

Successfully Social: A Non-Profit's Guide to Modern Social Media Marketing

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Abstract

Social media has revolutionized modern business and marketing practices by providing a mass audience of potential stakeholders for all business entities. Nonprofit organizations that learn to utilize social media affectively could benefit in virtually every organizational initiative, including marketing, fundraising, and advocacy, by easily connecting to target audiences through the power of virtual social networking. The specific focus of this work is on Christian ministries and charitable organizations. Case studies of two differing Christian organizations are discussed: the relief organization, Samaritan's Purse and the young adult ministry, Love and Respect (NOW). The case studies explore the organizations' background and mission, potential use for social media, current use of major outlets: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and Pinterest; and recommendations for each organization, based on a discussion of best practices for each outlet. Limitations of social media outlets are also discussed, to illustrate the constant change, necessity of staying current, and potential for growth in the realm of nonprofit social media.

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Analysis of Social Media

The advent of social media websites like Facebook and Twitter has started an internet and public relations revolution by forming an instantly accessible online community. Each social media platform has communities of online subscribers, often superseding geographical, demographical, language, and cultural barriers. Never before have such masses been so accessible (Bulmer & DiMauro, 2009). Such a revolution presents a wealth of opportunities for practitioners who thoroughly understand social media. Those who disregard the do's and don'ts of online etiquette, often pay a hefty, embarrassing price: being *forgotten* by the general public, in the midst of successfully social organizations.

Audiences

Though user demographics vary with each social media outlet, social media channels are some of the most efficient means of information dissemination to *all* age groups via advertising and individual channel interactions. Though started as a college networking site, social media giant Facebook now boasts a myriad of ages, cultures, and backgrounds within its over 900 million user base (Smith, 2013).

Outlets: Overview & Best Practices

The term *social media* encompasses a wide variety of web resources, most of which are categorized into different groups: blogs, social networking sites, virtual social worlds, collaborative projects, content communities, and virtual game worlds. This study will focus only on the most commonly used “social networking sites”—Facebook,

Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and Pinterest. The text *Marketing: The Core*, listed in the references, is an excellent resource for further research of the other categories, and should be referenced by the reader.

Facebook.

Background. What was started as a simple Ivy League networking website, under the name “thefacebook”, in February 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and Eduardo Saverin, has evolved into a social networking phenomenon which, if measured in terms of user population, would equal the third largest country in the world (Yadav, 2006; Chase & Knebl, 2011, p. 77). This information-sharing depicts social networking at its finest: the ability to share photographs, multimedia, and information with family and friends. The possibilities are phenomenal: “Facebook has become to social media what the Beatles are to rock and roll; it is the standard bearer” (Chase & Knebl, 2011, p. 77).

Basics. Facebook users have a number of tools at their disposal to customize their social networking experience. Each user has a profile to which they add as much personal background information as they desire: including name, birthday, hometown, a profile picture, work and education history, activities and interests, et cetera. To connect with another user, an individual will typically send a *friend request*, which, once accepted, allows users to interact on each other’s *walls*, a publicly seen collection of posts from the individual users and those who choose to post messages on his or her profile. Users then proceed to add whatever content to their profiles that they so choose; these selections are typically relevant to their lifestyles or purposes. (Chase & Knebl, 2011).

Best uses. Organizations often utilize Facebook for organizational disclosure purposes. The site could also be an effective source for information dissemination and

inciting organizational involvement and fundraising, though most nonprofits currently are not using these features (Waters, Burnett, Lamm & Lucas, 2009).

Business-specific functions include the utilization of the Facebook Pages application, which enables organizations, both nonprofit and for-profit, to feature their brands and relevant information concerning their mission, events, and publicity efforts, and receive valuable analytics about the interactivity and demographics of a page's followers.

Nonprofit-specific functions include being featured on the Causes.com application, a nonprofit website that gives credence, publicity, and funding to nonprofits worldwide (Facebook: Nonprofits, 2014).

Areas of caution. Typically, organizations underutilize information dissemination features on Facebook, including failing to utilize multimedia in posts. Nonprofits generally do not provide much opportunity or information for organizational involvement on their pages, including fundraising applications. Many organizations often fail or are slow to respond to follower interactions, which often causes followers to become less engaged in the cause in the future. (Waters et al., 2009).

Twitter.

Background. Twitter is a microblogging service that connects people through idea and information dissemination from 140-character or less messages, called *tweets*. Twitter has more than 230 million active users monthly, who, collectively, transmit over 500 million tweets per day (Twitter, 2013). Famed characteristics of this medium are the ability to easily interact directly with well-known figures and organizations, and to get firsthand news, more quickly than older, traditional media forms. Twitter is defined as

“the fastest, simplest way to stay close to everything you care about” (Smith, 2013, p. 14).

Basics. Twitter developers created several different functions to enhance the ongoing conversation facilitation that is Twitter. Users have the option to *follow* other people and organizations, which essentially compiles all of the users an individual chooses to follow into a time-sensitive feed through which a user can easily scroll.

While creating a tweet, a user has the option of *hashtagging* within his or her post—that is utilizing the # in front of a word or phrase to categorize the post with said word or phrase, in order for other Twitter users to see all of the conversations about the given hashtagged topic (Smith, 2013). For instance, if an organization were to send a message with the hashtag #talkback, a user could click on that phrase and see all of the Twitter users that have historically used that hashtag, asking for feedback from their followers. Hashtags about cultural events are especially popular, and the Twittersphere has created its own set of popular weekly hashtags, like #RandomWednesday, #TransformationTuesday, et cetera that often involve the posting of pictures. A list of the most discussed topics—most often those that are hashtagged—appear in the *Trending Topics* section on the Twitter homepage for each user to see (2013). It is quite easy, thus, to get a pulse on what is happening in the Twitter world!

The direct message function enables users to send another user a tweet, privately (Smith, 2013). The *retweet* option enables a user to re-post someone else’s post, affectively sharing it with all of his or her followers. Hyperlinks to websites can also be easily posted in tweets. Because these links are often quite lengthy, most analysts utilize third-party software to make links more concise (Hootsuite, 2014).

Best uses. Hashtags are often used to trend causes, organizational events, and cause-specific phrases. Hyperlinks can be used to link followers to multimedia or articles of interest. Direct messaging can, and should be used to engage with followers that may reach out to an organization with a more private concern (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

An organization's Twitter account, also known as its *handle*, should not simply be self-promoting, but would be most effective if its content is culturally relevant and beneficial, somehow, to its followers (Twitter: About, 2014). Whether a tweet persuades, informs, entertains, inspires or shocks, it must capture the attention of followers in order to spark any potential interaction. When crafting tweets, social media personnel should ask themselves, *What does this message do for my followers?*

Response time is *key* for all social media outlets. The Golden Rule of Twitter, of course, is "Retweet unto others as you would have them retweet unto you" (Mansfield, 2012, p. 97). Never should comments or questions of a social media site be left unacknowledged; this, intentionally or unintentionally, isolates the follower, leaving him or her feeling neglected.

Areas of caution. Nonprofits often use this medium to communicate one-way messages, failing to engage with followers (Lovejoy et al., 2012). Over time, if followers do not feel connected to an organization as some kind of an active participant, they will disengage: thus, two-way communication is paramount.

Over-hashtagging is also an annoyance to many in the Twitter world. Selected hashtags should *always* be easily related to the post. Analysts recommend no more than one or two hashtags per tweet (Mansfield, 2012).

YouTube.

Background. YouTube was created to serve as a “forum for people to connect, inform, and inspire others across the globe and acts as a distribution platform for original content creators and advertisers large and small” (YouTube: About, 2014, para. 1).

Though this video platform is primarily known as a means of internet entertainment by the masses, YouTube is a great source for nonprofit organizations to establish a social presence through video and advertising efforts for the purpose of greater awareness and attraction within the target market(s).

Basics. Users visit YouTube to “discover, watch and share originally-created videos” (YouTube: About, 2014, para. 1). Businesses have benefited from the site through original videos produced by or for their organization and featured on their individual account, or, *channel*, as well as through advertising clips shown before a selected video (YouTube: Getting Started, 2014). Through this medium, nonprofits can affectively tell and *show* their story—which helps to attract and maintain the attention of target markets.

Best uses. Beyond creating a YouTube account, nonprofit organizations can apply and, once accepted, utilize features specific to the YouTube Nonprofit Program. Tools incorporated in this program include a clickable donations button for the organization’s home page, live streaming of events, community discussion boards, and other premium video features that call viewers to action for the cause (Nonprofit YouTube, 2014).

Areas of caution. Many companies miss the equity of YouTube because they simply use this platform as an uploading agent to share and interact with followers on *other* networks; but they fail to respond to comments or feedback received on YouTube

(Smith, 2013). Regardless of the outlet, social media is never best utilized unless two-way communication is efficiently.

Instagram.

Background. What once was launched in October 2010 to be a simple photo sharing and editing mobile application, Instagram has turned into a multimedia sensation. Instagram estimates that its users share a combined 55 million photos, daily (Barnes, 2014). This mobile application experienced significant user response to its two newest competitive initiatives this past year: the addition of Instagram Video and Instagram Direct: a private photo messaging capability (Instagram, 2014).

Basics. Users can edit and post photographs and up to 30-second video clips to their profiles. Posts usually include a brief caption, and several relevant hashtags. It is common for users to comment and “like” posts of their followers (Instagram, 2014).

Best uses. Organizations interested in attracting new followers should utilize hashtags relevant to the individual pictures, as well as the overall organization, within the description of the media (Barnes, 2014). This practice enables all Instagram users to see the given picture or video that has been tagged with a certain hashtag.

As with all other social media outlets, Instagram users respond well to interactivity. What does this look like for the Instagram user? Followers love to see organizations interacting with the Instagram community: liking and commenting on others’ posts, and being *quick* to respond to comments on their own posts, as this creates community, and followers can feel a greater loyalty to the organization. It is simply not enough to post media; interactivity is the difference between the excellent and mediocre.

Areas of caution. Because of the wide variety of photography resources in today's world, the average person is becoming much more critical about what defines a *good photo*. Organizations must be careful, thus, to take clearly visible, candid, action-oriented photos, or suffer a tarnished reputation instead (Barnes, 2014).

In the midst of such an active social media outlet, it is incredibly easy to be forgotten by the public. It is crucial, thus, for all organizations interested in maintaining an Instagram following *must* post media consistently to their Instagram accounts. Experts differ on the exact frequency that illustrates consistency, but most agree daily postings are sufficient (Barnes, 2014). Organizations should not simply *exist* on Instagram, but should strive for an interactive following by their target markets.

Pinterest.

Background. Since its creation in March 2010, Pinterest has been described by founders Ben Silbermann, Evan Sharp, and Paul Sciarra as a “tool for discovering things you love, and doing those things in real life” (Pinterest: Press, 2014, para. 1). Analysts project that this outlet is the “fastest growing social network today, and cannot be ignored” (Smith, 2013, p. 23).

Basics. The social media outlet can be described as a virtual scrapbook of online articles, pictures, videos, websites, etc.-- a cool, 21st century means of bookmarking. Each individual online item a user wishes to save on his or her Pinterest account is called a *Pin*. *Pinning* an object will not only save the image, but link back to the original website where the item is featured. Similarly-themed *Pins* are organized and saved on *Boards*. Board themes are determined by the user, and can be made confidential through *Secret Boards*, or public to all friends and users—as Pinterest is not simply a solitary

place for individuals to save their own Pins, but to browse Pins pinned by friends and other Pinterest users—creating a Pinterest community (Pinterest: Basics, 2014).

Best uses. Nonprofit organizations are using this outlet as a means to depict their missions, visually. Specifically, nonprofits “use the social site to connect people based on their social passions” (Petronzio, 2012, para. 2). Pinterest can be used to post imagery or media relevant to the cause or promotional organization material (Cramer, 2012). Essentially, this medium epitomizes the adage, “A picture is worth a thousand words.”

Social media analysts advise organizations to define and know their Pinterest audience. Once this is done, organizations should make every effort to make a personal connection with users, in order to maximize target audience interactivity, by personalizing boards to meet audience desires and being transparent (Petronzio, 2012).

Instead of simply creating boards featuring pictures of the organization and its projects, experts advise making community connections on Pinterest a priority, in order to pique the interest of and engage Pinterest users. To do this, organizations should include staff interest boards, like favorite quotes and books of the various employees, relating to the organizational culture. Analysts also suggest that users like seeing organizations that feature other like-minded corporations on their Pinterest pages—Pinterest is *not* simply a place for self-promotion (Petronzio, 2012). People desire to be connected with other people; thus, revealing the personalities of the workers behind the scenes of an organization, and the community of the organizational culture are easy and efficient ways of establishing a long-lasting connection with potential stakeholders.

Because nonprofit organizations are predominantly dependent on donations for revenue, efficient fundraising is essential, and, possible through Pinterest. Earned income

strategies can easily be pursued, as company merchandise can be featured, *pinned*, and linked to an online store through a simple HTML command (Petronzio, 2012).

Though Pinterest is primarily known as a photograph-based outlet, it is possible, and becoming a more popular option, to feature video on the site from an organization's YouTube channel. This audio and visual element allows stakeholders to *hear* the heart of the organization—making communication less static (Petronzio, 2012).

Areas of caution. Quite simply, analysts say that the key to Pinterest is *balance*. Organizations are mistaken when they pin too much or not enough, too often or too little, not enough varied content or unrelated content. How can nonprofits discern the appropriate amount? Analysts suggest that organizations should pay close attention to Pinterest analytics to gauge responsiveness to the current posts. Nonprofits should also be sure that they are utilizing a Pinterest business account, as opposed to a personal account, in order to utilize the features that Pinterest developers have made available to businesses—including links to the nonprofit's background and other social media accounts (Cormier, 2013).

Synergy of Social Media—Hootsuite

Trying to successfully manage several different social media accounts can be overwhelming; however, management systems like Hootsuite not only organize social media accounts, but also establish synergy between the different social media platforms, so that they work together most effectively. From the Hootsuite account, or *dashboard*, organizations can “collaboratively execute campaigns across multiple social networks.” Other perks of Hootsuite include auto-scheduling posts into the future, geo-targeting

functionality, collaboration abilities, and customized analytics for each outlet (Hootsuite, 2014).

Nonprofit Organizations

History

Defined as “an organization that is not intended to make a profit, especially one setup to provide a public service” (nonprofit organizations, 2012, para. 1). Though it is impossible to trace back the roots of good will and philanthropic practices, America’s modern nonprofit organizational model arose in the post-civil-war era, via the philanthropy of donors like John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie (Worth, 2012). Originally, the purposes of these groups were to influence government and to help immigrants in large American cities (Gose, 2011). The nonprofit sector, however, was not recognized as an official business entity until 1975, when the Filer Commission drafted the Commission on Private Philanthropy and Public Needs (Worth, 2012). Since this public recognition and growing need for aid worldwide, the nonprofit sector has flourished. Today, thousands of nonprofit organizations exist to enact worldwide change.

Types of Nonprofits

Under the nonprofit organization umbrella are many different organizations with many different aims; in fact, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) group nonprofits into over 30 different categories that determine a nonprofit’s specific tax-exemption status (Worth, 2012). Major categories include (1) “Religious congregations”, (2) “Tax-exempt organizations registered under tax codes other than 501 (c)”, and the most common, (3) “Tax-exempt organizations registered under [tax code] Section 501 (c).” Under the latter of the categories falls several other subcategories, including: (1) social welfare

(advocacy) organizations, (2) charitable nonprofits, which breaks down into (a) public charities and (b) private foundations, and (3) other registered nonprofits under Section 501 (c) (Worth, 2012, p. 27). Though this distinction is made primarily for tax purposes, a nonprofit organization's tax classification often reveals much about its mission.

Social Media and the Non-Profit: Illustrating the Need

Social media presents many unique opportunities to spread awareness about their causes to large masses of people for little-to-no cost. Organizations also have the chance to engage with these users and create relationships that yield devoted donors and advocates.

Marketing

A primary use of social media for the private and public sector is marketing, in order to increase brand awareness, loyalty, and interaction. These aims are all the more important for nonprofits, as they are dependent upon the advocacy and funding of others for success. Social media outlets have tailored their programs to this nonprofit need by creating nonprofit-specific webpages, including Flickr for Good, Google for Nonprofits, and Hope140—Twitter's social nonprofit platform (Bermudez, 2012).

Analysts have also studied the marketing relationship *between* nonprofit and for-profit organizations, termed *cause marketing*. Under this promotional partnership, both organizations stand to benefit: for-profits in increased social value and awareness for their *brand*, and in non-profits greater exposure and funding for their *cause*. Credit card company American Express is adept at this type of promotion, as it has benefited from the relationship with over 90 different nonprofits since 1983; in turn, these nonprofits have handsomely benefited from the reputation and relationships of the prominent

American Express. Other popular cause-marketing campaigns include Susan G. Komen's "For the Cure" campaign and "Box Tops for Education." Social media is often utilized for cause marketing initiatives in the forms of contests, promoted posts, and links to donation pages, which stands to benefit the nonprofit through further follower engagement, expanding awareness about the organization, and replenishing organizational resources (Furlow, 2011).

Earned Income Strategies

Earned income is the "payment of goods or services that the nonprofit has provided [through various business ventures], rather than contributed revenue" (Worth, 2012, p. 299). Often, nonprofits depend on this type of revenue to keep themselves afloat. Organizations that sell merchandise through online stores, tables at events, and gift shops, like the Metropolitan Opera, have turned to social media to promote the purchasing of these products (Lovejoy et al., 2012).

Support

Many nonprofits focus on emergency relief efforts, and, in recent years, have utilized social media to rally support in times of disaster. Many nonprofits successfully solicited donations and volunteers on social media platforms Facebook and Twitter in response to the 2010 Haiti earthquake (Muralidharan, Rasmussen, Patterson & Shin, 2011). Invisible Children, an organization that combats the brutalities of the African child soldier movement, has used Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to organize student rallies--creating advocates for the organization (West, 2011). These historical examples prove that great change can be enacted through what may be viewed as simple social media blurbs.

Social Media & Christian Nonprofits: Case Studies

Relief Ministry: Samaritan's Purse

History/mission. Samaritan's Purse was founded by evangelist and journalist Bob Pierce in 1970, after seeing, firsthand, the reality of the destitution of suffering children in Korea. What he believed to be his God-given message was clear: "to meet emergency needs in crisis areas through existing evangelical mission agencies and national churches" (Samaritan's Purse: History, 2014, para. 1). In 1973, Pierce met Franklin Graham, a man who shared his heart and vision for world missions. Graham became increasingly more involved with Samaritan's Purse, and, in 1978, succeeded Pierce as President and Chairman of the Board of the organization, after Pierce died of leukemia (Samaritan's Purse: History, 2014).

The namesake of the organization alludes to the Luke 10 Bible story of the "Good Samaritan", who rescued a suffering man that others blatantly disregarded. Samaritan's Purse takes very seriously Jesus' exhortation at the end of the "Good Samaritan" passage, to "Go and do likewise," and has, as a portion of their mission statement proclaims, "...helped meet needs of people who are victims of war, poverty, natural disasters, disease, and famine with the purpose of sharing God's love through His Son, Jesus Christ," through a variety of worldwide ministries (Samaritan's Purse: About Us: Mission Statement, 2014, para. 1).

Social media potential to meet needs. Because Samaritan's Purse is a gospel-centered relief organization dedicated to meeting needs around the world through eight major ministry initiatives, its need for resources is ever-present, thus, donors are incredibly important. Whether the need be food, children's toys, clothing, building

supplies, et cetera, Samaritan's Purse has been able, through the generous monetary and physical gift-giving of others, to meet needs worldwide. Social media should be a means by which Samaritan's Purse solicits these donations.

Because of its worldwide scope, Samaritan's Purse is also an organization that is dependent upon volunteers to accomplish the vast amount of organizational goals associated with each ministry initiative. From regional planning director of Christmastime shoebox initiative Operation Christmas Child, to medical professional volunteer, the needs of volunteers are many. The opportunity for Samaritan's Purse to communicate to the masses about (1) the dire need for worldwide assistance and communication of the Gospel, and (2) how an individual can, from wherever they are, make a difference through their involvement with Samaritan's Purse, is invaluable.

Though the Samaritan's Purse website is an excellent outlet to portray all of this information, mass marketing initiatives are needed to attract individuals who may never visit the organization's site, unless prompted by another source. Because of its far-reaching impact alone, social media is a tool that Samaritan's Purse has, and, must continue to use well to assure organizational longevity and excellence in the nonprofit's mission to "Help in Jesus' name."

Current social media usage, by outlet.

Facebook. Though the main discussion of Samaritan's Purse's Facebook usage will focus on its main organizational page, it is notable to mention that the nonprofit also actively maintains Facebook pages for most of its ministry initiatives--like Operation Christmas Child, World Medical Mission, and Children's Heart--and links to them appropriately via a "Likes" toolbar towards the top of its main Facebook page.

A historical study of the organization's main Facebook page reveals several common characteristics. It appears that the Facebook managers create one to two posts for each weekday, and a single post for most Saturdays and Sundays. The posts seem to fall into five major categories: prayer requests, photographs and/or video reports of recent Samaritan's Purse initiatives, initiative updates from President Franklin Graham or other Samaritan's Purse executives, ministry spotlights of Samaritan's Purse employees or partners, and scriptural encouragement. Samaritan's Purse's Facebook managers do a wonderful job of featuring partner organizations; this is a notable achievement, as many other nonprofits fail to create community on their Facebook pages by featuring other worthy organizations.

Samaritan's Purse's Facebook reach and influence is significant in the volume and interactivity of its followers. The page has 701,062 *likes*, a historical record of those who have followed the page, and, more importantly, 25,302 people are actively engaging with the page—whether that be through recently liking the page, sharing or liking a Samaritan's Purse status, tagging Samaritan's Purse in a personal status, or writing on the Samaritan's Purse Facebook wall. Because of this large, responsive audience, virtually all of Samaritan's Purse's posts have a large response, as most posts boast over 100 shares—a few have even been shared over 1,000 times. Many of the most interactive posts are prayer requests and provoking pictures of various ministry initiatives (Facebook: Samaritan's Purse, 2014). This level of interaction indicates that Samaritan's Purse has a captive audience that is, likely, willing and ready to become involved in organizational activities, and Samaritan's Purse should alter its posts accordingly.

Twitter. Like Facebook, Samaritan's Purse also maintains Twitter handles for each of its branch ministries; its corporate handle will be the topic of this discussion.

Content for the Twitter handle mirrors much of the Facebook content, though in more concise statements due to Twitter's 140-character restriction. Samaritan's Purse appears to post between 3-8 posts per day. Many of these posts are bible verses, short descriptions of a given photo, video, or article link, informational blurbs, or retweets from users related to the organization, like the nonprofit's president, Franklin Graham. Samaritan's Purse boasts 69,100 followers, and always attains double-digit favorites and retweets (Twitter: Samaritan's Purse, 2014).

YouTube. Samaritan's Purse's YouTube channel features eight different categories of video, (1) Operation Christmas Child, (2) International Relief, (3) U.S. Disaster Relief, (4) Water & Hygiene, (5) Animals & Agriculture, (6) Construction Projects, (7) Medical Ministries, and (8) Women & Children. Each of these videos, undoubtedly, is used for promotional purposes, as their inspirational, testimonial style motivates action and appeals to the emotions. The homepage's feature video is an excellent overview of the ministries of Samaritan's Purse. Many of 766 videos on the channel are without like or comment—this, most likely, is because of the large volume of videos with very similar content. (YouTube: Samaritan's Purse Video, 2014).

Instagram. Samaritan's Purse's Instagram account--@samaritanpurse--is not linked directly on the organization's website, though it can be found through the Instagram search engine feature. It appears that the social media team posts 3-4 pictures per day, a feat that is not hard to believe, considering the many destinations and photo opportunities of that this ministry possesses. The team typically utilizes the geo-locate option, which labels the geographical location of the photo; a captivating feature for an international ministry, as it allows followers to see the various parts of the world that are touched by the ministry of Samaritan's Purse. Samaritan's Purse's photos typically get over 100 likes, from their 2,041 followers (Instagram: Samaritan's Purse, 2014).

Pinterest. Samaritan's Purse's Pinterest page acts primarily as another photo-sharing medium. Out of its 18 boards, only one, a blog board, features content other than photography. Each board is dedicated to a specific ministry of Samaritan's Purse. The page has 2,216 followers, and a total of 577 pins. Most, if not all, of the photography on the Pinterest page is trademarked property of Samaritan's Purse (Pinterest: Samaritan's Purse, 2014). Social media experts suggest that more effective organizational Pinterest pages feature diverse content from other sources outside of the organization (Cormier, 2013). It would benefit Samaritan's Purse, thus, to include pin content other than photographs, including content from other like-minded organizations, like blogs or videos.

Recommendations. Samaritan's Purse can improve its social media presence by enacting a few simple practices. Though Samaritan's Purse is both an encouraging and serious ministry, the tone of its social media post, from a reader's perspective, is, overall, very serious and heavy. Social media writers should consider ways to occasionally make

posts more enthusiastic and light-hearted. All channels, especially Facebook and Twitter, should also become more interactive with followers: asking them questions, or creating contests the engage followers. Samaritan's Purse has an active following that will, undoubtedly, engage in conversation, so Samaritan's Purse should be quick to prompt discussion. This dialogue will establish a greater dedication of social media followers' to the mission and initiatives of Samaritan's Purse.

The team should also enlist the help of multi-lingual personnel, as many of Samaritan's Purse's followers speak different languages, and are not responded to on Facebook. The sheer volume of feedback from Samaritan's Purse followers is amazing, and, consequently, the task of replying to all of these individuals is incredibly difficult; thus, more responders should be employed, as quick response time is *imperative*. Page managers should also be quicker to delete irrelevant posts from followers from all social media channels, as spam is an eyesore to those on social media.

To remind followers about all Samaritan's Purse initiatives, social media personnel should feature the many YouTube videos of Samaritan's Purse on all outlets more frequently. In the future, shorter versions of promotional videos should be made so that they can be featured on the Samaritan's Purse's Instagram channel.

Improvements to the organization's Pinterest page should include pins other than their own photographs, and content from other like-minded organizations, like blogs or videos.

Because of the high degree of interactivity that Samaritan's Purse has among its followers, the organization should utilize its social media platform to call its supporters to action, posting more frequently about specific volunteer and supply needs. Specifically,

the organization should create geo-specific event pages for volunteer needs, so that followers living in a specific region of a Samaritan's Purse center could find out more detailed information about how to get involved with a Samaritan's Purse initiative. As Facebook further develops the ability to donate to nonprofit organizations online, Samaritan's Purse should pursue this initiative with its followers.

Young-Adult Ministry: Love & Respect NOW

History/mission. As a young-adult ministry, Love & Respect Now (LRN), launched by Joy Eggrichs as a spin-off ministry of Love & Respect, utilizes social media to spark conversation, engage, inform, and entertain target markets. While the primary demographic for this ministry is 18-35 years old, LRN has recently launched a new initiative entitled "The Illumination Project", purposed to instill wisdom into younger generations from the reflections of life experiences of Joy's parents and Love & Respect founders, Sarah and Emerson Eggrichs, that has attracted followers of older age groups to the social media channels (Love and Respect NOW, 2014).

Joy's quirky sense of humor is evident in all of the social media channels, bringing a refreshing perspective to tough topics typical of growing up. All channels are very intentional about bringing up current social issues, pop culture topics, and are rich in media—both pictures and video. All channels frequently promote Love & Respect initiatives, as well as Emerson Eggerichs' personal professional career (Love and Respect NOW, 2014).

Social media potential to meet needs. Social media can, and does, meet several needs of LRN's ministry, as its target market is the most social media savvy age group, 18-35 year olds. The ministry should, thus, connect to its age group through this

technological media in order to be relevant and capture the attention of this target market. Because blogs and video blogs, also known as *vlogs*, are such an integral part of LRN's ministry, having social platforms to publicize these resources is imperative. LRN merchandise and other earned income strategies, including materials for "The Illumination Project", can, and should, be featured on social platforms for maximum exposure. Joy's personal speaking engagements, as well as LRN conferences or promotional events, would also benefit from the invitation pages and publicity that social media offers. In essence, LRN must utilize social media for relevancy and maximum exposure to its audience.

Current social media usage, by outlet.

Facebook. LRN averages two-to-three posts per day. This content consisted of an approximate equal proportion of outside articles and pictures relevant to culture & current events, and promotion for LRN and Love & Respect blogs, videos, and books. Over half of these posts involved 2-way communication, and seven were informative or unsuccessfully engaging 1-way posts. Many of the posts can be characterized as quirky and comedic, taking creative spins on cultural events like *No-Shave November* by sharing a post of the Little Mermaid sporting facial hair. People respond well to the quirky personality that LRN has created for itself, most often through likes and quirky comeback comments (Facebook: Love and Respect (NOW), 2014).

Twitter. LRN's Twitter channel--@LoveRespectNow-- averages 9-11 tweets, per day. This communication medium is a bit more interactive than the Facebook channel, and posts include announcements, LRN retweets from other organizations, and less responsive informational posts. The most frequently *favorited* and *retweeted* posts are

culturally relevant posts and quotes from Christian leaders. The page boasts 13,900 followers, and most posts are retweeted and favorite at least once. (Twitter: Love and Respect (NOW), 2014).

YouTube. LRN's YouTube channel is entitled "Joy Eggerichs." The featured video on the channel is a well-detailed overview of Joy's background and mission for Love & Respect NOW. The YouTube channel is utilized frequently, as Joy has a penchant for vlogs about various aspects of relationships from a scriptural perspective. Many of Joy's videos also feature interviews with Emerson and Sarah Eggerichs; Joy's parents and founders of LRN's parent ministry, Love & Respect, Christian authorities like Eric Metaxas, and Joy's personal friends. Responsiveness to these videos is high, as viewer "likes" range from 300 to over 2,000, and many viewer comments (YouTube: Joy Eggerichs, 2014).

Instagram. LRN generates daily Instagram posts, with occasional bi-weekly video posts. The images utilized in many posts served as backgrounds to promos for blogs or videos on LRN's website, and were accompanied with links to the content in each picture's description. Audiences seem most responsive to videos, specifically, Joy's #MondayMornin' update video with five same-day comments. Followers also respond to powerful images, as a December photo of a small child in a shopping cart looking up at the many ceiling fans on the ceiling of a home improvement store, a picture that served as the background for a quote from Emerson Eggerichs to promote an article he wrote for the Illumination Project about Joy as a child, received 68 likes. Each post was accompanied by hashtags intended to attract a wider audience that may not already

follow LRN; for instance #growvember, #movemeber, and #beard for a *No Shave November* photo (Instagram: Love and Respect (NOW), 2014).

Pinterest. LRN’s Pinterest page, which is featured on LRN’s website, is entitled, “Joy Eggerichs.” The page features five boards: four quirky, comedic boards, and one linking to LRN blogs and vlogs. The material appears outdated, especially the LRN board, as it does not feature *any* of the media produced for LRN’s newest project, “The Illumination Project.” This Pinterest page has 789 followers, a small number when compared to LRN’s other social media outlets (Pinterest: Joy Eggerichs, 2014).

Recommendations. LRN would greatly benefit from a few new initiatives. The organization should strive to produce more original content for each distinct channel, as most of the posts from Instagram are re-posted on the other social media sites throughout the week as well; while this is not always a bad thing, it is important to remember that many avid fans of the organization follow *all* social media channels, and deserve to see new content on each different venue. To avoid the annoyance of perceived “spamming” LRN should consider private-messaging users to thank them for following the channel.

Though LRN is Joy Eggerichs’ primary ministry, it should seek to uniquely label all social media outlets with its ministry’s namesake, not its founder’s—this is a specific reference to LRN’s YouTube and Pinterest channels. As a Christian organization, LRN should also strive to post more scripturally-based quotes; for only one tweet over the past week was a scriptural passage, and communicating gospel truth should be LRN’s primary mission.

Because LRN’s YouTube channel is such a valuable asset to the ministry, the social media team should pay more attention to responding to feedback on the YouTube

channel, as many viewers comment on the video, sometimes even asking questions, and often go unacknowledged by the Joy Eggerichs account. LRN's Pinterest page also has the potential to become a great resource for followers. The social media team should work to update the content with LRN's most recent blogs and vlogs, creating a board specifically for "The Illumination Project", and create more resource boards that feature the personality of the LRN team, like favorite books, scriptures, quotes, et cetera, that can be utilized by the channel's followers.

Limitations: Other Social Media Outlets

Research and time constraints do not permit a comprehensive discussion of all existing social media outlets, tactics and strategies. The internet realm is constantly changing, and, thus, new social media channels and updates are routinely being developed. In addition, existing social media platforms consistently update the benefits available to organizations. It is paramount, thus, for nonprofit social media personnel to constantly research the newest innovations for social media via the outlets' individual sites, as well as marketing and public relations websites.

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