

Don't Let Rush to Social Media Become a Distraction!

By: Hardy Smith

There is certainly a lot of buzz among nonprofits about using social media tools for promoting events and for connecting with volunteers and donors. In fact, there is so much of it I'm almost feeling overwhelmed by the attention being devoted to this subject.

Now, I'm not a dinosaur who doesn't want to adapt to new ways. I do get it and I do understand that social media use is not just a fad. It is now an established method of communication that any organization wanting continued success must utilize. In addition, the number of individuals signing up to use some form of social media is staggering.

These new sources of information now rival—and may soon outstrip—the telephone, newspapers, television, direct mail, newsletters, email, and about every other traditional form of outreach that organizations have used in the past. However, what about those who have not yet adapted to them?

Professional speaker friend Monica Wofford often talks about staying on task and not being distracted by “shiny objects”. While working to implement your social media strategies, don't let them be shiny objects that draw you away from your other communication activities.

Social media tools should be used to strengthen your current forms of communication. Utilizing social media should not be thought of as an either/or choice. Before beginning your use of social media, ensure your organization is communicating effectively by taking these steps:

- Identify your audiences.
- Decide what forms of communication are the most effective for the demographic groups you are trying to reach.
- If you are unsure, ask them how they prefer to be communicated with.

People have preferred communication comfort zones. Don't lose those you've have worked to build relationships with by focusing so much on new communication techniques that you stop doing what has so far kept you connected with your existing base of supporters.

(As a nonprofit consultant and speaker, Hardy Smith has a proven ability for helping organizations achieve high performance success. To learn more about Hardy or to sign up for his free Tips for Nonprofit Success newsletter, please visit www.hardysmith.com)