twitter.com/freshmediame>) media collective in Vancouver. BCCIC also used hashtag #IDW2010 for their most recent International Development Week across all BCCIC branches. You can also see a daily updated list of the most popular #hashtags worldwide or by region on right-hand side of your Twitter account home under 'Trending Topics.')

(3) **EXAMPLES** of highly successful Twitter pages:

(Example 1) @tckTckTck (high amount of followers for a niche issue based on good correlation with other social media outlets like Flickr)

(Example 2) #FollowFriday hashtag (example of consistently-used public hashtag that organizes world's tweets around a specific idea)

(Example 3) @Apathy_IsBoring (Montreal-based nonprofit uses lots of @ replies to keep followers engaged and make it look like a conversation).

(Example 4) @Imagine1Day (uses informative background and engages/mobilizes followers thru inspirational tweets and public activities like their recent flashmob)

BIT.LY, SOCIAL OOMPH & GOOGLE ANALYTICS

(1) *Beginniner Level:* **Link-Tracking sites** like <http://bit.ly> are useful for a few reasons:

- They make your links shorter (for Facebook updates and Twitter tweets)
- They allow you to track how many people have clicked on that specific link, and how many other people have shared or RT'd your link through Facebook/Twitter and other outlets.
- Easy to set up and easy to maintain – just need a login and can track all your links that way.

(2) *Intermediate Level:* **Tweet-Scheduling Sites** like SocialOomph

- These sites are useful for automated, scheduled tweets and Facebook updates.
- Can be used during last day of a campaign if you want to do new tweets every hour on the hour from several accounts, for example.
- Can take a bit to set up though, so is more for the heavier social media user.

(3) *Intermediate Level:* **Website Tracking Sites** like Google Analytics

- These sites are useful if you can access your website homepage's HTML (or get your communications head or web designer to do it for you)
- Google Analytics is free for all google accounts and catalogues several levels of data about your website and who is going to it. Similar to *Bit.ly* link tracking but more advanced in-depth analysis.