



# Charity Views

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# Welcome to the

# DIGITAL ERA

# of giving

*It's something we hear all the time—the rise of technology and pervasive use of digital platforms is changing the way we do business. If you don't adapt, you'll be left behind. For business owners and decision makers it's as thrilling as it is nerve-wracking.*

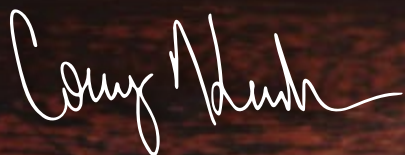
*Often forgotten, but no less important, is the effect of these changes on the charitable sector. Just like the world of business, if charities fail to adapt to the rapidly-evolving landscape they operate in, they too will suffer the consequences.*

*In this installment of Charity Views, we take a closer look at technology, specifically through the lens of the digital medium. We review how it has changed the industry's best practices thus far, and how it might continue to do so in the future.*

*Yes, the necessity for change is daunting; however, the potential of this modern era of giving is remarkable. Ultimately, what we're looking at is the opportunity to connect with donors and help others—better and more frequently than ever before.*

*Thank you for your readership and support,*

**COREY KUSABA**  
EXECUTIVE SALES DIRECTOR





# The RIGHT WAY to DIGITAL

The landscape of giving has changed immensely in recent years and not just because of the rising influence of technology. Previously an industry dominated by a handful of big-name organizations, donations are more and more frequently going to smaller, cause-specific charities. This doesn't mean that for larger non-profits decline is an inevitability nor does it mean for the niche charities that growth is a guarantee. What it means in both cases is that we must look at the "why" in order to use rising digital platforms to our advantage.





# TELL IT *like it Is*

- The rise of the smaller charitable organization is largely due to one, rather simple factor: transparency. It's the same reason companies like Southwest are doing so well. People want to know where their money is going. The good news is that charities, big and small, can use technology to establish trust by connecting with donors, even giving them real-time updates on how their donation is being put to good use.

Charity: water, a New York organization, partnered with Samsung to create a VR experience that virtually took potential donors to the Ethiopian town they'd be helping. It was an innovation that showed people exactly where their money would be going, and it helped the charity raise \$2.4 million in one night.



*VR helped the charity raise*

# \$2.4 MILLION

*in one night*

# Limit THE BARRIER



► Here's a shocking fact. According to a recent report by Charity Digital Skills, 50% of charities still don't have a digital strategy. Equally as surprising, the majority of fundraising efforts and giving-related dialogue continues to be done offline.

Most charities, driven by the notion that theirs is a "traditional industry," maintain a reliance on tried and tested methods to drive engagement. Physical interactions such as sponsorship events, marathons and direct contact remain the focal point of their gift-giving efforts.

Not only is direct digital payment a norm in today's society—it's a safe way to make transactions. Services such as Venmo, PayPal and Zelle have changed the concept of currency. Herein lies a huge opportunity for charities. Utilizing these services minimalizes a major barrier of donation, streamlines the process exponentially and gives donors the ability to conveniently make a difference right away.



# 50%

***of charities still don't  
have a digital strategy***



# THINK BIGGER



## than email



When organizations think digital, more often than not, their first inclination is to consider an email. With how nuanced targeting capabilities have become, it's a valid ally. However, email marketing is only scratching the surface of a deep and excitingly unexplored tech frontier in the world of giving.

From using video gaming for fundraising to building a smart nightlight that helps the sick heal, companies aren't simply utilizing technology to raise awareness, they are inspiring action and effecting change. In short, the potential outreach and impact of a charity with a compelling cause and creative way to deliver its message is enormous.



# UNEXPECTED CONNECTIONS

- ▶ We live in an era of constant noise. Everyone has something to say and, thanks to the rise of digital platforms, a way to say it. For charities, this results in a need to connect with potential donors in unexpected places.

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital saw opportunity, and took advantage. They partnered with Twitch, a video-game streaming service, to develop a gaming-based platform that made charitable giving fun. Their "Play Live" initiative enabled gamers to raise awareness and provide fellow Twitch-users a direct path to donate simply by playing video games through the Twitch network.

Rather than compete with other charities through traditional channels, they used technology to communicate their cause in an unconventional space. As a result, they were able to connect with, and inspire, a younger, previously unreachable demographic.





# FURTHER THE Cause

- ▶ The Ronald McDonald House Charities took a step beyond fundraising by using digital technology to create an interactive nightlight for patients and their families. When a child touched their nightlight at the hospital, its counterpart would change colors at their parents' home, and vice versa. The sense of contact it created helped these children heal faster and more comfortably. It is an inspiring example of the way charities themselves can use digital technology to better the lives of those they're fighting for.



# TIPS & TRICKS

Needless to say, the future for the charity sector is as bright as ever and there are quite literally no limitations on how you can use digital to further your cause. Here are some tips and tricks to keep in mind as your organization continues to evolve.

## How to Catch a Millennial

Not only is their purchasing power at an all-time high, millennials are an incredibly cause-driven demographic. *A survey conducted by Bustle Digital Group* found that 81% of millennials say that social media is the most effective way to reach them, with 40% noting that Instagram is their platform of choice.

## Use the Data (Respectfully)

Data is an organization's most valuable, most abundant and often most under-utilized resource. People are willingly sharing information about their preferences, tendencies and interests, yet they are also incredibly sensitive to companies invading their privacy. This is an asset that can be pivotal to strengthening connections, but must be used carefully.

## Make the Investment

According to the Charity Skills Report, 50% of charities note that organizational challenges are given more attention than digital efforts. Commit to the future of your company. The investment of both time and money in digital is not only worth it, it's a necessity for your organization's continued growth.

# 81%



*of millennials say that social media is the most effective way to reach them*



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