Fundraising Strategies: Making Social Media Mission Critical

Performing Arts Exchange 2012
Mary Trudel and Rory MacPherson
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Trudel | MacPherson

Learning Objectives:

- Share findings/insights from successful practitioners
- Review techniques to balance digital with traditional efforts
- Explore ways to incorporate effective strategies into practice
Session outline

- Showcase successful strategies
- Highlight national trends
- Review social media continuum
- Detail crucial measurement metrics
- Workshop + Q&A
Strategy Questions

- Insights are based on our landmark national study, *How Strong Is Your Social Net?*
  - National: invited groups in all 50 states, responses received from groups in 45
  - More than 1,600 respondents
  - Arts organizations of all types and sizes
How Strong Is Your Social Net?

Goals of the Project

- Overview of social media “state of play”
- Provide insights into attitudes and trends
- Create an online resource to monitor usage and attitudes
- Build community around best practices/key learnings
Strategy Question: Are digital communications and social media delivering results?

- Best results
- Major results
- Good results
- Some results
- No results

- Building live participation
- Developing fan networks
- Fundraising
- Ticket sales
National Social Media Fundraising Trends:

- Has become mission critical: 1.7%
- Major results: 3.1%
- Good results: 14.1%
- Some results: 45%
- No results: 24.1%
Social Media Fundraising results by organization size/discipline:

- **Groups $20MM+:**
  - Mission critical + major results: 6.2%
  - No results: 18.8%

- **Presenters:**
  - Mission critical + major results: 4%
  - No results: 28.2%
Social Media Fundraising results by organization discipline:

- **Film/video:**
  - Mission critical + major results: 5.9%
  - No results: 0%

- **Music:**
  - Mission critical + major results: 2.1%
  - No results: 31.4%

- **Theater:**
  - Mission critical + major results: 7.4%
  - No results: 24.4%
Strategy Question: Should we focus on short term $$ goals or building long term support?

Long Term:

- Streetside Stories – “We have been receiving a consistent influx of small donations from people around the country and around the world via Facebook...they found out about us entirely through social media.”

- Diaspora Vibe Virtual Gallery: Most effective approach – “Our successful online donation campaign – Bricks to Clicks”
Strategy Question: Should we focus on short term $$ goals or building long term support?

Short term:

- New Noise Theater: “A Kickstarter campaign to fund a specific project exceeded its goal way ahead of time and continued to garner support in the following days and weeks”

- Alverno Presents: Successful Kickstarter campaign exceeded $15K goal by $3K and secured 300 new donors
Strategy Question:
Are crowdfunding campaigns worth the effort?
Strategy Question: How will crowdfunding efforts effect our organization’s culture?

Benefits

- Successful crowd-sourced drives can:
  - Unite internal teams around goals
  - Involve artists/performers
  - Create opportunities to showcase your mission
  - Raise visibility with major funders
  - Build fan BUZZ around your programming
Strategy Question: How will crowdfunding efforts affect our organization’s culture?

Costs

- Successful crowd-sourced drives will:
  - Involve more staff + time than planned
  - Require investment in prizes + shipping
  - Demand attention from key stakeholders
  - Rely on current donors + friends
Strategy Question: Are there online crowdfunding alternatives to Kickstarter?
Strategy Question: Do we need to use a crowdfunding service?

Why not d.i.y?
Strategy Question: How Can We D.I.Y. Crowd Funding?

- Establish specific dramatic goals
- Chart purposeful progress
- Enlist key advocates to activate their networks
- Don’t forget email – be persistent
Strategy Question: How can we leverage personal stories?

- Sharing personal stories can move people to donate
Profile: Georgia Shakespeare

- Challenge: surviving a funding **perfect storm**
- Solutions:
  - Personal appeal by managing director
  - Recruiting alumni to spread the word
  - Eliciting testimonials on why Georgia Shakespeare **matters**
Profile: Georgia Shakespeare

Georgia Shakespeare

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world." - Margaret Mead

Since Friday, over 250 people donated to GS and have raised over $45,000 towards our $150,000 goal! Please help spread the word!

Save Georgia Shakespeare - a message from Richard Garner
campaign/20.constantcontact.com

In 26 years, I have never approached you in this way, but I must now come to you to ask for your help to save our theatre.

2,228 Impressions • 0.90% Feedback

17 people like this.

1 share

Bob Fass "For it so falls out that what we have we prize not to the worth whiles we enjoy it, but being lack'd and lost, why, then we rack the value, then we find the virtue that possession would not show us whiles it was ours." William Shakespeare, Much Ado About Nothing.
September 12 at 11:33am • Like • 32

Kevin Prigger What Bob Fass wrote: Exactly what we were thinking. First time we have contributed above our season ticket costs. Boy, it feels good to help a friend in need.
September 12 at 11:15pm • Unlike • 0

Georgia Shakespeare Bob • Kevin- thank you so much for helping us. We adore having you as subscribers and thank you so much for your continued support ;)
September 12 at 10:47pm • Like
Profile: Georgia Shakespeare

“We raised $325,000 in 2 weeks from more than 1000 people across the U.S. – the smallest gift $3.77, the price of a beer to celebrate alumnus, actor Sid Solomon’s birthday, the largest $50,000 from a local foundation which didn’t want to see our company fold.”

Donna Weber
Development Manager
Profile: Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

“We raised $200,000 in three months during a campaign primarily based in digital and social media.”

—Thomas Cott,
Director of Marketing
Profile: **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**
Profile: **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**

- **Challenge:** harnessing the power of fan networks

- **Solutions:**
  - Use appealing offers to capture online audiences
  - Entice fans to recruit their own networks
  - Focus on ticket sales *and* donations
Profile: Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater
Profile: **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**

Ailey has been chosen to participate in the American Express Members Project. If we get the most votes Ailey will receive $200,000 to help us reach a wider global audience, expand our education programs & support scholarships for young dancers. You can help us by registering and voting once a week. Visit www.voteailey.org

You can vote once a week between now and Feb 20th. Please note: when you click on the "vote here” button below, you will be taken to the Members Project website.
Strategy Question: How can we connect with values patrons share?

- It’s not just about the money
- Involvement = investment = eventual giving = long term commitment
NYPL Labs Stereogranimator

- From 40,635 original stereographs to 30,278 animated GIFs
NYPL What's on the Menu? project

- In one year 1,066,623 dishes transcribed from 15,365 menus
Strategy Question: How can we get advocates to activate their own social networks to help the organization?

- Phoenix Chorale: Have held 2 very successful fundraising campaigns using DoJiggy fundraising software, we armed our staff, singers and board to raise money via email and social media (primarily through Facebook) and met and exceeded both goals.

- For our 10th anniversary campaign, a number of new annual and monthly sustainer donors signed up. Recently, we offered "Glitter-Fierce" VIP status at our film festival and overnight people signed up for it. Very popular. So our messaging via email works well. The conversations we have via Facebook are also really fabulous...it's an interesting interaction and we're hoping to see it convert into more community investment.
THE CULTIVATION PYRAMID

LEVEL 1
Prospect
Identified as a cultivation prospect but has not yet attended, or has lapsed their involvement

LEVEL 2
Attendee
Attended one or more performances or events within past 2 years

LEVEL 3
Subscriber
Current TimeLine subscriber

LEVEL 4
Casual Donor
Donor who has given one or more times within past 2 years

LEVEL 5
Loyal Donor
Donor who gives at least once each year

LEVEL 6
Entry Level History Maker
Annual donor of $1,000 - $4,999

LEVEL 7
Advanced Level History Maker
Annual donor of $5,000 +

LEVEL 8
Bequest | Capital Campaign | Endowment Supporter
Ultimate goal for all cultivation

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Strategy Question: What kinds of sponsorship trades make sense?
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Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater · 163,206 like this
February 16 at 3:26pm · 

Ailey fans in Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, Houston, and Newark can enter to win the Camry Concierge Ultimate Experience contest. One winner in each city will receive a pair of complimentary tickets to see the Ailey company and chauffer service to the performance in the 2012 Camry, along with other special prizes!

Camry Concierge Ultimate Experience
conciergesweepstakes.com

Harrison Guy
Thank you Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and Toyota for the complimentary tickets and car service to tonight’s performance! The fully loaded Camry was a dream and the show was simply magnificent! I am so grateful for the Toyota Sweepstakes! Everyone treated me like royalty! DEFINITELY A NIGHT TO REMEMBER!
Strategy Question: Hey – What’s in it for me? Contests with clout

- NOCCA: Ticket discounts were tied to specific codes for each community partner sharing the deal on the Facebook page + Twitter feed
Strategy Question: Hey – What’s in it for me?

Contests with clout

- Hanover Theatre holds Deadliest Catch and Girls Night out photo contests
Strategy Question: How can groups take advantage of *eyeball farming*?

- Corporation + Challenge Grant = Doing Well by Doing GOOD
Strategy Question: How can groups take advantage of eyeball farming?
Strategy Question: How do you measure online activity and social engagement?
Strategy Question: How should we measure online activity and social engagement?
Measuring What Audiences Say:

University presenter:

- We ask how they heard about the performance whenever a ticket is printed and use this as a measurement
- Retweets when campaign mentions guest artists accomplishments and includes other organizations with their @name.

Theater presenter:

- Asking our audience to tell us what they think about a play we're doing, and seeing an outpouring of opinions, reactions, and shared experiences
Measuring What Audiences Share

California presenter:
- Our best results are from videos and social media posts that are forwarded from our patrons to their networks.

University presenter:
- For our upcoming season, we recruited Twitter Ambassadors, local Tweeters (who are not regular patrons) with lots of followers who often write about the performing arts. In exchange for free tickets, they are writing about their experiences with our performances and organization.
Measuring What Audiences Do

California presenter:

- Last season we did away with a printed brochure and put all our resources into developing a social media campaign. We had a 26% increase in tickets sold from the year before.

West Coast presenter:

- We had a last minute noon time concert to promote a musical series and no budget to advertise. By solely using social media and email we were able to get a large audience for the event.

Far West theater:

- Immediate ticket sales spike when a digital message is sent.
Conclusions
1. Not One Size Fits All

- **Authenticity is key**
- **Ask for what you need** – be specific – what/why/why now
2. Make it Personal

- Answer the question: “Why should I care?”
3. Connect with Values and Value Connections

What you do speaks so loudly I can't hear what you are saying.

-- Henry Adams, 19th century
4. You need to be present in order to have presence with potential patrons/donors/partners
Are you listening? HSIYSN Survey: Have you changed anything based on audience feedback?

- No: 54%
- Yes: 46%
Strategy question: Have you changed anything based on audience feedback?

- Positive experiential changes include:
  - Start times/days
  - Free parking for subscribers
  - More comfortable seats
  - Building signage
  - Concessions menu
  - Upgraded sound system
Strategy question: Have you changed anything based on audience feedback?

- Positive strategic changes include:
  - Media focus – dropping cable/adding online
  - Improved website navigation
  - Accessible language around content
  - Reducing print advertising
  - Answering artistic/service questions in real time
5. Partnership Payoffs – The Right Stuff?
6. Eyeball Farming: What friends are for?
7. Measure what matters

- Pay attention to what audiences say/share + do
8. Involve the whole organization, fans + family
Conclusions/Workshop/Q&A
What’s next

- Visit our website to learn more or to get in touch (trudelmacpherson.com)
- Follow us on Twitter (@smartaboutart)