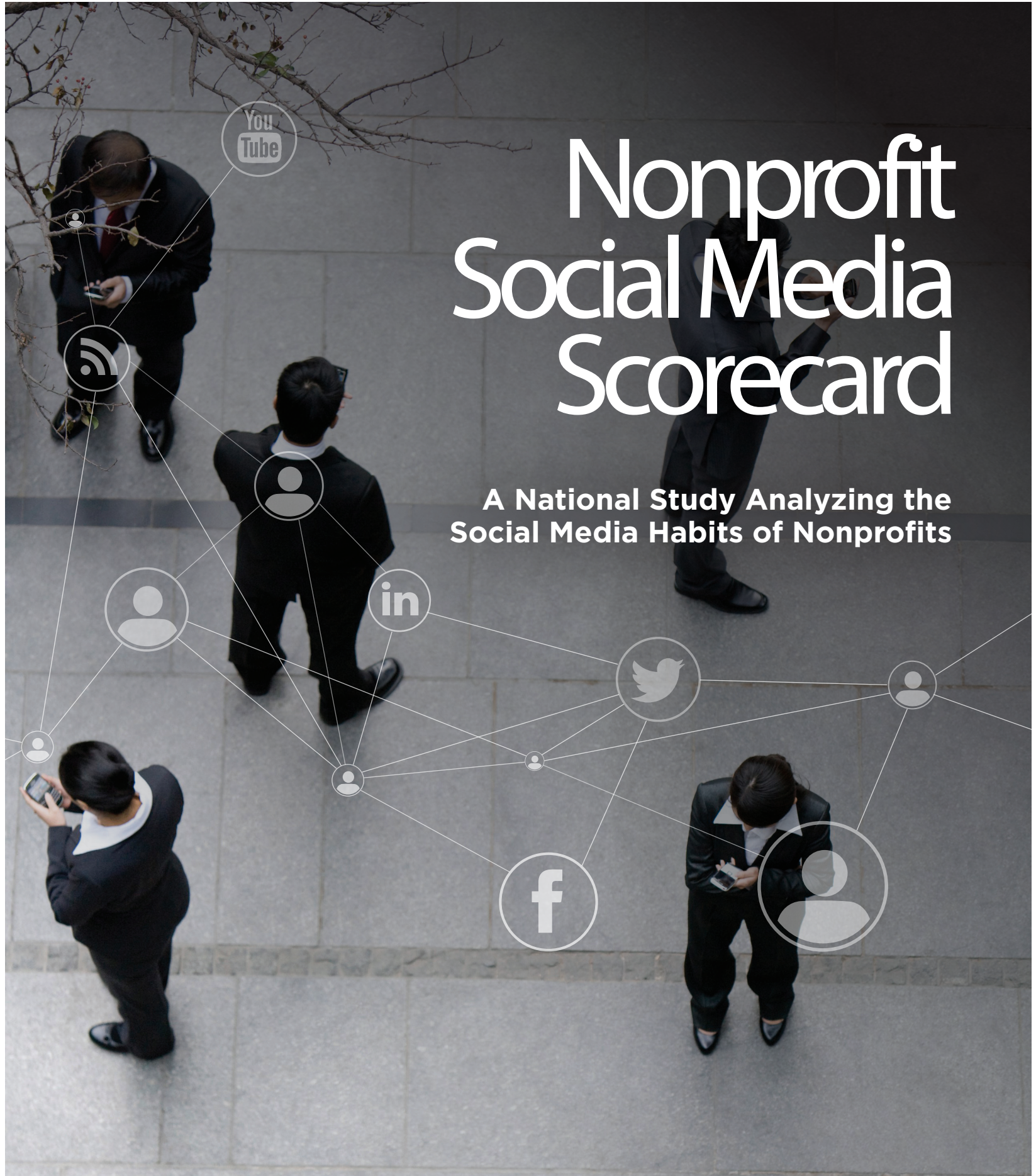


Nonprofit Social Media Scorecard

A National Study Analyzing the
Social Media Habits of Nonprofits



PUBLISHED BY


Dunham+Company[®]
CAUSE+**EFFECT**

 **MARKETING**
SUPPORT NETWORK



Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Overview 2

Linking to Social Media 3

Sharing 4

Consumer Expectations for Response 5

Our Results 6

Types of Responses 7

How Soon Did They Respond? 8

Responding to Donors 9

Social Sharing 10

Conclusion 11

Works Cited 12

Methodology 13

About Marketing Support Network 14

About Dunham+Company 15

Acknowledgments 16



Introduction

Imagine one of your organization's donors walks up to you at a social gathering and says—in front of a crowd of strangers—that they absolutely love the work of your organization and hope others will support it too. How should you respond?

Well, you certainly wouldn't turn around and start talking to someone else, or stare into space while everyone stood around feeling awkward. If you did, you'd most likely lose that supporter because your response would be quite offensive.

Unfortunately, too many charitable organizations are doing just that when it comes to how they approach social media. And that can be a big problem for you and your followers on Facebook and Twitter if you fail to pay attention to those connecting with you through those platforms.

How you approach your management of social platforms is critical, as many of today's first-time donors use social media as one of their main forms of contact with an organization.

And how an organization responds is critical as to whether or not an individual will engage with that organization. Simply stated, social media is one of the best opportunities to actually *engage* with your donors, meeting them where they are and encouraging them to act.

Many of today's first time donors are using social media as one of their main forms of contact with organizations and businesses.

Oftentimes nonprofits make the mistake of using social media as a billboard, rather than a platform to build relationships. This approach is contrary to the nature of social media, and it often drives away followers because it's nearly impossible to engage with someone who is only trying to sell you something.

Relationships are reciprocal. And social media is the apex of online relational engagement. So what are you giving your followers? Are you responding when they reach out to you? Are you giving them relevant and engaging content?

Your social media presence is a platform projecting your voice farther than it could go through other channels. Social media allows you to know and be known, to understand your audience for who they are as individuals, and to share your organization's story to build real and lasting relationships for maximum impact.

It's vital to understand that your community is social. You need to meet them where they are not only with content, but also with a genuine relationship that is a reflection of who you are.

Overview



The donor of today is connected to the world through social media channels. They keep in touch with friends and family, get their news, and connect with brands and organizations all day long. This raises the question: As a nonprofit, have you made the most of these new tools to connect with your donors?

This study was designed to help identify the gap between how organizations use social media to relate to donors and how they can better leverage these assets. Social media is an excellent way to keep your donors informed—and fill the pipeline with potential new donors. And we want to help you do just that.

So we did the work, looking at 161 nonprofit organizations to see how they handle donor questions and interactions via their social media channels.

Each organization was graded on the following:

1. Response time to general inquiries over social media channels.
2. Integration between website and social channels for sharing.
3. Response time to posts about donations over social media channels.

Our goal was to identify the current trends in online donor development via social media, and develop industry benchmarks and identify best practices that will help organizations optimize their donor relation and retention efforts.

What follows are our findings, analyses, observations, and recommendations. Stepping up your organization's social game will make a difference, and it's time to get started.

This study was designed to help identify the gap between how organizations are using social media to relate to donors and how they can better leverage these assets.

Linking to Social Media

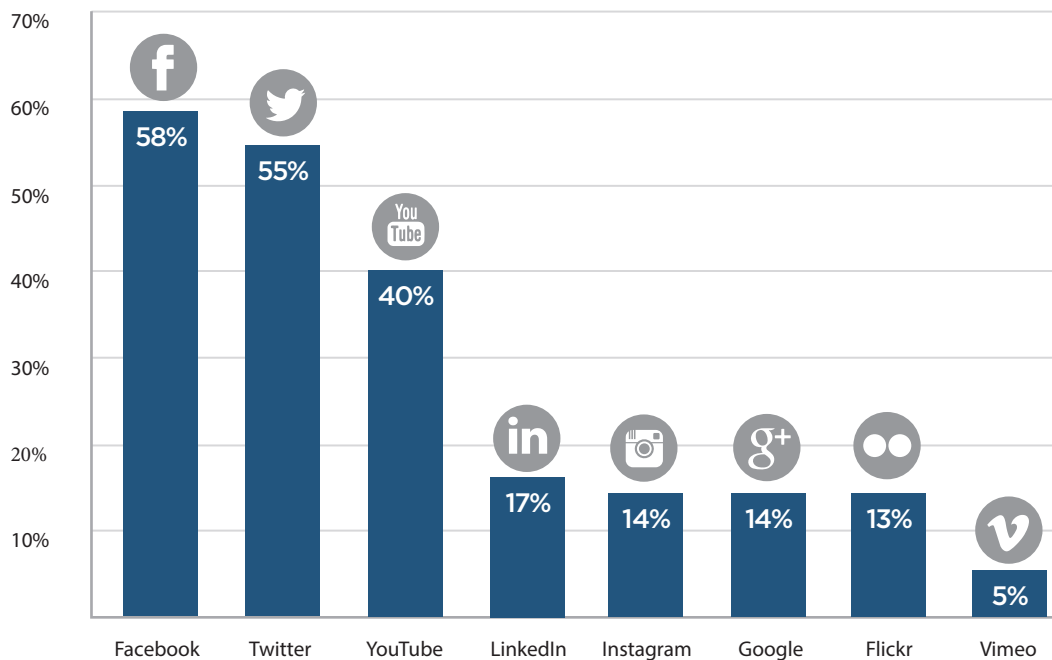


Let's start with the bad news... and then move on to the *other* bad news.



- 100% of organizations surveyed were on Facebook, yet only 58% linked to their Facebook page from their website homepage.
- 85% of organizations surveyed were on Twitter, yet only 55% of them linked to Twitter from their website homepage.

Nonprofit organizations link to the following social media platforms:



Why Should You Care?

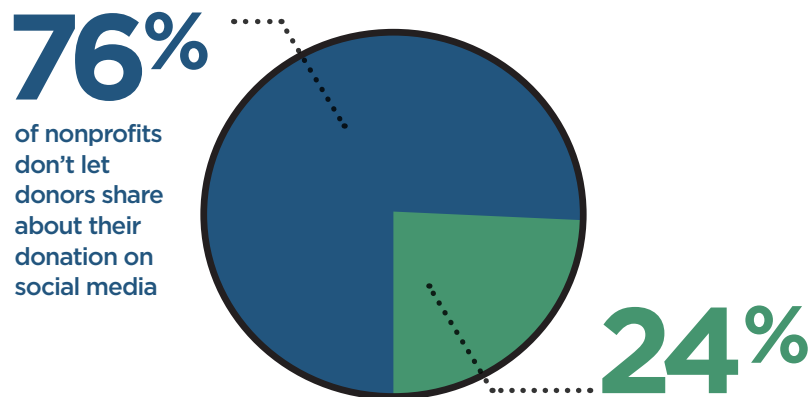
By now, failing to link to your social media channels from your website is a major oversight. The technical term for this is "A Big Miss." Unless your strategy calls for isolation from potential constituents and supporters, call a meeting and get this done.



Sharing

Dating back to millennia-old cave drawings depicting a hunter making a big kill, people like to share with others when they do something they feel good about. Giving donors the ability to share about their generosity and feelings is what we like to call a *really, really good idea*.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of organizations fail to provide this simple functionality.



Why Should You Care?

If given the opportunity to share, a good percentage of donors will do just that! In fact, 40 percent of people surveyed by the Red Cross said they would share or be likely to share about a donation they made on social media.

The same Red Cross survey found that the most common reason why a respondent decided to give a gift was due to one of these activities:

- 24% received a mailing from a charity
- 18% received an email from a friend
- 17% read a message/post on social media
- 12% received a phone call from a charity
- 11% received an email from a charity
- 7% gave in response to a celebrity solicitation

Enabling your donors to share with their networks is more effective at causing someone to give than sending out an email or calling them. Only a “mailing from a charity” and a personal “email from a friend” are more effective... and the effectiveness of social media is only increasing.



Consumer Expectations for Response

People expect to hear from you when they give to, interact with, or talk about your organization on social media. Research (from a study of over 690 social media users) of overall consumers who have ever attempted to contact a brand, product, or company through social media reveals the following expectations:



- **32% expect a response within 30 minutes**
- **42% expect a response within 60 minutes**
- **67% expect a same-day response**
- **Almost 100% expect a response within a few days**
- **57% expect the same response time at night and on weekends as during normal business hours**

So the people who care about you expect acknowledgment, a reply, and maybe even some gratitude... quickly.

Expectations and the Reality

When it comes to response, for-profits and nonprofits are in different leagues. For comparison, we revisited a 2013 study by Conversocial measuring for-profit social media response levels. The study found the following:



- **81% of companies responded on Twitter, and 80% responded on Facebook.**
- **20% of companies responded on Twitter within two hours, and 43% responded within one day.**

Timing of the responses from those companies that responded on Twitter:

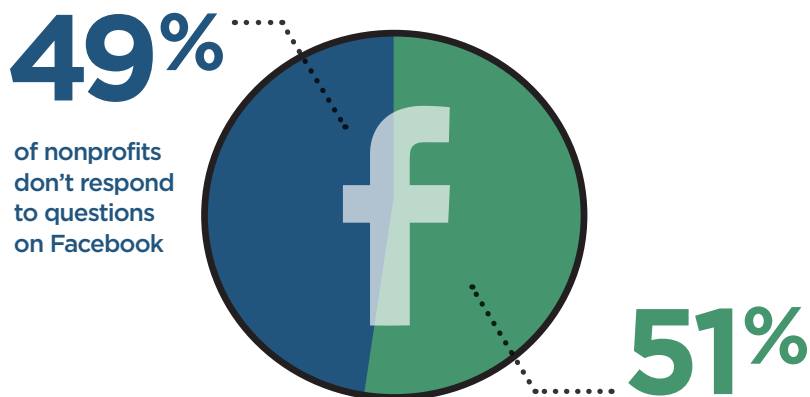
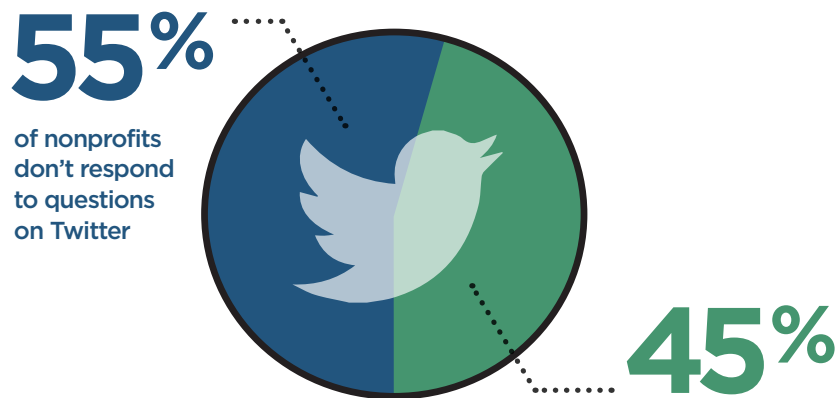
	Best 😊	9 minutes
🐦	Worst ☹️	2 days, 2 hours
	Average 😐	11 hours, 15 minutes

Not ideal, but not bad—especially when compared to the following.



Our Results

The response levels for nonprofits are much lower. When our researchers asked the initial question of the nonprofits we surveyed, we got the following results:



Why Should You Care?

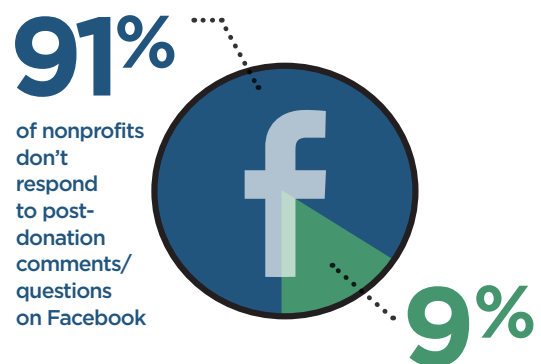
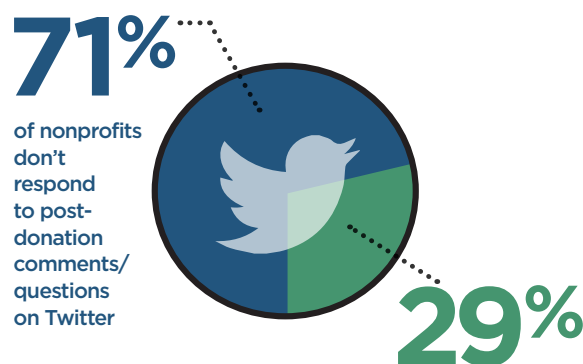
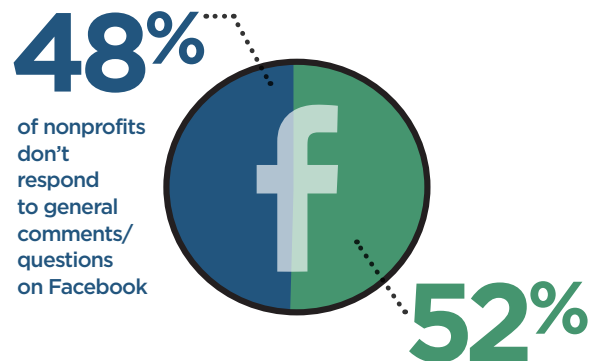
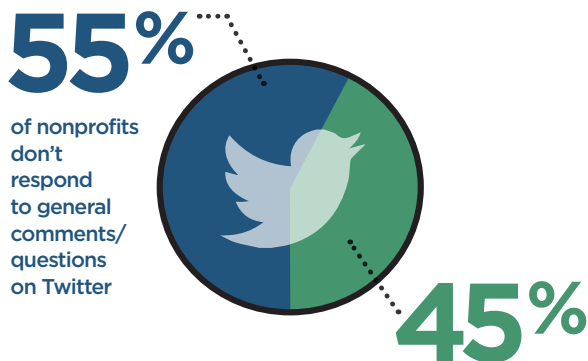
Responding to those who engage with your organization on social media is only important if you want people to continue to have warm feelings about your brand and share these feelings with others. If maintaining positive relationships with those who are supporting you and growing your base of support are important, then responding to posts should be your top priority in your new social media strategy.



Types of Responses

Some brands are better at responding to different types of inquiries. Overall, organizations are better at replying to general questions rather than donor responses or showing appreciation for those who give.

Responding to Comments/Questions



Why Should You Care?

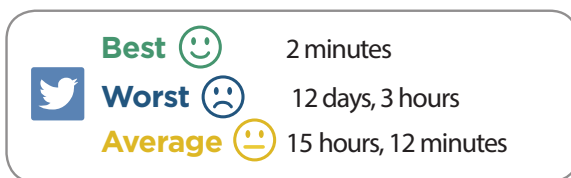
Getting back to folks with answers to general questions is good. Following up with those who have given a gift or have specific donation-related questions... even better. In essence, when you fail to respond to such a question, you're communicating that the donor's support is unimportant.



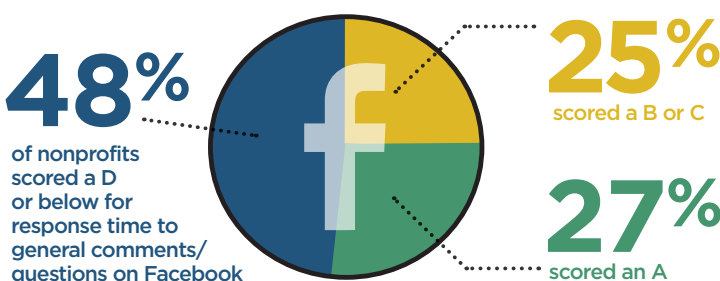
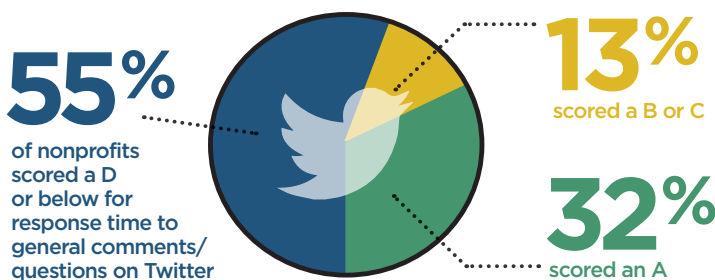
How Soon Did They Respond?

Another area where expectations did not necessarily line up with reality is the promptness of responses, which for nonprofits lags far behind what constituents feel they're entitled to.

Take Twitter, for example, where 26 percent of nonprofits responded within two hours, and 35 percent responded within one day. Overall, the timing of the response from those nonprofits that did respond on Twitter is not good:



Grades for Response Time



Response Time:

- | | |
|----------------------------|----|
| ● Immediate – 4 Hours | A |
| ● 4-8 Hours | B+ |
| ● 8-18 Hours | B |
| ● 18-24 Hours | C+ |
| ● 24-48 Hours | C |
| ● 48-72 Hours | D+ |
| ● 3-5 Days | D |
| ● +5 Days (or no response) | F |



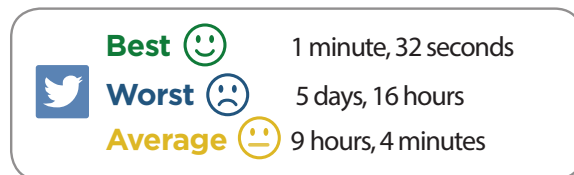
Why Should You Care?

Your response time will directly impact how an individual feels about your organization—especially since humans want and need to receive acknowledgment and thanks in a timely manner. Don't allow someone to write you off just because you fail to respond to them. That's called a self-inflicted wound.

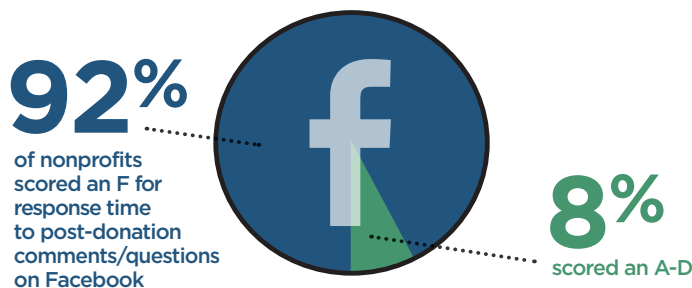
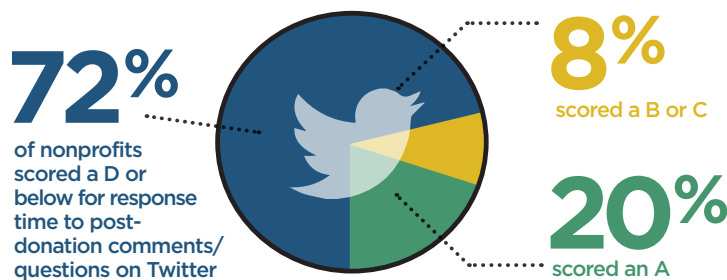


Responding to Donors

While the response times improve a bit for post-donation comments and questions, even more organizations are missing the mark. Here's how it looks for those organizations who responded on Twitter:



Grades for Responses to Donations by Platform



Response Time:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| ● Immediate – 4 Hours | A |
| ● 4-8 Hours | B+ |
| ● 8-18 Hours | B |
| ● 18-24 Hours | C+ |
| ● 24-48 Hours | C |
| ● 48-72 Hours | D+ |
| ● 3-5 Days | D |
| ● +5 Days
(or no response) | F |



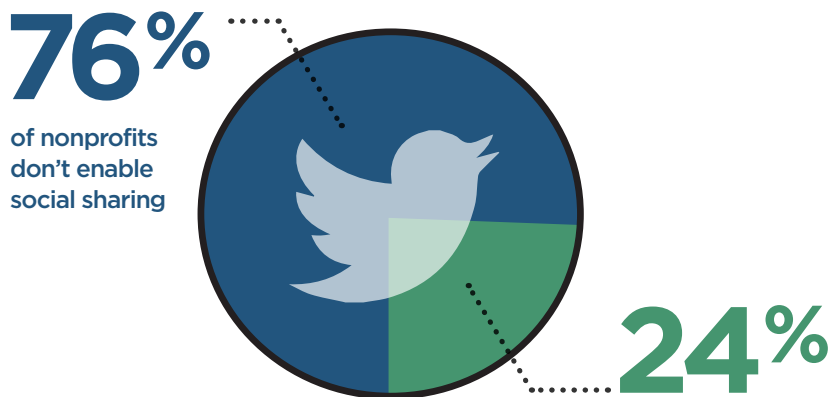
Why Should You Care?

"Thank you!" is one of the most powerful sentences you can utter. Just think back to the times when you've done something for someone and they responded with heartfelt gratitude. It makes a difference! This carries the same import across hundreds and potentially thousands of people.



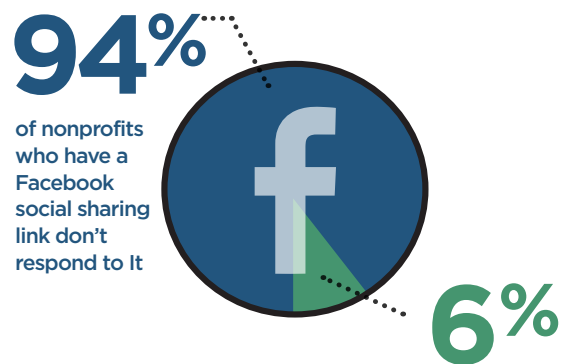
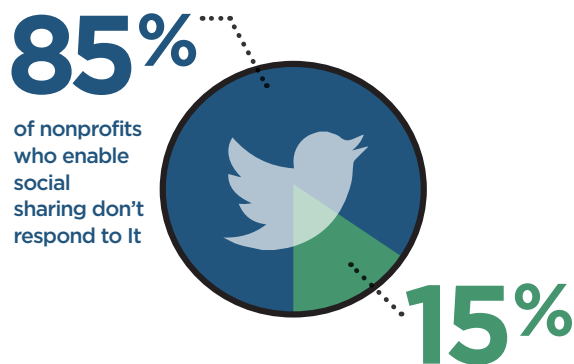
Social Sharing

Encouraging those who engage with you to share their experiences and interactions with their own social networks is one of the no-brainer benefits that nonprofits can derive from the social ecosystem. Unfortunately, our study again suggests a gap between what's happening and what should be happening, with only a small percentage of organizations enabling and encouraging social sharing about them.



Social Sharing and Actual Response

While some organizations have linking and sharing set up for their social media channels, even those who include such options don't necessarily utilize them to respond to constituents.



Why Should You Care?

This is the perfect channel for reinforcing what followers and donors think and feel about your organization, and such a simple method of remaining in the conversation should not be wasted.



Conclusion

Social media has been around long enough that most nonprofits have figured out how to leverage it at least a little bit. But there remain obvious strategic and tactical gaps wherein relationships with their supporters may be strengthened, and larger followings may be amassed. All with some basic blocking and tackling.

While most organizations are on social media and do a good job of posting regularly, very few use these channels to genuinely connect with and engage their constituents. Social media channels are used as one more way to advertise events or ask for donations, but there is plenty of room for improvement when it comes to treating these platforms as a way to connect donors to the organization and engage them in conversation.

This is going to become increasingly important as younger donors mature, since they have grown up with this socially connected technology and expect organizations to be using these platforms correctly.

It's time to rethink why content is created and what the follow-up plan should be on social media channels. The nonprofit sector has plenty of room for improvement in the areas of genuine engagement and response across these platforms.

For 15 practical tips on social media engagement, download our [Best Practices Guide](#).

There is plenty of room for improvement when it comes to treating social media platforms as a way to connect donors to the organization and engage them in conversation.



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Methodology

1. Using a variety of personal Facebook and Twitter accounts, we contacted each organization through those two social media channels to ask a question about the organization. We then tracked how quickly the organization answered each response on a particular channel.
 - a. Responses were graded by time.

• Immediate - 4 hours	A
• 4-8 Hours	B+
• 8-18 Hours	B
• 18-24 Hours	C+
• 24-48 Hours	C
• 48-72 Hours	D+
• 3-5 Days	D
• +5 days (or no response)	F
2. After we received an answer to our initial question, we made an online donation of \$10 to that organization and tracked what happened next.
 - a. Did the website give us an option to share the fact that we donated to that organization with our social media connections? If so, on what channels?
 - b. If given the option, we used the links to share about the donation.
 - c. If no "Share" option was given, we still tweeted and posted to the Facebook page about the donation to our social channels, tagging the organization.
3. Did the organization respond to tweets or posts about donations to thank donors for their support? How long did it take to receive these responses? Responses were graded by time.
 - a. Time to respond

• Immediate - 4 hours	A
• 4-8 Hours	B+
• 8-18 Hours	B
• 18-24 Hours	C+
• 24-48 Hours	C
• 48-72 Hours	D+
• 3-5 Days	D
• +5 days (or no response)	F
4. Once all of the data was captured, we analyzed the results to find trends in time and response, and inform recommended best practices.

About Marketing Support Network



For over 30 years, Marketing Support Network has partnered with nonprofits to expand their reach. Our mission is to support your organization by designing and implementing contact center and communication solutions through phone, live chat, email, and social media. We know that you have a specific mission and a unique voice. Our approach offers the perfect balance of both response and marketing services to ensure your voice is represented clearly and seamlessly across all communication channels.

Every contact is an opportunity to engage and inspire listeners, viewers, and donors to see more lives changed. That's why we listen and reach out 24/7/365, meeting people where they are when they need your organization most. Your message, your mission, going further with our support. Our mission is your mission! Learn more at www.marketingsupportnetwork.com.





About Dunham+Company

For most faith-based and nonprofit organizations, there's a gap between where they are and where they want to be. At Dunham+Company, we call this "the impact gap," and it is our job to help close that gap. From offices in the United States and Australia, we use our fundraising expertise to help organizations all over the world develop and sustain support to achieve their vision.

Dunham+Company is uniquely suited to increase the impact of nonprofit organizations from the highest levels of strategic planning to the most meticulous analysis of data. Working with Dunham+Company, nonprofits have greater impact on their cause, whether it's more people fed, more viewers and listeners reached, more relationships restored, or more lives transformed. Find out more at www.dunhamandcompany.com.



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