

Chapter 72

Nonprofit Fundraising Transformation through Analytics

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ABSTRACT

The authors present the experiences of a professor and a team of students who found that social media and predictive analytics go hand-in-hand when designing effective marketing campaigns (in this case, fundraising for a community of nonprofit organizations). The students of a medium-sized southwestern private university assisted a large southwestern city with the social media marketing efforts for the city's first Big Give fundraising. The organizers then told the students that the internal goal for the 24-hour event was \$1.5 million USD. The campaign resulted in 21,361 gifts made for a grand total of \$2,095,606.50 USD (approximately 40% greater than was forecasted). It was estimated by the organizers that the most significant contributing factor to the greater performance of the campaign was the social media efforts of the students. The average number of donations raised by the 467 organizations that participated was 45.52 for an overall average of \$3,527.09 USD.

INTRODUCTION

According to David Amerland in a 2014 article off of Social Media Today:

ROI is the dirty word in social media. The moment it's aired you get one of two responses: flashy numbers (clicks, visitor figures, reTweets, Likes and +1s) or mushy concepts (brand appeal, brand impact spread, influence rise or social media visibility). Both lead to discontent amongst clients and marketers who know what they are doing.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-1837-2.ch072

The reason we have such an approach lies in the way we have traditionally approached metrics in social media marketing. Surely there are better ways or surer methods (from: Social Media Analytics: From Return on Investment to Return on Involvement. June 14th, 2014).

In this chapter, the reader will get to learn from the experiences of a professor and a team of students who found that social media and predictive analytics go hand-in-hand when designing effective marketing campaigns (in this case, fundraising for a community of nonprofit organizations).

This case study started when a professor of a medium-sized southwestern private university was approached by the leadership of a non-profit community association (late in 2013) for a large southwestern city to assist with the social media marketing efforts for the city's first Big Give fundraising campaign. The Big Give is part of a national program called Give Local America whereby communities across the U.S.A. (run by the organizations Kimba & Network for Good, see here: <http://www.givelocalamerica.org/#page-1>) work together to help raise money for local nonprofits on one single day. In 2014, that 24-hour online giving day was on Tuesday, May 6th and \$53,715,113.40 was raised from 306,099 gifts from all across the nation (Anonymous, 2014).

In this large southwestern city, this year (2014) was the first year for the various stakeholders of the city to participate in the annual day of giving and therefore multiple resources were utilized to help pull it together. As part of the efforts, the previously mentioned professor involved his BBA Capstone II students to run the social media efforts for the entire city and the 467 organizations (all nonprofits) that were involved. The Capstone II class is the second in a series of two Capstone classes required for all Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) students at the university. The first Capstone class teaches the students how to conduct a theoretical case analysis of a publicly-traded organization and to ultimately suggest goals and strategies for this organization. In the second class, utilized by the city's stakeholders for the Big Give, the students are required to work with an outside client to help them with a pre-arranged consulting project (arranged prior to the semester by the professor teaching the class) and are graded on the quality of their final deliverables and a presentation made to the clients at the end of the class. At this university, all BBA students graduate only after having practiced using their skills and knowledge in a 'real world' situation with an actual consulting client.

The 28 students were introduced to the client, the executive director (ED) of the city's non-profit association organization and a contractor hired to help coordinate the overall fundraising campaign, on January 29th, 2014 and were instructed to get into five teams to work on developing and implementing strategies for the largest social media applications to help the city's stakeholders and the various non-profit organizations (467 by the cutoff date) to fund raise on May 6th, 2014. The students were then told by the organizers that the internal goal for the 24 hour event was \$1.5 million USD. The five teams were self-selected to work with the following five social media channels:

1. Facebook;
2. YouTube;
3. Twitter;
4. Instagram; and
5. LinkedIn.

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