

Measuring Your Marketing: A Plan for Being More Effective

By Howard Adam Levy, Principal, Red Rooster Group

If your organization is like most nonprofits, you are reaching out to donors in any way you can—through your website, email, events, year-end appeals, and perhaps even social media. But what's working? Think of all the staff time and money it takes to generate this activity. Knowing which tactics are effective and should be increased, and which are not, can help you allocate your resources to get the most bang for your buck. This article shows you how.

1 It's important to have goals so that you know what you are looking to achieve.

Every organization is different. For example, if you are relaunching a new web site, perhaps you'll want to set goals for online donations. If you are sending out email newsletters, then you might strive to improve your open and click through rates with every email.

In terms of social media, according to *Nonprofits and Social Media: It Ain't Optional* a survey conducted by Geri Stengel, President of Ventureneer, your goals should be related to the amount of time you anticipate spending on social media activities. Nonprofits who merely dabble in social media are looking to boost their nonprofit's visibility, drive traffic to their websites, and build community. Nonprofits that spend a lot of time also use social media for raising money, advocacy, and cause marketing.

2 You can't measure everything. It's not possible or realistic. The key is to pick a few metrics that will help you gain some insight into what's working for your organization. Consider your goals — generating awareness, building community, increasing website traffic, advocating for an issue, raising money?

Review the marketing metrics list and select the items you need monitor to measure the success for your goals. Focus on what can be counted in a practical and affordable manner, but consider what you might want to measure in the future, so that you can add those metrics as you get more sophisticated about your marketing. This list will constitute your own marketing dashboard to keep you on track.

3 Review your dashboard regularly so that you can understand what's working.

For example, if you are monitoring your website traffic weekly, you'll be able to see spikes that that may be caused by your other marketing activity. How often should you review your dashboard? That depends on what type of marketing you are doing, but the more frequently the better. Social media efforts will give you constant feedback. If you are sending out email newsletters, then review the open and click through rates 72 hours after. Review your web traffic at least monthly, and take time to review your overall marketing efforts quarterly.

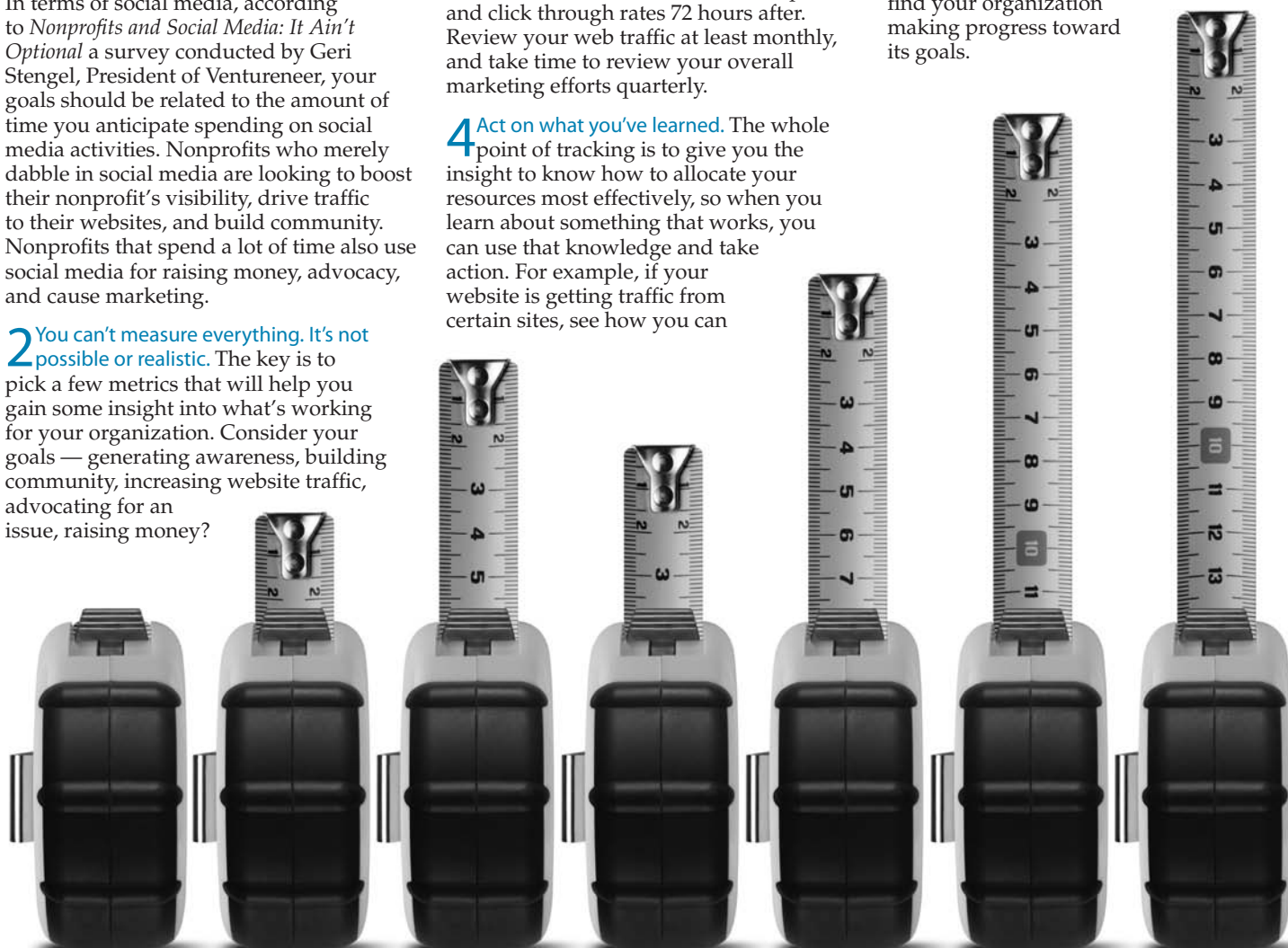
4 Act on what you've learned. The whole point of tracking is to give you the insight to know how to allocate your resources most effectively, so when you learn about something that works, you can use that knowledge and take action. For example, if your website is getting traffic from certain sites, see how you can

boost your visibility on those referring sites as well as duplicate the efforts on other sites. It's also helpful to compare results before and after specific initiatives such as launching a Facebook page, fundraising event or advocacy campaign to see what you can learn from them.

5 Use free monitoring tools when possible.

If you don't already get web traffic reports, you can use Google Analytics reports for free by simply opening an account and adding code to your website. You can also learn a lot by setting up free Google Alerts to inform you about any mention of your organization, your competition and your keywords.

Marketing isn't magic, it's work, but you can do it. If you set up your marketing dashboard, monitor your results regularly, and make the necessary adjustments in your marketing, and you'll find your organization making progress toward its goals.



Marketing Metrics to Measure

Select items from this list to create your own marketing dashboard to measure what's important to your organization.

WEBSITE

- Number of unique visitors
- Source of traffic (which search engines, partners and affiliates) and traffic on specific landing pages to track marketing campaigns
- Website sources (which sites are sending traffic to your site)
- Number of page views
- Average time on site
- Bounce rates (visitors to a site who "bounce" away to a different site, rather than going to pages on the same site)
- Number of people who signed up for your newsletter
- Amount raised through online donations
- Number of link-backs from other sites
- Number of signatures collected on a survey

- Number of volunteers recruited
- Number of in kind contributions
- Amount of corporate support generated
- Amount of fee revenue generated
- Amount of fundraising merchandise sold
- Number of comments or reviews. on blog posts

SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING

- Keyword search result ranking for different keywords on different search engines
- Adwork rankings
- Click throughs on Adwords

EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

- Number of emails sent out monthly
- Number of people on email list
- Number of new subscribers
- Number of opt-outs per mailing
- Open rates
- Click-through rates
- What links are clicked on—including headlines, text and images
- Number of forwards to a friend

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Number of Friends, Followers, Fans
- Frequency and quality of comments and subscribers on your blog
- Frequency of your updates
- Number of Tweets/Retweets
- Number of YouTube subscribers
- Activity levels on your social media sites
- Amount of money raised through your social media sites
- Number of link-backs, retweets, etc.
- Overall quality of your conversations

PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Amount and type of coverage in different media (broadcast, newspapers, special interest publications, websites, blogs, etc.)
- Press Release Syndications
- Number of editors on your PR list
- Number of bloggers you engage with regularly

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

- Number of attendees
- Number of new attendees

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- Amount of donations at different giving levels
- Sponsorship activity
- Media coverage
- General buzz and social media activity

WHAT ARE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS MEASURING?

According to *Nonprofits and Social Media: It Ain't Optional*, a survey conducted by Ventureneer and Caliber (www.ventureneer.com/NPSoMe):

- 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.
- Nonprofit 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).

Howard Adam Levy is principal of Red Rooster Group, a branding agency that creates effective brands and marketing campaigns. www.RedRoosterGroup.com | 212-673-9353.

Do you want to learn more strategies for effective communications? You might be interested in this upcoming workshop:

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