

# Chapter 8

## CHOICES:

### Measuring Return on Investment in a Nonprofit Organization

**Leigh Nanney Hersey**  
*University of Louisiana – Monroe, USA*

#### **ABSTRACT**

*Social media is increasing becoming a prominent tool in today's nonprofit sector. By 2010, the largest 200 nonprofit organizations in the United States used social media as a tool to meet their goals (Barnes, n.d.). According to those surveyed the top reason for using social media is for increasing awareness of the organization's mission (90%). In studying the American Red Cross' use of social media, Briones, et al. (2011) found that the use of social media built relationships with the public. This chapter explores the success of a mid-sized nonprofit organization, CHOICES: Memphis Center for Reproductive Health, as it develops a strategic social media plan to increase awareness and support for the organization. Through this case study, we will address how this organization has used social media to advance its mission and the process used to develop performance metrics along the way.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Social media is becoming an increasingly prominent tool for today's nonprofit sector. By 2010, the largest 200 nonprofit organizations in the United States were using social media as a tool to meet their missions (Barnes, n.d.). According to those surveyed, most nonprofit organizations use social media to increase awareness of the organization's mission (90%). In studying the American Red Cross' use of social media, Briones, et al. (2011) found that the use of social media built relationships with the public. Social media can be especially important in smaller nonprofit organizations with small marketing budgets and few staff members.

This chapter explores the success of a mid-sized nonprofit organization, CHOICES: Memphis Center for Reproductive Health, as it develops a strategic social media plan to increase awareness and support in the community. Through this case study, the authors will address how CHOICES used social media to advance its mission and the process used to develop performance metrics along the way. Nonprofit organizations need to improve their ability to measure the effectiveness of their social networking strategies (Barnes, as cited in West, 2011).

This case study explores the success a nonprofit organization has had with its strategic use of social media. It will add to the literature on how nonprofit organizations can measure their effective use of social media. Unfortunately, too many nonprofit organizations begin using social media tools without a clear plan or understanding of how to use these tools strategically (Wymer & Grau 2011). From this case study, nonprofit leaders can learn the importance of developing a clear plan and measuring the return of investment of their own social media use to develop a better networking platform.

## **BACKGROUND: SOCIAL MEDIA USE BY NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

In the past decade, social media has become a more important tool for nonprofit organizations. Transformational social media communication tools have significantly increased audience access to nonprofit organizations engaged in cause marketing and advocacy. While often thought of as primarily a communications tool, when used effectively, social media can help nonprofit organizations better meet their missions. Social media has provided increased ability not only for outreach and advocacy, but also for education, collaboration, service provision, volunteer recruitment, and financial support (Shirky, 2008; Pynes, 2009). The new tools have also resulted in

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