

The Role of Social Media in Fundraising: A Strategic Approach for Non-Profit Organisations

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Introduction

Over the past decade, social media has revolutionised various social domains, assuming a prominent role in the fundraising and crowdfunding efforts of non-profit organisations. It has significantly broadened the possibilities of reaching diverse global audiences and, consequently, increased the amount of funds raised (Sinha et al., 2025; Hesse & Boenigk, 2024; Cai & Polzin, 2025). In this regard, digital communication tools such as the internet and digital platforms have become essential instruments for communication and emotional engagement (Ng, 2024; Bak et al., 2024; Bhati & McDonnell, 2020). This environment enables organisations to maintain almost continuous contact with their key audiences at reduced costs, thus optimising their fundraising strategies (Cho et al., 2024; Bargoni et al., 2023). Within this framework, social media is not only seen as a communication medium but also as a mechanism for building communities, fostering interaction, and mobilising donors (Liu et al., 2021; Zhou & Ye, 2019). From this perspective, social media can be effective when it is integrated into strategic planning and accompanied by a deep understanding of the factors that influence follower engagement (Yang & Lee, 2019; Hong et al., 2018). Campaigns based on emotional content and ongoing interaction have demonstrated their ability to generate greater donor engagement and loyalty (Rashid et al., 2021; Battisti et al., 2021). Considering recent developments in research related to social media implementation, its use in educational settings has become increasingly noteworthy (Montilla & Valencia, 2021; Valencia et al., 2020), particularly regarding its application as a didactic strategy to strengthen competencies (Valencia & Guzmán, 2020) and the challenges associated with its implementation (Valencia, 2020). Similarly, its use as a marketing and advertising strategy has been explored in the cultural (Grillo et al., 2023) and governmental (Guzmán et al., 2020) sectors.

Concerning the use of social media in fundraising contexts within non-profit organisations, there is an increasing interest in implementing digital communication strategies to support such entities. This includes best practices (Sinha et al., 2025), the use of influencers (Cho et al., 2024), and their connection with social marketing (Ng, 2024; Stötzer & Kaltenbrunner, 2024). However, there are relatively few studies that focus on identifying the specific characteristics of social media that enhance fundraising effectiveness in these institutions.

Given this scenario, the present study seeks to analyse the role of social media in fundraising strategies, identify key success factors, and explore best practices implemented through a scoping review. To this end, the following guiding research questions were proposed:

RQ2: What key features of social media facilitate the achievement of fundraising goals in non-profit organisations?

RQ3: What are the best practices for managing social media as part of a strategic communication plan for fundraising in non-profit organisations?

To answer these questions, the study is structured into four sections. The first provides the theoretical framework and contextualisation of social media and fundraising in non-profit entities. The second outlines the methodology used to achieve the study's objectives. The third presents the main findings, and the fourth discusses the most significant results and the conclusions derived from the research.

Fundraising in Non-Profit Organisations

According to Hesse and Boenigk (2024), fundraising is a crucial activity for non-profit organisations and entities within the social sector, as it enables them to ensure the financial sustainability of their projects and programmes. Werke and Bogale (2024) indicate that fundraising encompasses a set of practices and strategies aimed at securing financial resources through various sources, including individual donations, grants, events, and targeted campaigns. These activities involve not only the procurement of funds but also the development of long-term relationships with donors, which is essential for continued support and the expansion of the organisation's mission. In this context, fundraising in non-profit organisations often focuses on understanding donor motivations and designing campaigns that are perceived as socially relevant and credible. Elvira-Lorilla et al. (2024) emphasise that the management of inter-organisational relationships and effective communication are crucial aspects for enhancing efficiency in resource acquisition. Likewise, elements such as transparency and clarity in presenting project objectives and outcomes strengthen donor trust and enhance their willingness to contribute financially.

Additionally, the fundraising process in these organisations includes the importance of collaboration and networking, which, according to Kusimba (2024), can facilitate the identification of potential donors and improve fundraising strategies. The use of digital tools and crowdfunding platforms has significantly transformed this landscape, allowing for greater social participation and access to a broader base of potential funders. Thus, authors such as Cárdenas et al. (2025) and Sinha et al. (2025) and Suh and Hijal-Moghrabi (2025) agree that persuasive communication, the appropriate presentation of projects, and the mobilisation of social networks are key elements for successful fundraising campaigns.

Social Media as a Tool for Fundraising

Social media plays a significant role in the fundraising process, particularly in the context of the social sector and non-profit organisations. This is mainly due to its ability to facilitate communication, broaden reach, and foster interaction among stakeholders. As noted by Wymer and Čačija (2023), social media enables the creation of virtual support communities that function as platforms for dissemination and mobilisation, allowing messages to reach a broad, diverse, and global audience. This extensive interconnection reduces geographical and temporal barriers, making it possible to secure resources in real time and to keep donors informed about project developments. Moreover, scholars such as Quevedo and Lee (2023) emphasise that social media is not only helpful in promoting campaigns but also for enhancing trust and organisational credibility through the consistent and transparent sharing of information regarding achievements and needs. Interaction on these platforms encourages active public engagement, which may be understood as a network effect. This implies that as

more individuals contribute and share, the likelihood of attracting additional donors increases, thus boosting crowdfunding and other collective fundraising efforts (Ogwu et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the effective use of social media requires a well-designed communication strategy that highlights social impact and establishes emotional connections with potential donors. In this respect, and as stated by Rashid et al. (2021) and Burtch et al. (2021), the appropriate delivery of messages, the frequency of updates, and the creation of accessible, credible, and transparent content are essential for mobilising and sustaining the support community (Ogwu et al., 2022; Burtch et al., 2021).

The PRISMA (2020) model was employed to conduct a systematic literature review. The search was carried out in the academic database Scopus using keywords such as "fundraising", "social media", and "nonprofit organisations". A total of 234 documents were initially identified, excluding conference papers, book chapters, and literary reviews. After filtering, 172 research articles remained. An initial screening of titles and abstracts was conducted to discard those that did not address fundraising and social media in non-profit contexts.

Based on this process, 40 articles that met the criteria of relevance and quality were selected. These articles were analysed in depth to identify common patterns and key factors influencing the success of social media-based fundraising strategies. Following this, a content analysis matrix was designed and developed. This matrix recorded data such as titles, authors, publication years, journal names, and analytical categories. The categories included key social media factors that facilitate fundraising goals and best practices in implementing social media as part of a strategic communication approach for fundraising.

Key Social Media Factors Facilitating Fundraising Goals in Non-Profit Organisations

The key social media factors that facilitate fundraising objectives are grounded in several dimensions that enhance the effectiveness of fundraising campaigns. Firstly, the capacity for information access and dissemination is fundamental, as it enables broader and faster communication of projects, eliminating geographical and social asymmetries, and reducing search and transaction costs. This, in turn, encourages greater donor participation (Sinha et al., 2025; Sihi, 2018; Anoraga, 2023; Chen et al., 2022). Similarly, the presence of an active virtual community, formed through proactive groups and followers, helps build a strong and cohesive network that fosters both financial and emotional resource mobilisation (Hesse & Boenigk, 2025; Hong et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2021; Bin-Nashwan & Al-Daihani, 2020). Furthermore, the importance of maintaining constant and transparent communication is emphasised, as regular updates on contributions can generate an imitation effect, encouraging further donations and strengthening project credibility (Suh & Hijal-Moghrabi, 2025; Ogwu et al., 2022; Battisti et al., 2021; Nageswarakurukkal et al., 2020).

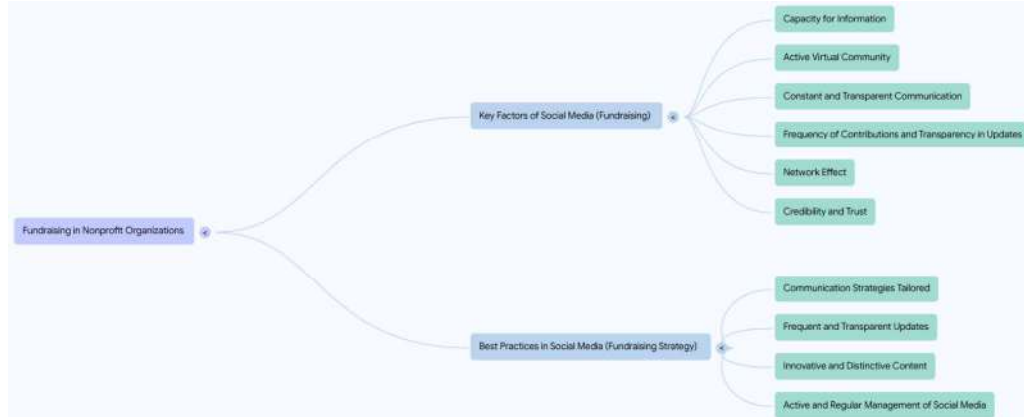
Likewise, the frequency of contributions and transparency in updates are considered critical variables for the success of crowdfunding campaigns, as they maintain donor interest and trust (Cai & Polzin, 2025; Cho et al., 2024; Wymer & Čačija, 2023; Li et al., 2022). Additionally, the network effect derived from the strategic use of social media amplifies message dissemination and extends project reach to broader and more diverse audiences. From this perspective, interconnection, interaction, and user collaboration facilitate a dynamic exchange of data, opinions, and support, increasing the likelihood of achieving financial goals (Bak et al., 2024;

Hung et al., 2019; Bhati & McDonnell, 2020). Lastly, credibility and trust are reinforced by the organisation's presence across various communication platforms—such as social networks, blogs, and instant messaging channels—where storytelling, periodic updates, and public recognition of contributions enhance the perceived reliability of the project, positively influencing donation decisions (Ng, 2024; Quevedo & Lee, 2023; Iniesta et al., 2022; Kim & Reeck, 2019) (see Figure 1).

Best Practices in the Implementation of Social Media as Part of a Strategic Communication Approach for Fundraising in Non-Profit Organisations

When addressing best practices in the implementation of social media within the context of fundraising, one key element is the development of communication strategies tailored to different audiences and channels, using a multi-stakeholder approach that enables message segmentation according to the specific needs and interests of each group. This ensures that communication is more effective and persuasive (Shi et al., 2025; Dehdashti et al., 2022; Bernardino et al., 2021; Zhou & Ye, 2019). Another essential practice is maintaining a frequent and transparent updating of project developments and contributions. The frequency of updates has a direct impact on the success of the campaign, as it encourages new contributions and builds trust by sharing progress and results (Stötzer & Kaltenbrunner, 2024; Shaker & Nelson, 2022; Rashid et al., 2021; Yang & Lee, 2019). In addition, creating innovative and distinctive content—such as audiovisuals, articles, and news updates—is considered a best practice that helps capture attention and sustain interest. The use of diverse formats and both internal and external communication channels enhances the reach of the message and strengthens the digital presence of the project, facilitating emotional engagement with followers and potential contributors (Werke & Bogale, 2024; Bargoni et al., 2023; Ferrari et al., 2022; Burtch et al., 2021). A final practice worth highlighting is the active and regular management of social media through coordinated and planned campaigns, allowing for public interaction and engagement. This creates a network effect that boosts the dissemination and support of the project (Elvira-Lorilla et al., 2024; Morvinski et al., 2022). Interaction with followers, providing timely responses to their questions and comments, and promoting participatory campaigns are practices that strengthen ties with the community and consolidate digital communication as an integral component of the fundraising strategy (Kusimba, 2024; Levenshus et al., 2019) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Key factors of social media that facilitate fundraising purposes and best practices for implementing social media as part of fundraising in nonprofit organisations.



Conclusions

In conclusion, the strategic use of social media is identified as a fundamental factor for the success of fundraising campaigns in non-profit organisations, as it allows for the expansion of reach and the enhancement of the effectiveness of communication efforts. It is recognised that an appropriate communication strategy—which incorporates segmentation, a focus on social impact, and the use of multiple channels, both traditional and digital—enables the attraction and retention of potential donors (Bernardino et al., 2021). Likewise, elements such as transparency and the constant updating of information reinforce public trust and promote stronger engagement with social initiatives. Similarly, the frequency, credibility, and transparency of communication foster trust and consolidate relationships with followers, facilitating the development of an active and engaged community (Stötzer & Kaltenbrunner, 2024).

In addition, the creation of innovative content and the effective use of diverse formats are highlighted as best practices that help capture attention and increase project visibility. Finally, as future lines of research, it is suggested that applied studies analyse the relationship between digital communication strategies and their impact on fundraising performance in non-profit organisations within the social sector. It is also recommended to explore the role of emerging technologies and digital platforms in the innovation of social fundraising campaigns.

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