

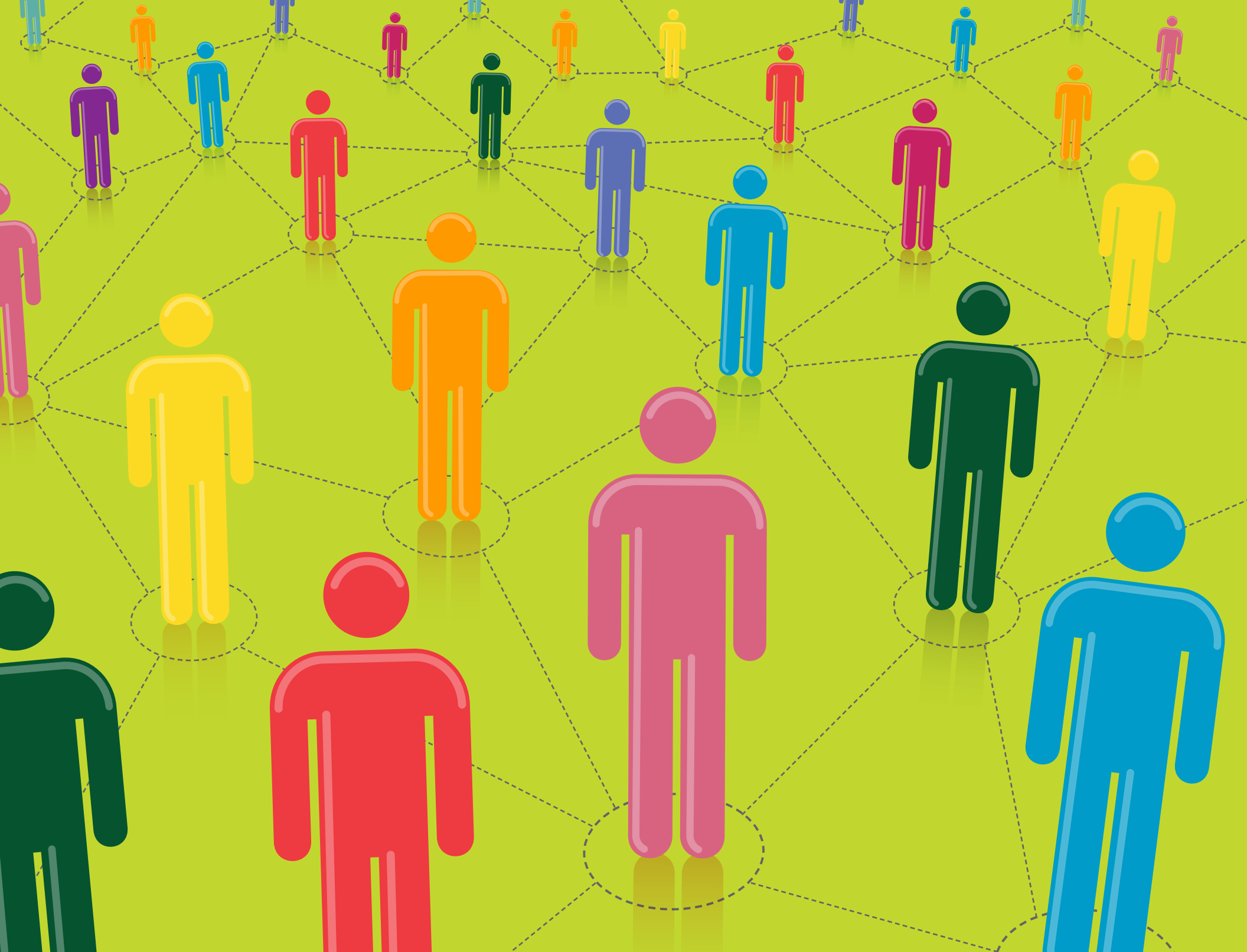


2014

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT

PREPARED FOR THE SALVATION ARMY





Creating Meaningful Connections Through SOCIAL MEDIA

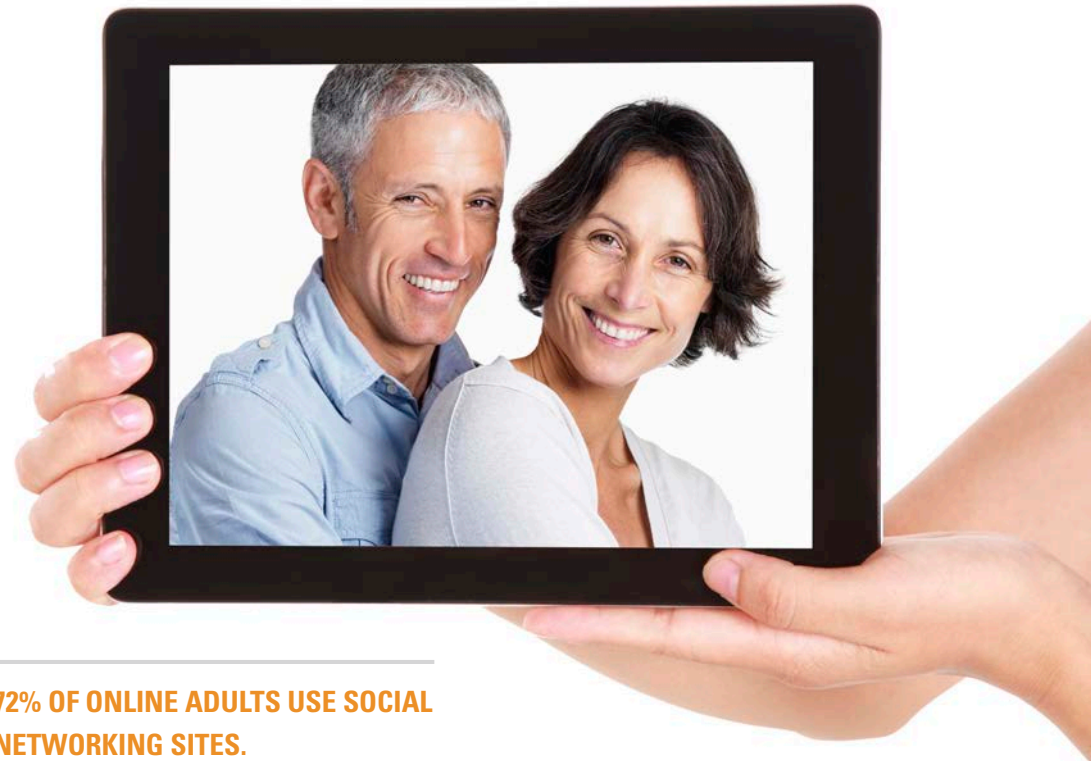
By some estimates, nearly one in four people around the world uses social media. That's why more nonprofits than ever are engaging in social media to bring awareness to their mission. In fact, most organizations now include social media plans within their overall communication and fundraising strategies.

But social media is more than just generating awareness. *It's about creating meaningful connections with people.* So let's take a look at how that happens.

Unlike other channels, social media doesn't need a specific campaign to be effective. That leaves you free to talk about other things with your supporters, like events and inspiring testimonials, and share photos.

The strength of good social media communication is the ability to create a natural voice. The authenticity of this voice is what draws followers. Above all, it should always feel organic and real. People don't want to






connect with organizations; they want to connect with the people *behind* the organizations. They are looking for behind-the-scenes access to better understand how the mission they support is being fulfilled. Social media is the bridge that allows this connection to take place.



72% OF ONLINE ADULTS USE SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES.

(Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project)

Here is a quick summary of some of the more popular social media platforms being used by nonprofit organizations:

	PLATFORM	PROS	CONS
	FACEBOOK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Most popular social network ■ Low-cost marketing ■ Great source of traffic ■ Highly targeted advertising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Always changing ■ Takes time to market efficiently ■ Privacy concerns
	TWITTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Real-time communication ■ Great customer service tool ■ Easy to connect with influencers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Little structure ■ Limited message size ■ Short message shelf-life ■ High incidence of spam
	GOOGLE +	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Easy segmentation with circles ■ Audience of early adopters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Not as popular as Facebook/Twitter ■ Limited growth
	YOUTUBE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Targeted viewership ■ Easy to create, publish, and share video ■ Popularity of video content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tough to measure results ■ Videos can attract negative comments ■ Annoying ads
	PINTEREST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Powerful source of referral traffic ■ Great for programs and products with visual appeal ■ Quickly growing in popularity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Organizations are not the focus ■ Challenging for non-visual organizations or programs ■ Re-pinning does not guarantee traffic back to original site

The contents in this kit are confidential and are for the exclusive use of TrueSense Marketing's Salvation Army clients.

Why Social Media Is Important

In a campaign-centric world, where everything is driven by accountability and hard ROI, it can be challenging to justify investing time in a channel where the financial gain is not readily apparent.

Resources are often constrained, people are already wearing multiple hats, and it can be difficult to prioritize something that is relatively new and unproven. However, the larger goal is to create a genuine connection. That connection generates loyalty, which in turn leads to a more engaged audience that will be ready to give when the time is right for them.

What Social Media Is — and Isn't

Social media is not the next hot fundraising channel or new direct line of revenue. But, that's okay — it doesn't need to be. That's because unlike other channels, social media extends far beyond *just* fundraising.

The goal of great ongoing social media interaction is the ability to stay relevant and top-of-mind to your audience. When donors decide to give, you want your organization to be the first one that pops into their head.

Social media is *extremely good* at:

- ▶ Building loyalty.
- ▶ Strengthening relationships by reinforcing why people support your organization.
- ▶ Creating advocates for your organization by enabling them to spread the importance and impact of your mission.
- ▶ Helping to support and augment other marketing, communication, and fundraising efforts.

Social media is *not* designed to:

- ▶ Be a new primary fundraising channel.
- ▶ Replace other fundraising channels.
- ▶ Be a new one-directional communication channel, similar to email or direct mail.
- ▶ Be exclusively campaign-centric.

Although you have the ability to solicit funds directly through any social media channel (and indeed it is appropriate to do this occasionally), if this is all you do, your audience is going to tune you out fairly quickly. They are not on Facebook because they are looking to get additional solicitations for gifts — they're likely being asked for donations through other channels. They want to see what you're doing day-to-day in the community.

Rather, people are there because they are looking for a new, different way to engage with you — one that

offers true interaction. This is the unique value of any social media platform: **the ability for supporters to talk back.**

Similarly, while social media can play a specific role in campaign promotion, it needs to live beyond the usual campaign-by-campaign cycle that many organizations are used to. Your audience wants to hear about the space between fundraising efforts.

What Does This Look Like?

Maybe it's a picture of a truck at a disaster-response scene. Maybe it's simply a question asking your supporters why they care the way they do. It's about sharing the little victories, the stories that don't always make it into other channels like direct mail, because direct mail pieces need to focus on the "ask." By refreshing content and engaging your supporters beyond a specific fundraising campaign, you'll create a more meaningful connection with your audience.

GETTING STARTED

Before we get into specific messaging tactics, we need to make sure we're set up for success. This means making sure we have two things taken care of:

- ▶ **Page branding**
- ▶ **Ability to drive social media adoption**



Page Branding

Having a well-branded social media page means that the primary banner (or page border imagery) is consistent with the theme and brand of your organization, as it appears in other channels. This means that for The Salvation Army on Facebook, the shield logo should be the “personal pic” that appears in the bottom left of the header banner.

For the header banner itself, this should be an image that reinforces the beliefs that are at the core of the Army: positivity, hope, and giving. A great example can be seen on the National Salvation Army page.

The collage above makes it very clear who this organization is and who they serve. There is no ambiguity here, and the images support The Salvation Army brand. However, there is no single “perfect” image or images. As long as it supports the core beliefs of The Salvation Army brand, you’re on the right track.

Driving Adoption

Although some supporters will seek out your social media presence by themselves, the majority will follow you online only if they are specifically asked. This means it’s important to make a direct effort to help push people towards these new channels. Are we promoting our Facebook or Twitter programs in the

key areas where people are already interacting online? Is it included as part of the email stationery? Where it is promoted, is it clear why people should be interested in following your organization? There are a few key places to make sure that your social media platforms are being promoted:

- ▶ **On the donation thank-you page:** Invite people to post their gift, and follow to see how their gift is making an impact every day.
- ▶ **In the website's persistent header or footer area:** The goal here is to make sure that the links to follow appear on each page, so that when someone finds content that motivates them to follow, they don't need to look far to find the link that will take them there.
- ▶ **Within email stationery:** This can be in either the header or footer, as long as it is easily visible. This can also be a great place to make a case for following your organization: *"Like us on Facebook to join the conversation and see the great work we do every day!"* Make sure you reference your social media presence in personal emails as well.

Focusing on Audience

When thinking about topics to post, many organizations make the mistake of taking an "organization-centric" view of the world. This means that they assume everything that's important to them will automatically be important to their followers. (*Why would they be following you in the first place, right?*)

Instead, organizations need to be relentlessly focused on their supporters' interests, and what information **they** will find valuable. It's not all guessing — there is a slew of metrics that can help quantify exactly what posts and content your users engage with most — but the goal over time is to develop an instinct for how to best make your message most relevant for your followers.

Put yourself in their shoes: Does your post add value to their day? Does it provide them with something good enough that they'll want to share it with their personal network? Does it make them feel good about continuing to support your organization? Does it engage them and invite interaction?

Finding Your Voice

In general, your followers want to hear from the real people behind your organization. Highly polished marketing language has its place in other channels, but an informal and genuine tone works best for social media. When consuming content on social media, people are looking for three things that indicate authenticity:

1. Tone

Does it sound like it's coming from a real person or a marketing agency?

2. Personality

Does the post tell the audience something about the personality of the organization, such as hopefulness or optimism? There's no "right" personality here, as long as there is a positive personality that's reflective of the organizational mission.

3. Invitation to Engage

Does the post care about what the audience thinks, and invite them to respond?

Again, not all posts need to follow all three rules all the time. Over time, these factors will bring credibility to your social media presence, and make people feel like they are being genuinely welcomed to participate in the organization.

Creating a Two-Way Dialogue

One of the great strengths of social media is the ability to engage in a true dialogue with your audience. Sometimes the idea of this can be scary, because it can be challenging to think about losing control of the message. And there will be times where it becomes appropriate to step in to moderate any conversation that seems inappropriate. But in general, this is where the magic happens from an audience engagement and relationship-building perspective.

How do we get people talking? Put simply, we ask them to. The audience is looking for a cue to chime in, so we need to make sure we are providing that in a straightforward way. Asking questions can be a great way to get people to respond, and it shows that the organization has a genuine interest in hearing from them. An example might be as simple as asking “Why do you volunteer?”, or “What motivates you to give?” Asking about the priorities and motivations of your audience not only allows them to feel engaged; it can also provide some interesting insight as to what makes them tick, which further allows to you adapt your messaging to remain relevant to them.

When one of your followers makes a comment or responds to a question, it can be helpful to respond back. This allows them to feel “heard,” and validates for them that the organization has a genuine interest in their perspective.

Make It Share-able

The other way that people like to engage in social media is through sharing. Whether it’s a motivational message, an interesting article, or an inspiring photo — people **love** to share. It’s our role to provide them with content that is good enough for them to pass along to their personal network of friends and peers. Again, this is where it becomes critical to think like our audience: What would *they* find interesting enough to share? This can sometimes be different from what the organization wishes they would share (like a campaign giving link, for example), but your ability to understand this will improve over time as you look at the engagement metrics that indicate your audience’s perceived relevance of your social media content. It’s also important to remember that if negative feedback is received, a negative response should not follow. Keep responses positive, and if need be, delete inappropriate or offensive comments.

Image Is Everything

Social media can be a very visual medium — especially on platforms like Facebook where users are constantly scanning to quickly identify interesting content. In addition, posts with images *and* text are far more frequently “liked” and shared with other users. For The Salvation Army, there are a number of ways to take advantage of this. Here are some examples:

- ▶ **Pictures from the field:** These help to provide a specific, tangible sense of what it looks like to see The Army in action
- ▶ **Volunteer events**
- ▶ **Community events**
- ▶ **Disaster relief**
- ▶ **Mobile uploads that share events in “real time”**
- ▶ **Families receiving food**
- ▶ **Children getting clothes**
- ▶ **Community results**

Other Content Opportunities

Social media content doesn't need to be unique or exclusive to the platform where it is posted. Indeed, much of what your organization is likely already producing can be repurposed for social media. Many organizations regularly take content from their newsletters (online or offline) to help gain more traction on stories that people might miss seeing in their inboxes. *Profiles From The Shield*, an email series that TrueSense sends out on behalf of our clients, is an example of content that can be adapted for social media, and be a great way to drive traffic from social media back to your primary website. In addition to newsletters and other existing stewardship content, other opportunities for regular content generation can include:

- ▶ **Volunteer of the week:** This not only highlights the importance of volunteers and demonstrates the appreciation The Army has for volunteers, but makes the volunteer feel appreciated and recognized for their efforts.
- ▶ **Highlighting donor stories:** This can be another great way for your audience to better identify with your organization and other supporters. Why was someone motivated to give? What's their history with the organization? This doesn't have to be limited to major donors, and can extend to any supporter who is willing to let their story be told.
- ▶ **Hunger and poverty statistics:** Used sparingly, these can help raise awareness about the ongoing need that The Army helps to meet. We recommend pairing these statistics with other facts or stories about how The Army is working to meet these needs.
- ▶ **Impact or other success stories:** Our supporters often hear about the range of challenges The Army meets, but how often do they get to hear about the successes? Telling success stories allows donors to feel good about their investment in your organization, and can provide a sense of goodwill and accomplishment. In general, positive, uplifting content gets shared and “liked” more often than content that highlights daunting challenges.

Ways to Use Social Media

There are many ways different content “types” can be used to foster awareness, engagement, and loyalty. The key is to mix these different types in a way that provides your audience with an interesting variety of content.

Conversation Starters

As mentioned earlier, this is the “permission” that the audience is looking for to engage. A few examples of what this might look like could include:

Questions: “How do you feel blessed this Christmas?”, “What is your favorite holiday tradition?”, “What is your favorite thing about volunteering with the Army?”

Soliciting content: “Send us your pic of volunteering with The Army”, “Send us a picture of your local bell-ringer”, “Why do you think The Army is needed in your area?”

There are also many opportunities to leverage social media to help spread awareness to an audience that might be less engaged in other channels. And it doesn’t need to be time-consuming to add social media to your existing promotional calendar.

- ▶ **Create Facebook events to highlight fundraising or global events.**
- ▶ **Share links to local media, breaking news, and other online content that promotes mission need and awareness.** This includes any media that features The Army or an Army event.
- ▶ **Celebrate milestones.** This can include organization “birthdays,” volunteer or event goals, or anything that lets your audience know your organization has achieved something important or meaningful.

Campaign Promotion Timeline

It can be appropriate to leverage social media in the promotion of specific campaigns. The key here is not to rely only on solicitation messages, as that will cause your audience to quickly tune you out. Instead, you can use this communication template to promote awareness while also staying relevant and interesting to your audience.

TIMING	Three weeks from campaign launch	Two weeks from launch	Week of launch	One week after launch	Week after campaign close
MESSAGING GOAL	Building awareness	Building awareness	Soliciting a response	Campaign/Goal update	Follow-up with impact and acknowledgment
EXAMPLE	<i>"We're so excited about our upcoming toy drive!"</i>	<i>"Only two weeks away from our annual toy drive! If you were a kid, what kind of toy would YOU want?"</i>	<i>"Our toy drive is here! Will you consider donating a toy this year? <link to campaign info or donation page>"</i>	<i>"We're so excited to be halfway to our goal! Our donors are the best, and will make so many children happy this year."</i>	<i>"Thanks to you, our toy drive was a huge success this year. We got over 10,000 toys donated! Special thanks to our wonderful volunteers who helped make it happen!"</i>

Social Media Content Calendar

Coming up with a year-round social media communication strategy can seem daunting, so we've put together a content calendar you can use to help generate ideas. Of course, you should adapt this to best fit the specific programs and activities that are unique to your organization.

MONTH	THEME	SUGGESTED CONTENT
OCT	Getting ready for year-end activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask your supporters to volunteer for holiday or end-of-year activities. ● Talk about the requests for help you expect to see in the last part of the year. ● Provide wish lists for families that will need Thanksgiving or holiday assistance.
NOV	Thanksgiving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask supporters to post the things they feel blessed to have. ● Post why you are thankful. ● Provide tips for putting together an affordable Thanksgiving dinner. ● Ask supporters to upload a photo of them volunteering during Thanksgiving. ● Encourage supporters to visit Salvation Army thrift stores for holiday gifts. ● Remind supporters about Giving Tuesday (first Tuesday following Thanksgiving).
DEC	Christmastime and holiday programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offer information about Angel Tree programs. ● Provide fun facts, such as the history of the Red Kettle. ● Ask supporters why they feel blessed this Christmas. ● Post photos of toy distribution, volunteers in action, food distribution, and other holiday programs. ● At the end of December, post thoughts that reflect on the upcoming new year.

MONTH	THEME	SUGGESTED CONTENT
JAN	Thanking your supporters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share statistics with supporters about how many people you helped during the prior year. ● Post a story of someone who received help. ● Say thank you to supporters. ● Recognize volunteers who helped during the holiday season.
FEB	We want to hear from you!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share the story of one donor and why they support you. ● Ask for supporters to post memories of The Salvation Army from their youth. ● Generate awareness about staying warm during cold weather (and reinforce that The Army helps people who can't heat their homes). ● Celebrate Valentine's Day by thanking those who have a "heart" for serving less fortunate people. ● Provide tips for winter-proofing your home and ask followers for their tips.
MAR	Spring cleaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talk about spring cleaning as a metaphor for spiritual renewal. ● Share advice for ways people can help better serve their community. ● Ask supporters what their Easter plans are. ● Talk about how less fortunate people will be given an Easter dinner, and post photos in April so your supporters will check back.

MONTH	THEME	SUGGESTED CONTENT
<p style="text-align: center;">APR</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Easter reflections</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Remind your followers what the true meaning of Easter is. ● Share why it's important to help poor and hungry people. ● Encourage supporters to submit their favorite Easter memory or recipe. ● Provide tips on preparing for spring storms. ● Remind followers of how The Salvation Army is ready with emergency disaster services when storms strike. ● Show photos of mobile canteens serving at disaster sites.
<p style="text-align: center;">MAY</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Celebration!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Announce National Salvation Army Week, and explain how it started. ● List events related to National Salvation Army Week for supporters and invite them to attend. ● Post photos from this special week. ● Talk about The Salvation Army's famous donut recipes, and how they got their start. ● Include the famous Salvation Army donut recipe. ● Wish moms a Happy Mother's Day, and ask people to honor their mothers by posting a beloved memory or recipe. ● Share the programs you provide for help struggling moms.
<p style="text-align: center;">JUN</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Helping families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School ends, so remind supporters that so will the school lunches disadvantaged children rely on. ● Salvation Army camp is gearing up. Ask followers to post a favorite camp memory or recipe. ● Focus on a child whose life was changed because of camp. ● Share a favorite camp song. ● Post photos from camp over the years.

MONTH	THEME	SUGGESTED CONTENT
<p>JUL</p>	<p>Turning up the heat on compassion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Remind supporters that poverty doesn't take a summer vacation. ● Provide tips for beating the heat. ● Update content with camp photos from 2014. ● Provide information on local cooling centers and other programs The Salvation Army provides during the summer. ● Remind supporters to check on the elderly and pets.
<p>AUG</p>	<p>Back to school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Post ways supporters can help provide a child with the supplies they need for school. ● Focus on any local programs, like filling backpacks for kids. ● Offer a testimonial from a child or parent about how The Salvation Army helped prepare them for the school year. ● Post photos of children getting school supplies through The Army. ● Profile a volunteer who serves in your food pantry. ● Update cooling center information.
<p>SEP</p>	<p>Change of seasons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offer thoughts on the changing of seasons, but remind supporters that compassion is here to stay. ● Talk about after-school programs you provide. ● Show photos of children taking music lessons or engaging in after-school activities at your local Corps. ● Ask people to name their favorite teacher, and why. ● Thank your supporters for being loyal throughout the summer months, and remind that the busy season is just ahead.

How to Measure Progress

Understanding the impact and efficacy of social media can be tricky. Indeed, there is no shortage of tools and platforms that leverage advanced engagement metrics with the goal of helping organizations understand their social media performance. Many of these tools require a good deal of time dedicated to their usage, which is a challenge for many resource-constrained organizations. Our goal here is not to provide an exhaustive list of all engagement metrics and analytical tools available, but to answer the question: “Where should I begin, and what metrics should I care about?”

An Example: Facebook Insights

As you probably know, Facebook Insights is the free, out-of-the-box analytics tool that is available for every organization that uses Facebook. For most organizations, this tool covers the majority of the basic metrics needed to understand success in this channel. Insights allow you to research what your Facebook audience has been responding to, what they’ve clicked on, and what times they are most active. Let’s take a look at some of the key performance indicators that are included with Facebook Insights:

Likes, Shares, and Unsubscribes

These are the easiest metrics to understand, and appear as a timeline that breaks out each specific activity. Looking at this timeline is the easiest way to quickly understand total engagement traffic, and can provide insights as to specific times of the day or week that your audience tends to be most active with your content.

Post Type

When looking at your posts in Insights, the icon to the left of the post will indicate whether the post was text-only, a link, or an image. When looking at engagement metrics, you might begin to notice a pattern around what types of posts your audience engages with most.

Reach

This is defined as “the number of unique people who have seen your post.” Sorting by Reach will allow you to see what type of posts received the highest reach, as well as how many people engaged in each of your highest reached posts. Viewing the Reach metrics can also help you understand what type of content (text-only, link, or image) is viewed by the highest number of users, enabling you to focus on content that is most effective for your audience.

Engaged Users

In Facebook, this is “the number of unique people who have clicked on your post.” This is *not* the number of people who have “liked” the post. This metric is great when you’re looking at the success of a link you posted to your Facebook page. Though you may not have received many comments, likes, or shares on your link, if your audience has clicked through to the place you were driving them to, that can be considered a success.

In Summary

Social media is a fast-moving and evolving channel. But with so many people on social media, most organizations need to be just as engaged as their supporters. The tips and guidance we've presented here can help you develop a plan for using social media platforms, but remember: *It's all about creating meaningful connections.*

When you create a two-way dialogue with your followers and supporters, you build relationships that last — ones that inspire people to remain engaged with your organization, that encourage them to spread awareness on your behalf, and that motivate them to support your important work with their time, talents, and loyalty.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TrueSense Marketing and how you can build and implement an effective social media plan, please contact your TrueSense Account Director at **1.877.TRU.MKTG (877.878.6584).**

