VENTURENEER
BUILDING SUCCESSFUL ENTERPRISES WITH HEART

Nonprofits and Social Media: It Ain't Optional

A Survey Conducted by Ventureneer and

Caliber

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GERI STENGEL
PRESIDENT

210 West 70th Street, 510
New York, NY 10023

212 362.3088
geri@ventureneer.com

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Introduction

Most social media tools are free, but the time to manage them isn't. Nonprofits, large and small, are well aware of this cost and cite it as a major roadblock to using social media. Another obstacle: Nonprofits have been preconditioned to view technology as expensive and difficult. These descriptions were accurate at one time but not now. Low-cost resources abound to help – and the people you want to reach expect nonprofits, like for-profits, to make social media a cornerstone of their outreach efforts.

It's the 21st century. People passionate about a cause and eager to bring about social change connect through social media. It is imperative that nonprofits learn how to become visible in social media by using the right medium for the task at hand.

In the summer of 2010, Ventureneer and Caliber conducted a survey of nonprofits to elicit data from which best practices could be developed to guide nonprofits in initiating or revising their social media marketing efforts. What works, what doesn't? For which purposes does each social medium work? By answering these questions, we can improve the cost-efficiency and effectiveness of social media by nonprofits.

Whether you already use social media or you're new to the game, this report is for you.

Social media are a low-resource (but not a "no resource") way to connect through trusted networks to new supporters of all kinds. Social media are the e-version of word-of-mouth advertising which, as everyone knows, is the best advertising you can get.

The best is not free. The overarching messages from the survey are:

- Organizations must construct a social media plan; setting up a Facebook page and opening a Twitter account do not constitute a marketing plan.
- You get out what you put in. Spend time to learn the different media, to develop a message, and to build an online reputation. Then you'll start feeling the power.
- Different media for different purposes. Know your tools.

Now for the details.

For articles, case studies and tips go to **ventureneer.com/NPSoMe**

10 Highly Successful Social Media Habits for Nonprofits

Successful users of social media have 10 habits that make them effective:

1. ***Excel at social media by dedicating the time to it.*** There are no ifs, ands or buts about it: To do social media well, nonprofits have to allocate at least 25 hours of staff time per week. For example, nonprofits that are highly successful at social media:
   - Tweet at least daily
   - Publish content to their blogs and update their social media profiles at least weekly

That may not sound like 25 hours a week but providing the content for tweets, Facebook, and blogs requires research and writing, both of which take time.

2. ***Use social media for more purposes.*** The more time a nonprofit puts into social media, the more it gets out of social media. Both nonprofits who merely dabble in social media and those who are power users are using it to:
   - Boost a nonprofit's visibility
   - Drive traffic to websites
   - Build community

Nonprofits that spend a lot of time – the power-users – *also* tap social media to help with functions essential to the mission of the nonprofit:
   - Raising money
   - Advocacy
   - Cause marketing

3. ***Start slowly***, build a foundation, and then add more media (and time) to the mix. That's how successful users of social media do it. The longer nonprofits use social media, the more kinds of media they use. The more kinds they use, the more successful their social media efforts are.

4. ***Rely on social media to strengthen marketing, not reduce marketing expenditures.*** Social media is about increasing cost efficiency and marketing effectiveness,

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using each medium to do what it does best. The Big Four of social media are Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn. Each has its own character, its own strengths and weaknesses.

- Facebook and Twitter are more effective at:
    - Boosting a nonprofit's visibility
    - Driving traffic to websites
    - Raising money
    - Mobilizing and coordinating people
    - Recruiting people
- All of the Big Four social media are effective at building community and advocacy.
- Facebook is the most effective for cause marketing.
- Twitter is the most effective at increasing search engine rankings.
- YouTube is the most effective for selling products and services.
- LinkedIn is the most effective for researching people, companies and industries.

5. *Dedicate a larger share of the marketing pie to social media* now and in the upcoming year. Include social media campaigns in the budget allocations for fundraising, cause marketing, and advocacy efforts. Social media should be viewed as part of these efforts, not as a separate marketing function.

6. *Maximize other marketing with social media.* There is a powerful synergy between social media and other marketing efforts, especially other e-marketing efforts, such as search engine optimization and email. When social media is integrated into efforts to drive traffic to websites and increase search engine rankings, it not only increases the quantity but the quality of traffic.

7. *Allow people to learn in the way that works best for them. Different people learn differently.* Nonprofits need to choose the learning method that works best for the staff assigned to implement the social media program. Whether you have a team or a part-time person, training may require a variety of resources. However, if the nonprofit wants to become very successful, it must train its staff. Many learning resources are free, but the most successful organizations spend money on classes, conferences, books, and staff or

consultants experienced with social media. Those who use social media most effectively and most often, take advantage of a wide range of tools.

8. *Go with your strengths; outsource your weaknesses.* The more nonprofits use social media, the more they understand that some tasks are better done by outsiders. It's better to specialize and outsource what you don't do well to a firm or a freelancer who does know how to do it. If you're not a great copywriter, outsource the writing. Obviously, budget will need to be weighed in this decision, but don't forget to weigh effectiveness as well.

9. *View social media as cross-functional.* Nonprofits that do not recognize the benefits of social media throughout the organization may function less efficiently and effectively than those that do. Nonprofits must break down the vertical organizational chart. In order for social media to work best, everyone in the organization must work together to maximize resources. In fact, social media may be the catalyst for a more collaborative culture.

10. *Balance empowerment with accountability through policies and guidelines.* Developing policies and procedures for the use of social media is a new field so you will have to create your own rules (although you could start a social media discussion to find out what other nonprofits have done).You must provide boundaries and guidelines for employees who use social media both personally and professionally. An employee code of conduct sets guidelines for employees about their personal use of social media. An operations manual provides the policies and procedures for those involved with social media on behalf of the nonprofit. Both are necessary to protect your organization and leverage resources.

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Rules of the Road

Starting Out

***Start your social media journey* by:**

- Spending a few minutes every day reading, listening to, and watching social media. Pay attention to what gets noticed by others (comments and retweets) and what appeals to you. Determine the style that resonates with your nonprofit's image.
- Participate in other people's conversations by commenting and retweeting before you start your own blog or tweeting.

Frame social media efforts by asking who, what, where, and how much. As you develop your social media plan for next year, keep these four questions in mind:

- What do you want to accomplish?
- Whom do you want to reach?
- Which media offers the best access to your target market?
- How much time and money will you spend?

Invest in training. Using a computer everyday doesn't necessarily translate into instant ability to use social media. The hardware is the same, the software is not. Learning to use the Big Four (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn) effectively – by creating or joining groups, making comments, participating in discussions – is similar to, but not as difficult as, learning other software programs you use.

Staff members who use social media in their personal lives may not know the best ways to use them on behalf of an organization. In fact, their personal social media habits may not conform with the image you want for your organization. Policies may need to be implemented. Instruction costs time and, perhaps, money depending on what resources you use to train staff.

Tolerate failure. It is critical to social media success. When social media tactics fail – and some are bound to, no matter how well conceived – pick up the pieces quickly, analyze why they failed, recalibrate, and move on. Social media is a messy process in which trial and error are often your guides to what works best for your nonprofit. On the plus side, it is much less

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expensive to track and correct errors in social media tactics than it is to correct errors in traditional media.

Content Development

Write about things that matter to your nonprofit and to the people you want to reach.
Whether you're the "official" voice of the nonprofit or speaking for yourself, develop a unique perspective with core messages that you communicate on a regular basis. The content must attract others. The mantra of social media is "This is a conversation, not a monologue."

Write compelling content. Compelling content is engaging, invites a conversation, and is well written. Engage people from within your network and outside. Draw outsiders to your network by posting comments on their websites

Speak the language of social media. As mentioned previously, using social media requires training, in part because each medium has its own language, navigation tools, and posting rules. For example, can you read and understand this tweet? If you can't, don't be deterred! The rules are few and simple; you just need to allow time to learn them.

> #FF @adincmiller @dosomething @laragalinsky @endeavoringE @kanter @BigDuckSarah @socialedge @tactphil @cmccaliber @nakisnakis @NonProfitTimes @Afine

> Here's the breakdown:
> # = hashtag (convention for categorizing tweets, which allows you to follow content on a specific topic: #nonprofits #socent) #FF is the hashtag for Follow Friday, the chosen day for recommending fellow tweeters to your followers.

> The tweet above is Ventureneer's Follow Friday recommendation. We are recommending that *our followers* follow the tweeters whose handles we list. The tweet appears on Ventureneer's Twitter page.

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@ = directing the tweet to someone. It's called a mention. The tweet is seen because the @Tweeter handle gets picked up by those mentioned and by anyone searching for that handle.

Translation: Ventureneer recommends that our followers take a look at the tweets of those listed and follow them, too, because we think they are engaging and provide good info.

Communicate quickly about hot topics. By responding early in the news cycle, you'll increase your digital influence. Add value to the conversation by saying something unique that reflects your distinct point of view.

> *CASES IN POINT: Multiple nonprofits reported that they use Twitter and Facebook to generate letters to elected officials about key legislation when it comes up for a vote.*

Consistently communicate. Share interesting, high-quality content regularly. Your audience will view you as a consistent, reliable source, and come back repeatedly.

Optimize your social media content: Always write for your target audience. What do they want to know and what do you want them to know about your cause, your impact, and your events? *Attracting* interest is key.

Developing Connection

Make an emotional connection. Your nonprofit should trigger a positive emotional response. The world is full of distractions; linking your nonprofit with an emotion helps etch it into people's minds. When your nonprofit triggers positive emotions among supporters and prospects, you are more likely to get a response: a donation, a volunteer's time, or clicks that send your message to other Facebook pages, thus spreading the word about your mission.

> *CASE IN POINT: A Vietnamese nonprofit uses its blog to highlight specific needs, such as surgery for children, by telling the children's stories on the blog.*

Build relationships. Spend time on your network. Connect by engaging in conversations with people: comment, retweet, and reply to comments on your social media. Be responsive even if it is just a thank you. *It's not all about you.*

> *CASE IN POINT:* *Three nonprofits joined social media forces to publicize a film that concerned a cause they all cared about.*

Pay it forward. Be helpful, share resources, and connect people to other people.

> *CASE IN POINT:* *A multi-service nonprofit used Facebook and Twitter to make other organizations aware of its existence, which resulted in support for later marketing efforts.*

Grow by stepping outside your immediate social circle. Think about other social circles related to yours. Corporate partners, media supporters, and volunteer groups are great sources of social media contacts. What are you doing that is relevant to them? Participate in their networks. Contribute by commenting and engaging in conversation. Help them by retweeting or blogging about their advocacy efforts, cause marketing project, or event. Social circles are many and varied.

> *CASE IN POINT:* *Leaders of a nonprofit that helps disabled former athletes reached out to their high school friends, some of whom they hadn't heard from in 40 years. The effort raised their "first serious donations." Another case: To promote volunteerism, a nonprofit decided to go where the audience already is, on Facebook and Twitter, and then push them to the organization's website. The two social media now account for 10 to 16 percent of website traffic.*

Build community by getting people with influence involved. Do you want the movers and shakers within your sector to be part of your community? You can build relationships with key influencers by consistently commenting in an intelligent and thoughtful manner on their blogs, Facebook pages or tweets. Influencers are those who galvanize action in their community or sector, whether a neighborhood leader or a political powerhouse. Understand what interests them. Give, give, give before you even think about getting something in return. Once a trusted relationship is built, you can reach out and ask when a need arises.

> *CASE IN POINT:* *A nonprofit held a "friend raise" event using Facebook to make people aware of the organization. It was an invitation to an event, not a solicitation of funds. About 100 people attended the event, more than 60 of whom had never heard of the organization before the "friend raise."*

Integrate Into Your Overall Marketing Efforts

Reflect your brand and send a consistent message. By being consistent across channels, people will more easily remember your message.

> *CASE IN POINT: A community development organization is raising funds for a new community center using LinkedIn, a blog, YouTube, Twitter and Facebook to raise awareness about the initiative, invite interaction and feedback, and raise dollars for a matching grant.*

Take advantage of each medium's strengths and reinforce your message across channels. The real sweet spot in marketing happens when the sum of your marketing effort is greater than its parts. Each medium has its strengths:

- YouTube is multi-sensory and emotional. Use it to demonstrate the need for your services within your community.
- Know what keywords people use when seeking an organization like yours or a cause like yours. This gives you the right keywords to use, especially in blogs.
- Facebook ads can act as billboards, extending the reach of fundraising, advocacy and cause marketing efforts.

> *CASE IN POINT: Nonprofits and their cause marketing partners promote their cause on each other's Facebook page through ads, thus giving each access to the customer/support base of the other.*

- LinkedIn is a large, searchable database with detailed information about the places people work now and where they previously worked. It's about finding common ground. It's about finding someone you know who knows someone you want to know to make that all important introduction.

> *CASE IN POINT: One nonprofit uses LinkedIn to research donors and board members, but not for fundraising.*

Social media, done well, strengthens the bond between the nonprofit and its constituents. As always, to create enduring brands, a marketing program uses many different touch points. Social media merely add new touch points that reach people you might otherwise have missed.

Cross promote content. Promote a new blog post via Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

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CASES IN POINT: *Many survey respondents reported using all of the Big Four to get votes in various corporate-giving initiatives, such as American Express, Members Project, Pepsi Refresh or Chase Community Giving.*

Increase Efficiency

Hire communicators, not technologists. Whether you do social media in-house or outsource it, understand that social media is less about technology and more about communicating and bonding. Yes, you need to know how to update a profile on Facebook, schedule a tweet through HootSuite, and upload content on your blog. But, more importantly, you need to be skilled at reaching out, building relationships, and writing for that medium.

Choose the right person to do social media. Relegating social media to an unsupervised intern is a sure-fire way to sink your social media efforts. Millennials may know social media, but they don't necessarily know your organization, culture or key messages. Effective use of an intern requires oversight to ensure success. And you don't want to be left in the lurch when the internship is over. Use the intern, by all means, but view the relationship as an opportunity for everyone to learn: the intern about your organization, your staff about how to use social media.

Create systems and procedures that streamline processes. "Work smarter, not harder" is an age-old adage. Simplify and make your social media process easier and less time-consuming. Assess everything that needs to be done. Decide which tools you'll use and why. Develop a checklist to follow so tasks aren't repeated or skipped. This will help reduce or eliminate mistakes, and make it easier to train several people to do the job (or take over when the intern leaves).

Educate management so they understand that social media takes time to do well (as do many other things). Social media isn't new but its use by nonprofits for marketing and development is. Board members and executive staff may be uncomfortable with the technology or dismissive of its usefulness. If so, spending money on social media may seem like budgetary excess. Online resources, including research papers and webinars, are available to make the value apparent.

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Measuring the Return on Investment

Use social media real-time metrics to measure your return on investment (ROI). Staff time to do social media has a cost. Nonprofits need to know that they are using that time wisely. What's the return on the staff time used and how does it compare to the return on other uses of staff time?

To determine if social media are worth your organization's time, your nonprofit must measure performance; if effectiveness is less than expected, you need to reshuffle the media mix and measure again. However – there's always a "however" – remember that your first forays into social media will not yield great results. You must build a base, then expand; you must prepare the field before your harvest.

A wide range of metrics is available:

- Friends, Followers, Fans
- Comments/Subscribers
- Tweets/Retweets
- Web traffic, page views, time, bounce rates
- Click-throughs
- Influence
- Sentiment
- Media mentions

The number of tools, both free and commercial, for analyzing and measuring your social media activities is staggering. It goes to show just how important analysis and measurement has become. The most basic measurements are:

- Counting your community members, connections, fans, followers, friends, etc.
- Using free measuring tools from Google or your website provider.
- Counting the number of comments or reviews.

Most nonprofits, even power-users, rely on free analytical tools to measure the effectiveness of their social media. Few spend extra money on measurement tools, but staff time will always be required to make sense of the measurements.

Every nonprofit's capabilities, expertise, and tool-set is different. For some, it will be second nature to implement sophisticated measurement practices. For others, it will be a stretch. One size does not fit all when it comes to measuring social media. Three guidelines will help you determine how to measure social media:

- Focus on measuring what matters at this moment. Do you want to generate awareness, build community, drive traffic to your website, advocate about an issue, raise money or integrate social media into a cause marketing campaign with a partner organization? Measure only what you need to know to evaluate this effort.
- Focus on what can be counted in a practical and affordable manner.
- If you need help, get it. Metrics matter. Take a class, a webinar or hire a consultant to explain the details until you can do it yourself. Don't guess. Don't miss this opportunity to broaden your funding base, find out what appeals to your supporters, and expand your reach.

Where appropriate, measure costs and revenue generated.

As always, guidelines are not straight jackets; they should be adapted to the needs of the nonprofit.

Evolve! Once you know what works and what doesn't, tweak your social media efforts and start the whole process all over again. That's the beauty of social media. You have instant results that allow you to modify quickly. Once one medium is working for you, add or expand another.

Specific Advice

Think systems when you're a small or lean nonprofit. Re-purpose content from one social medium to another. Automate processes. Push down the more routine processes to lower level staff or consider hiring an intern. While the intern may not know your organization, s/he can post the blogs written by someone who does know the organization and re-purpose those blogs to other media.

> *Cases in point: One group uses Twitter and Facebook to promote its causes and uses its blog to share compelling video footage that depicts the need for services. And another: A community center is using the Big Four and its blog to get small contributions from its community in order to raise the money needed for a matching grant.*

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Think training when you're a small or lean nonprofit. Time and money are at a premium, but if you only have a little to spend, buy training. A savvy employee will use the right tools for each project, know how to integrate blogging with tweeting with Facebook discussions.

Fundraising should take a back seat on social media. Know when you're being too aggressive with social media. Like all your other fundraising activities, it's about building relationships. Do not focus on fundraising. Focus on information and resources. Social media is about sharing updates directly related to the impact of your organization, the needs of your constituents, and news of interest to your followers. Foster connections before you ask for money. Know the rules.

> ***Case in point:*** *A nonprofit cross-posted on cause marketing partners Facebook pages in order to reach new readers and expand awareness of its services.*

Do cause marketing like the big boys do. Small nonprofits need to take a page out of the playbook of their much bigger brothers and sisters by incorporating social media into cause marketing and sponsorship efforts. Specifically, large nonprofits increase their use of social media when engaged in a cause marketing campaign. The corollary to this: If you want to increase the number of followers and fans, partner with a for-profit in a cause marketing effort.

> ***Case in point:*** *A nonprofit has a partnership with a pizza parlor. It posts weekly reminders about the promotion on Facebook and Twitter, as does the pizza parlor. Any online order nets the nonprofit $2. The weekly reminders have resulted in regular monthly checks from the partner. A small business and a small nonprofit can be good for each other.*

The Research Support

Nonprofit Usage of Social Media

Amount of Time Using Social Media

- More than half of nonprofits spend less than four hours per week participating in social media.
- Only 7 percent of nonprofits are power-users who spend 25 hours or more on social media per week.
- The longer a nonprofit has been using social media, the more time it spends doing it.

	Total	Use Social Media:		
		< 1 Year	1 Year	2+ Years
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
None	2	2	2	1
1-4 hours per week	52	61	56	39
5-9 hours per week	25	26	22	28
10-24 hours per week	15	10	15	19
25+ hours per week	7	2	4	14
Median hours per week	5	4	5	7

- Size matters when it comes to social media. The larger the nonprofit, the more time it spends on social media. Because larger nonprofits have more people, they have a greater ability to allocate the staff time required to undertake an initiative such as social media.

	Total	Size of Organization:		
		< $999K	$1M-$9.9M	$10M+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
None	2	1	1	2
1-4 hours per week	52	62	50	43
5-9 hours per week	25	27	26	24
10-24 hours per week	15	7	16	17
25+ hours per week	7	3	7	15
Median hours per week	5	4	5	6

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- When using social media for fundraising, advocacy, and cause marketing, savvy nonprofits recognize the importance of allocating more time to the effort. In other words, you get out what you put in.

| | TOTAL | Use Social Media For: | | |
| | | Fund-raising | Advocacy | Cause Marketing |
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
None	2	1	0	1
1-4 hours per week	52	49	46	53
5-9 hours per week	25	24	25	19
10-24 hours per week	15	15	20	16
25+ hours per week	7	11	9	12
Median hours per week	5	5	6	5

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Length of Time Using Social Media

- The longer you use social media, the more hours you are likely to spend on it. Power-users have used social media the longest, about 2 ½ years.

	Total	Hours Per Week Spent on Social Media:			
		1-4	5-9	10-24	25+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
LESS THAN YEAR	36	41	36	23	12
1 YEAR	30	33	27	31	20
2 + YEARS	34	26	37	45	68
2-3 years	28	23	33	35	39
3 years or more	7	3	4	11	29
Median (Months)	18	15	18	22	30

- Larger organizations are more likely to have used social media for a longer time.

	Total	Size of Organization:		
		< $999K	$1M-$9.9M	$10M+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
LESS THAN YEAR	36	38	37	30
1 YEAR	30	34	29	20
2 + YEARS	34	28	34	50
2-3 years	28	23	27	42
3 years or more	7	5	7	8
Median (Months)	18	16	17	24

- Nonprofits that use social media for fundraising, advocacy, and cause marketing are about average in the length of time they've been social media users.

	TOTAL	Use Social Media For:		
		Fund raising	Advocacy	Cause Marketing
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
LESS THAN YEAR	36	30	33	24
1 YEAR	30	31	31	38
2 + YEARS	34	39	37	38
2-3 years	28	29	29	27
3 years or more	7	10	8	11
Median (Months)	18	20	19	20

Reasons for Using Social Media

- A vast majority of nonprofits (92%) use social media to generate awareness of the organization's mission.
- Three-quarters of nonprofits use social media to build and maintain community.
- A majority of nonprofits (68%) use social media to drive traffic to their websites.
- The more time a nonprofit puts into social media, the more it gets out. As nonprofits increase their use of social media, they realize it can be used for more purposes.
- As nonprofits increase their use of social media for other purposes, the majority also increase their use of social media for advocacy, raising money, and cause marketing. The bottom line: the more you use social media, the more comfortable you are with it so the more you will use it … and the more it will benefit you.
- Power-users are less likely to view social media as a way to reduce marketing expenditures.

	Total	Hours Per Week Spent on Social Media:			
		1-4	5-9	10-24	25+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Build/maintain awareness of the organization, its cause	92	93	96	94	90
Build and maintain community	76	72	83	83	83
Increase traffic to website	68	64	73	75	90
Advocacy	44	39	45	50	59
Raise money	43	38	49	46	54
Mobilize and coordinate people	39	35	43	45	49
Recruitment (e.g. staff, volunteers, board)	32	27	35	38	46
Cause Marketing	31	22	31	35	50
Reduce spending on marketing	28	33	33	26	22
Increase search engine rankings	23	18	25	32	37
Program delivery	21	17	24	26	32
Sell product / services	17	12	21	23	37
Test effectiveness	14	14	14	20	10
Market research	11	7	11	18	17
Crisis management tool	6	3	5	14	12
Other (please specify)	5	5	5	5	

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- Medium- and large- sized nonprofits are more likely than small ones to incorporate social media into their advocacy, fundraising, and cause marketing efforts.
- Small- and mid-sized nonprofits are more likely than large ones to use social media as a way to reduce their marketing expenditures.
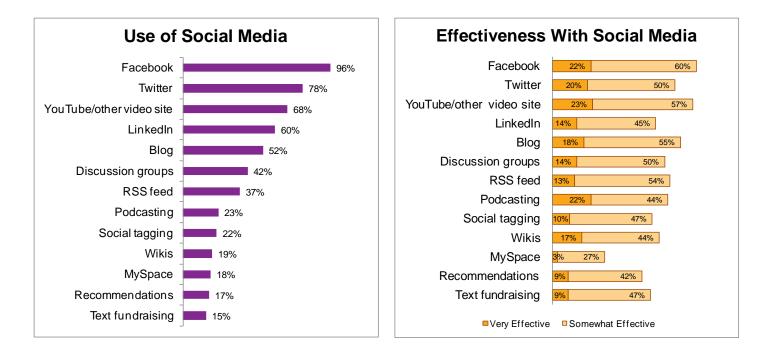
| | Total | Size of Organization: | | |
| | | < $999K | $1M- $9.9M | $10M+ |
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Build/maintain awareness of the organization, its cause	92	94	94	92
Build and maintain community	76	79	76	77
Increase traffic to website	68	68	72	74
Advocacy	44	35	48	49
Raise money	43	38	43	46
Mobilize and coordinate people	39	40	42	38
Recruitment (e.g. staff, volunteers, board)	32	31	32	38
Cause Marketing	31	27	67	71
Reduce spending on marketing	28	31	32	19
Increase search engine rankings	23	24	21	22
Program delivery	21	21	21	19
Sell product / services	17	21	14	18
Test effectiveness	14	15	15	17
Market research	11	12	9	7
Crisis management tool	6	3	5	10
Other (please specify)	5	8	5	4

- Each of the Big Four (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn) in social media has a niche in which it is most effective.
- Facebook and Twitter are more effective at:
  - Boosting a nonprofit's visibility
  - Driving traffic to websites
  - Raising money
  - Mobilizing and coordinating people
  - Recruiting people
- All of the Big Four social media are effective at building community and advocacy.
- Facebook is the most effective for cause marketing.
- Twitter is the most effective at increasing search engine rankings.
- YouTube is the most effective for selling products and services.
- LinkedIn is the most effective for researching people, companies and industries.

	Total	Very Effectively Use:			
		Facebook	Twitter	LinkedIn	YouTube
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Build/maintain awareness of the organization, its cause	92	93	96	87	87
Build and maintain community	76	84	81	80	80
Increase traffic to website	68	82	82	70	70
Advocacy	44	54	52	54	54
Raise money	43	48	50	26	26
Mobilize and coordinate people	39	52	51	37	37
Recruitment (e.g. staff, volunteers, board)	32	44	48	37	37
Cause Marketing	31	45	35	31	38
Reduce spending on marketing	28	37	36	39	39
Increase search engine rankings	23	28	34	28	28
Program delivery	21	24	26	26	26
Sell product / services	17	23	22	25	35
Test effectiveness	14	11	16	22	35
Market research	11	11	16	26	20
Crisis management tool	6	11	7	7	7

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- The most popular social media – Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn – have become known as the Big Four of social media.
- Nonprofits, as a whole, have not tapped the potential of social media to unlock new donors, access new board members, and spread the word about a cause. From the data, it appears as if most are put off by the time that must be spent before benefits accrue.
- Most nonprofits do not excel at using social media.
- In general, the more popular a social medium is among nonprofits, the more likely it is to be used effectively. In part, this may be due to word-of-mouth: When a nonprofit hears that there's a free or low-cost marketing tool available that is effective, it passes the news on and the word spreads.
- LinkedIn's popularity has not led to a better understanding of how best to use it.
- MySpace, which was once considered a social media powerhouse, is no longer a contender: only 18% of nonprofits use it and it is the least effective social medium.

Use of Social Media

Facebook	96%
Twitter	78%
YouTube/other video site	68%
LinkedIn	60%
Blog	52%
Discussion groups	42%
RSS feed	37%
Podcasting	23%
Social tagging	22%
Wikis	19%
MySpace	18%
Recommendations	17%
Text fundraising	15%

Effectiveness With Social Media

	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective
Facebook	22%	60%
Twitter	20%	50%
YouTube/other video site	23%	57%
LinkedIn	14%	45%
Blog	18%	55%
Discussion groups	14%	50%
RSS feed	13%	54%
Podcasting	22%	44%
Social tagging	10%	47%
Wikis	17%	44%
MySpace	3%	27%
Recommendations	9%	42%
Text fundraising	9%	47%

- On the whole, the more time you spend using social media, the more effective it will be for your organization. Expect to spend time on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, forums/discussion groups, and Facebook before you reap the benefits. Practice, it seems, makes perfect, or at least more effective.
- Nonprofits, even power-users, haven't broken the code for using LinkedIn effectively.

| | Total | Hours Per Week Spent on Social Media: | | | |
| | | 1-4 | 5-9 | 10-24 | 25+ |
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Facebook	22	12	27	31	48
Twitter	20	10	24	36	31
YouTube	23	16	28	25	36
LinkedIn	14	11	16	14	12
Blog	18	10	17	27	27
Forums/Discussion groups	14	8	15	17	25

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Frequency of Doing Social Media

- When it comes to tweets per a day or blogs per week, etc., nonprofits in general are not following the best practices of power-users, that is, they are not posting material frequently.

	Total	Hours Per Week Spent on Social Media:			
		1-4	5-9	10-24	25+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Tweet / retweet					
Daily or More Often	39	22	45	55	60
Weekly or More Often	66	54	60	70	83
Publish your own written content on a website or blog					
Daily or More Often	18	11	22	22	22
Weekly or More Often	52	38	45	60	73
Update your organization's profile on a social media site					
Daily or More Often	17	10	18	24	29
Weekly or More Often	41	34	41	46	51
Comment on other people's blogs					
Daily or More Often	8	4	9	10	11
Weekly or More Often	23	13	26	34	23
Create / upload video to web					
Daily or More Often	4	2	3	4	5
Weekly or More Often	16	8	18	20	24

- Most nonprofits (79%) that find Twitter "very effective" tweet daily or more often.
- Most nonprofits (85%) that consider blogs "very effective" post new blogs weekly or more often. Nearly half post daily or more often.
- A majority of nonprofits (58%) that consider Facebook "most effective" update their profiles weekly or more often.
- Nearly 40% of nonprofits that comment effectively on the blogs of others post comments weekly or more often.
- Nearly 40 %of nonprofits that are "most effective" users of YouTube or other video sites create /upload video to the web weekly or more often.

Tweet / retweet	Total (%)	Very Effective at Twitter (%)
Daily or More Often	39	79
Weekly or More Often	66	95
Publish your own written content on a website or blog		Very Effective at Blogger (%)
Daily or More Often	18	49
Weekly or More Often	52	85
Update your organization's profile on a social media site		Very Effective at Facebook (%)
Daily or More Often	17	35
Weekly or More Often	41	58
Comment on other people's blogs		
Daily or More Often	8	20
Weekly or More Often	23	37
Create / upload video to web		Very Effective at YouTube (%)
Daily or More Often	4	9
Weekly or More Often	16	39

- When nonprofits fundraise, advocate or cause market, they increase their use of all social media, especially Twitter.

	Total	Use Social Media For:		
		Fund raising	Advocacy	Cause Marketing
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Tweet / retweet				
Daily or More Often	39	47	47	48
Weekly or More Often	66	73	74	77
Publish your own written content on a website or blog				
Daily or More Often	18	22	23	26
Weekly or More Often	52	56	59	58
Update your organization's profile on a social media site				
Daily or More Often	17	24	21	27
Weekly or More Often	41	47	45	48
Comment on other people's blogs				
Daily or More Often	8	10	10	9
Weekly or More Often	23	27	28	27
Create / upload video to web				
Daily or More Often	4	6	5	7
Weekly or More Often	16	17	19	19

Median Number of Friends, Followers, Connections, etc.

- Not surprisingly, the more time – either per week or overall – spent using social media, the more connections your organization will have.
- The number of friends, followers, and connections increases with the number of years an organization has used social media; the size of the organization's budget; and the number of hours per week spent on social media.
- Nonprofits that use cause marketing have the most Facebook friends, Twitter followers, and LinkedIn connections. Advocacy groups have the most discussion group/forum users.

	TOTAL	Hours Per Week Doing Social Media:			
		1-4	5-9	10-24	25+
Facebook	430	260	470	960	2500
Twitter	290	180	310	930	930
LinkedIn	100	100	130	190	200
In-house discussion group / forum	160	100	140	210	400

	TOTAL	Use Social Media:		
		< 1 Year	1 Year	2+ Years
Facebook	430	200	590	810
Twitter	290	100	320	660
LinkedIn	100	100	120	200
In-house discussion group / forum	160	130	120	220

	TOTAL	Revenue:		
		< $999K	$1M-9.9M	$10M+
Facebook	430	260	530	690
Twitter	290	200	250	540
LinkedIn	100	120	100	100
In-house discussion group / forum	160	100	170	200

	TOTAL	Use Social Media For:		
		Fund raising	Advocacy	Cause Marketing
Facebook	430	620	610	730
Twitter	290	420	390	460
LinkedIn	100	100	100	120
In-house discussion group / forum	160	200	210	160

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How Nonprofits Implement Social Media

Learning Social Media

- Most nonprofits (91%) learn social media by simply getting out there and doing it.
- Nonprofits also learn by observing the social media efforts of others.
- Reading online resources is an important way to learn how to use social media.
  However, it is an even more important resource for those who actually use social media.
- Power-users take advantage of a greater range of learning tools.

	Total	Hours Per Week Doing Social Media:			
		1-4	5-9	10-24	25+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Learning by doing	91	91	91	94	89
Observing what others are doing	82	83	83	86	78
Reading online resources	70	63	76	78	83
Talking to colleagues	61	60	63	69	51
Attending classes (in person and online)	47	41	53	55	54
Talking to experts	43	39	41	47	52
Attending social media conferences	26	20	28	35	43
Reading books	22	17	22	30	35
Hired an expert on staff	15	9	13	31	43
Hired a consultant or firm and outsourcing some all social media functions	11	7	11	13	27

Current Social Media Budget: 2010

- The more time spent on social media and the longer the nonprofit has been using social media, the greater the role social media plays in overall marketing.
- The smaller the organization, the greater percentage social media is of overall marketing.
- Fundraising, advocacy, and cause marketing increase the role of social media in nonprofits.

Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Effort	TOTAL	Hours Doing Social Media:			
		1-4	5-9	10-24	25+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
LESS THAN 5%	42	42	28	19	8
5%-24%	42	47	48	51	54
25% +	16	11	24	30	39
Median	10	8	13	14	19

Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Effort	TOTAL	Use Social Media For:		
		< 1 Year	1 Year	2+ Years
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
None	16	11	5	4
LESS THAN 5%	42	48	30	21
5%-24%	42	42	50	53
25% +	16	10	21	25
Median	10	7	11	14

Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Effort	TOTAL	Size of Organization:		
		< $999K	$1M- $9.9M	$10M+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
LESS THAN 5%	42	37	44	46
5%-24%	42	39	44	46
25% +	16	24	12	8
Median	10	13	9	8

Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Effort	TOTAL	Use Social Media For:		
		Fund-raising	Advocacy	Cause Marketing
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
LESS THAN 5%	42	26	26	26
5%-24%	42	51	56	55
25% +	16	23	19	19
Median	10	13	12	12

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Projected Social Media Budget: 2011

- Nonprofits using social media will increase their concentration on social media by 60% next year compared to last year.
- The longer a nonprofit uses social media, the larger the percentage of overall marketing devoted to social media.
- The smaller the organization, the greater the percent of time it will spend on social media in 2011.
- Organizations planning fundraising, advocacy or cause marketing campaigns in 2011 plan to increase their focus on social media in 2011.

Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Effort	TOTAL	Hours Doing Social Media:			
		1-4	5-9	10-24	25+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
LESS THAN 5%	23	21	12	11	4
5%-24%	49	58	43	51	50
25% +	28	21	45	38	46
Median (Excluding 0)	16	13	20	21	24

Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Effort	TOTAL	Use Social Media For:		
		< 1 Year	1 Year	2+ Years
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
LESS THAN 5%	23	20	15	15
5%-24%	49	55	53	48
25% +	28	25	32	37
Median	16	14	18	20

Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Effort	TOTAL	Size of Organization:		
		< $999K	$1M-$9.9M	$10M+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
LESS THAN 5%	23	23	18	27
5%-24%	49	39	56	57
25% +	28	38	26	16
Median	16	21	15	13

Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Effort	TOTAL	Use Social Media For:		
		Fund raise	Advocacy	Cause Marketing
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
LESS THAN 5%	23	12	15	12
5%-24%	49	54	50	58
25% +	28	34	35	31
Median	16	19	19	18

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Integrating Social Media Into Marketing

- The more time spent on social media and the longer your organization works with it, the more likely the organization is to integrate social media into other marketing efforts.
- The larger the nonprofit, the more likely it is to integrate social media into its marketing efforts.
- Nonprofits that use social media for fundraising, advocacy, and cause marketing are even more likely than those who don't to have social media fully integrated into their marketing campaigns.

	Total	Hours Per Week Doing Social Media:			
		1-4	5-9	10-24	25+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Social media is integrated with other forms of marketing, advertising and publicity	84	80	85	90	94

	TOTAL	Use Social Media For:		
		< 1 Year	1 Year	2+ Years
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Social media is integrated with other forms of marketing, advertising and publicity	84	78	85	89

	TOTAL	Size of Organization:		
		< $999K	$1M-$9.9M	$10M+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Social media is integrated with other forms of marketing, advertising and publicity	84	77	87	86

	TOTAL	Use Social Media For:		
		Fund raise	Advocacy	Cause Marketing
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Social media is integrated with other forms of marketing, advertising and publicity	84	87	89	91

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In-house or Outsource Implementation of Social Media

While the vast majority of nonprofits manage their social media in-house, power-users are more likely to use a combination of in-house and outsourced resources.

	Total	Hours Per Week Doing Social Media:			
		1-4	5-9	10-24	25+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Outsource all social media functions	2	0	0	0	0
Outsource social media implementation; handle social media strategy in-house	2	1	3	4	5
Outsource social media strategy; handle social media implementation in-house	1	1	3	0	0
Use a combination of outsourced and in-house resources, but not divided as described above	13	9	13	22	24
Handle all social media functions in-house	82	89	81	74	71

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Departments Within a Nonprofit That Do Social Media

- Many departments within a nonprofit use social media, but the communications, marketing and public relations departments are the most common users.
- For a substantial minority of nonprofits (44%), the program departments are involved in social media.
- Nearly one third of nonprofits have their executive management involved in social media.

	Total	Hours Per Week Doing Social Media:			
		1-4	5-9	10-24	25+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Communications	72	70	77	71	76
Marketing	55	51	53	66	73
Public relations	45	40	49	55	61
Programs	44	41	43	54	56
Executive management	30	25	38	36	27
Human resources	10	8	9	12	22
Marketing research	7	4	11	8	10
Other (please specify)*	17	19	13	15	17

*Please note that the development department was inadvertently left off the list of choices in the survey. Many nonprofits commented that development does use social media, but comparing responses from a multiple-choice question to a write-in is comparing apples and oranges. Therefore, this response is not included.

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Policies and Guidelines

- As a nonprofit gains experience with social media, it is more likely to have an employee code of conduct (to ensure that employees are aware of expected standards of behavior and of the negative consequences of misconduct in both personal and professional use of social media) and policies and procedures (an operations manual for those who use social media) in place to guide the use of social media.

	Total	Hours Per Week Doing Social Media:			
		1-4	5-9	10-24	25+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
None	53	60	50	33	34
Employee code of conduct	36	32	35	39	57
Policies and procedures for blogging and commenting on behalf of the company including when and if approval is necessary	22	18	22	30	35

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Resistance to Fully Embracing Social Media

- Among nonprofits who do use social media, the primary reason for not increasing their use of social media is the amount of time it takes.
- The primary reason given for not using social media is that the nonprofit does not see how using social media will give a return on the investment.
- A majority of nonprofits not using social media also cited as reasons for non-use the amount of time it takes to implement a social media program and the lack of clear guidance/procedures.
- Almost half of all respondents were concerned about the cost of social media.

	Use Social Media (%)	Don't Use Social Media (%)
Amount of time it takes	67	56
Lack of financial resources	49	41
Not convinced of the value / return on investment	40	61
Lack of concrete measurement	42	38
Lack of clear guidance/procedures	34	51
Resistance from management	18	21
Seems too complicated	15	14
Other (please specify)	10	20
Resistance from the Board	7	14
Not appropriate for our organization	7	12

- All users cite the amount of time social media takes as a roadblock to using social media. But the more time an organization spends doing social media, the less likely it is to take that view.
- With all the measurement tools that are available, it was surprising that nearly half of power-users cited lack of concrete measurement as a reason for not fully embracing social media.

	Total	Hours Per Week Doing Social Media:			
		1-4	5-9	10-24	25+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
None, our organization has fully embraced social media	8	6	9	16	25
Amount of time it takes	65	74	64	54	53
Lack of financial resources	47	51	42	48	44
Not convinced of the value / return on investment	43	40	40	39	38
Lack of concrete measurement	41	43	40	43	47
Lack of clear guidance/procedures	37	39	34	34	19
Resistance from management	19	18	15	21	28
Seems too complicated	15	14	15	16	9
Other (please specify)	11	9	9	13	6
Resistance from the Board	8	7	5	8	9
Not appropriate for our organization	7	8	5	5	3

- In their comments, a number of people also mentioned lack of staff training and concern about security as reasons for not engaging in social media.

Measuring Social Media Effectiveness

- A vast majority of nonprofits measure the number of their members, connections, fans, followers, and friends. This is done no matter how much time the organization spends overall on social media.
- A majority of nonprofits measure the number of visitors, new visitors, page views, and comments. The propensity to do this increases with the amount of time the nonprofit spends on social media.
- Power-users recognize the importance of tracking the number of retweets and website bounce rates (the percentage of visitors to a site who "bounce" away to a different site, rather than going to other pages on the same site).

	Total	Hours Per Week Doing Social Media:			
		1-4	5-9	10-24	25+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Number of community members, connections, fans, followers, friends, etc.	84	84	88	84	82
Website traffic: overall visitors	69	65	67	73	74
Website traffic: page views	60	56	63	69	77
User response: number of comments	57	51	58	68	68
Website traffic: new visitors	53	45	54	65	72
User response: number of retweets	39	28	45	56	59
User response: quality of response	31	24	35	40	40
Website traffic: bounce rate	30	27	28	37	50
Amount of money raised	23	18	25	28	29
User response: number of people rating	16	10	18	22	32
Leads	13	10	13	18	24
User response: quality of rating	9	5	9	13	24

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- In general, nonprofits using social media for fundraising, advocacy, and cause marketing are more likely to measure their efforts.

Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Effort	TOTAL	Use Social Media For:		
		Fund raising	Advocacy	Cause Marketing
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Number of community members, connections, fans, followers, friends, etc.	84	88	90	83
Website traffic: overall visitors	69	72	71	71
Website traffic: page views	60	63	66	59
User response: number of comments	57	60	61	63
Website traffic: new visitors	53	57	59	57
User response: number of retweets	39	41	47	46
User response: quality of response	31	28	34	35
Website traffic: bounce rate	30	36	32	36
Amount of money raised	23	43	27	34
User response: number of people rating	16	15	16	19
Leads	13	13	14	15
User response: quality of rating	9	10	11	11

Measurement Tools Used by Nonprofits

- Nearly 100 nonprofits said they use Google or their website's analytic tools.
- About 30 nonprofits reported that they use free Facebook tools.
- About 25 nonprofits said they use bit.ly and/or HootSuite.
- Some nonprofits reported that they download data into spreadsheets to analyze the results.
- Very few nonprofits said they use tools, such as social mention, to analyze what people are saying about them.
- Even fewer nonprofits reported that they pay for measurement tools such as Radian 6, which listens, measures, and engage with social media.

The Psychology of the Use of Social Media

- Nonprofits using social media have more tolerance for failure. Trying something new, even something as widely used as social media, usually involves some risk and those unwilling to risk failure are unwilling to try social media.
- Nonprofits that aren't using social media generally do not describe themselves as innovators. They are more likely to let others test something new before they try it.
- Nonprofits that aren't using social media are more likely to be organizations that want a rock-solid case for any new undertaking.

Psychographics Statements	Use Social Media (%)	Don't Use Social Media (%)
If something new is tried and doesn't work, the organization tolerates failure as a chance to learn	44	26
The organization takes educated risks, in an effort to do things better	21	24
We proactively seek to be innovative	18	13
Innovation is costly, but worth it	18	17
When trying something new, we learn through trial and error	17	10
We scrimp and make do when it comes to the technology we use	17	16
We are considered innovative by others in the sector	14	12
Other organizations follow our lead	13	13
We consult with other organizations and experts in the field before we undertake something new	12	29
We must build a thorough case before undertaking something new	9	23
The organization spends money to test new things	9	6
The organization is behind the times	8	19
We need to know the ROI before we undertake something new	6	17
If we don't understand something new thoroughly, we won't undertake it	6	10
When trying something new, we like to think and plan for every contingency	5	7
We wait until something new is perfected before we will use it	1	6

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Respondent Demographics

Sector	(%)
Arts and culture	8
Association/Membership	11
Economic development	3
Education/Youth development	17
Environment	3
Faith-based	3
Foundation	4
Healthcare	11
Social/Human services	25
Multi-services	6
Other (please specify)	14

Revenue	(%)
LESS THAN $1 million	35
$250,000 or less	15
$250,000 - $499,999	8
$500,000 - $999,999	12
$1 million - $4.9 million	28
$5 million - $9.9 million	13
$10 million +	11
$25 MILLION +	26
$25 million - $49.9 million	6
$50 million - $99.9 million	3
$100 million +	4
Median (Millions)	3

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Methodology

Ventureneer, in collaboration with **Caliber**, conducted an online survey among nonprofits about their social media habits. The survey was conducted from August 4, 2010, through August 27, 2010.

We used a variety of techniques to drive traffic to the survey, including:
- Emailing to internal lists
- Distributing through partners: **Professionals for NonProfits**, **NYTAP**, **Cause Marketing Forum**, **AdAge GoodWorks**, **SelfishGiving.com** and the **Support Center** who promoted to their lists.
- Promoting on Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook.
- Posting a request to take the survey on our websites.
- Facebooks ads

We received 891 responses, which gives the survey statistical reliability.

About Ventureneer and Caliber

Ventureneer connects entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs, and nonprofit execs with the knowledge they need not only to make the world a better place, but to thrive as businesses.

Using Web 2.0, Ventureneer provides practical knowledge, related to real-life problems presented by experts who understand the theory as well as well as the reality of making businesses thrive.

Our classrooms are the offices of our students who attend classes, interact with each other and the instructor via the internet. Convenient and affordable support, informal learning (when people share insights and real-world stories) and formal learning (structured with a teacher): That's what Ventureneer does.

In addition, Ventureneer has a twice-weekly blog, **Vistas**, where you will find more information about the survey, about best practices for nonprofits using social media, and other insights about the nonprofit sector.

Caliber is a corporate alliance consulting firm focusing on hospitals and health care organizations. Caliber specializes in creating targeted marketing campaigns and strategic alliances that take organizations to a level where cause marketing and corporate alliances are so smartly integrated across disciplines that they have a positive effect on every aspect of marketing and development. Caliber advises clients around the country on social marketing, business development, nonprofit marketing and communications, advertising and design, event planning, and management and media relations. Whether it's infusing fresh thinking and sophisticated strategies to better ignite what already exists, or designing targeted solutions that engage key constituents and trigger activation, Caliber helps their clients see differently and achieve more.