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AN EVALUATION MEASURING THE PATTERNS AND EFFECTS OF  
NONPROFIT MESSAGING THROUGH FACEBOOK

JENNIFER BROOKE BALLARD

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Review and approved\* by the following:

Susan Fredricks  
Associate Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences  
Thesis Supervisor and Honors Adviser (Communications)

Laura Guertin  
Associate Professor of Earth Science  
Thesis Reader and Honors Adviser (Civic & Community Engagement)

\*Signatures are on file in the Jane E. Cooper Honors Program Office

## ABSTRACT

Social media has opened new avenues for people to become connected and to explore the realms of relationship building outside of traditional venues. That ability, when coupled with the capacity to reach a global audience, has allowed social-media tactics to become a valuable tool that for-profit and nonprofit businesses alike can utilize to build, maintain, and solicit new relationships. In this study, the patterns and effects of nonprofit messaging were measured through Facebook – a social-media forum. By measuring specific messages sent by nonprofits, the research attempts to evaluate three areas: the types of messages being sent by nonprofits, the types of responses received from supporters relating to those messages, and which messages produce quantitative and qualitative data that support the building of more meaningful relationships.

In a three-part process the researcher assessed the messaging of three organizations: Special Olympics (International focus), Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (National focus) and Philabundance (Local focus). First, the outgoing nonprofit messages were coded into eight categories: News; Events: Past Events, Present Events, or Future Events; Fundraising or Soliciting Volunteers; Issues; Soliciting Stories or Narratives; or Miscellaneous. Second, the supporter responses were coded into six responses: Accolades, Praise, and Thanks; References; Outreach or Support; Story or Narrative; General Response or Statement; or Miscellaneous. Finally, the supporter responses were compared to the Social Penetration Theory, which states there are four levels of disclosure; clichés, facts, opinions and feelings – with feelings being the deepest or most open a person could be with another person. Comparing the responses on Facebook to the Social Penetration Theory allows a closer look into what kind of

relationships certain types of messaging solicit (Adler, Procter II, & Towne, 2005).

The research shows mostly lower-level relationships are being formed through Philabundance. However, Special Olympics and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation have initiated several deeper-level feelings by soliciting specific responses from its supporters. The research also shows that with certain content messaging, there is a return on investment for nonprofits when using Facebook as a platform for relationship building. This pattern may lead to a model or template of “best practices” for nonprofits to consider when implementing social-media tactics to message, maintain and build relationships with supporters through Facebook.

**Keywords:** Nonprofit, Social Media, Facebook, Social Penetration Theory, Special Olympics, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Philabundance

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES.....	v
Chapter 1 Introduction: Social Media Synergy.....	1
Research Objectives.....	1
Chapter 2 Review of Literature.....	2
Social Media.....	2
Facebook.....	2
Special Olympics.....	3
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.....	4
Philabundance.....	4
Social Penetration Theory.....	5
Chapter 3 Methodology.....	6
Foundation Messaging Defined.....	7
Responses Messaging Defined.....	10
Content Messaging.....	11
Chapter 4 Results.....	14
Chapter 5 Discussion.....	17
What kinds of messages receive the most supporter responses?.....	17
What kinds of messages receive the deepest level of disclosures (Feelings) according to the SPT?.....	18
What are the current impacts and implications of using Facebook as a means to build meaningful relationships? And is there a ROI?.....	20
Limitations to Research Findings.....	21
Ideas for Future Research.....	21
Chapter 6 Conclusion.....	22
References.....	23
Appendix A: Philabundance Facebook Weekly Data.....	24
Appendix A-1: Philabundance Coding Week 1.....	24
Appendix A-2: Philabundance Coding Week 1.....	25
Appendix B: Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Facebook Weekly Data.....	26
Appendix B-1.....	26
Appendix B-2.....	27

Appendix C: Special Olympics Facebook Weekly Data.....28  
    Appendix C-1.....28  
    Appendix C-2.....29  
    Appendix C-3.....30  
    Appendix C-4.....31

ACADEMIC VITAE

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 5-1: Depth of Disclosure Comparison per Two-week Sampling.....19

## Chapter 1

### Introduction: Social Media Synergy

Social media. It is the hot topic among businesses and trending to be the hot button for most marketing departments. The ratings firm, Neilson, has published reports saying two-thirds of the Internet population visits social-media sites (“Social networking’s new,” 2009). And the behemoth, Facebook, boasts that if it were a country, it would be the third largest country in the world, with over 400-million users. For-profit and nonprofit organizations alike are clamoring to harness the synergy that social media possesses (Dsouza, 2009).

However, as with all newly devised tactics to solicit new business, there is a large learning curve. Many companies are struggling to quantify a return on investment (ROI) when using social media as a forum to solicit new business, whether it is in market share or in volunteer retention.

#### Research Objectives

The researcher conducted a case study of each of the nonprofits and their content messaging on Facebook for two weeks, as well as an extensive literature and Internet review of social media. Three research objectives were identified. First, the researcher felt it was important to understand what kinds of messages received the most supporter responses. Second, the researcher felt it was valuable to know what kinds of messages received the deepest level of disclosures (Feelings) according to the SPT. Finally, by comparing the information above with each of the nonprofits studied, the researcher felt the current impacts and implications of using Facebook as a means to build meaningful relationships could be shown, thus creating a possible ROI for nonprofits.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of Literature**

A review of literature was conducted focusing on several areas. The review allowed the researcher to provide background information on the key concepts studied in this report: Social Media, Facebook, Special Olympics, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Philabundance and the Social Penetration Theory. The researcher also closely analyzed information on content messaging and what types of messages typically receive the most supporter responses.

#### **Social Media**

In broad terms, social media encompasses online communities dedicated to allowing communication, photo sharing, and video sharing through web-based and Internet technologies. More specifically, social media has changed the way society communicates. It has not only revolutionized the way we connect and build relationships with one another, it has drastically altered the way companies do business. The early social-media communities were built on the premise that the members, not advertisers, would make the content (Evans, 2008). And it is this idea that has led to the social media revolution, where the consumer now decides who you are and what your brand means.

#### **Facebook**

Created in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and co-founders Dustin Moskovitz, Chris Hughes and Eduardo Saverin, Facebook was originally meant to be a networking site among college students. In 2006, Facebook started to allow use by the general public.



“Though Facebook was initially built just for college kids, the platform offers many components for strategic professional networking and generating extreme visibility for your company and community around your brand” (Meyerson, 2010). Facebook works by allowing its users to create an online profile with pictures, videos and information about themselves and then allows for connecting with other online users to build a large networking group. Its users vary from personal users, to small online groups, and include companies and nonprofits as well. With its hundreds of millions of active users and new users joining every day, Facebook is the second most trafficked website in the world, second only to Google (Meyerson, 2010). Many analysts caution companies against ignoring Facebook as a platform for marketing their brand – especially including nonprofit groups since Facebook and most other social media sites are free to use.

### **Special Olympics (International Nonprofit)**

In 1962, Eunice Kennedy Shriver started a summer camp for children and adults with intellectual disabilities in her backyard, and six years later the first International Special Olympics Summer Games were held in Chicago (<http://www.specialolympics.org>). According to the Special Olympics Facebook page, “The Special Olympics is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering individuals with intellectual disabilities to become physically fit, productive and respected members of society through sports training and competition.”

### **Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (National Nonprofit)**

In 1955, a group of parents who had children with cystic fibrosis (CF), a rare genetic disease, decided to create the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (CFF) in the hopes of improving the quality of their children's lives – as well as others living with the disease. The mission of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, a nonprofit donor-supported organization, is to assure the development of the means to cure and control cystic fibrosis and to improve the quality of life for those with the disease (<http://www.cff.org>).

Cystic fibrosis is an inherited chronic disease that affects the lungs and digestive system of about 30,000 children and adults in the United States (70,000 worldwide). A defective gene and its protein product cause the body to produce unusually thick, sticky mucus that clogs the lungs and leads to life-threatening lung infections; and obstructs the pancreas and stops natural enzymes from helping the body break down and absorb food (<http://www.cff.org>).

### **Philabundance (Local Nonprofit)**

Philabundance, located in Philadelphia, was created in 1984 to help combat the near million people in Delaware Valley who need better access to food.

Philabundance provides food to approximately 65,000 people per week through our direct services and network of 500 member agencies including emergency food kitchens, food cupboards, senior centers, and more. We serve low-income residents at risk of hunger and malnutrition, of which 23% are children and 16% are senior citizens. These services are accessed by vulnerable populations such as those with disabilities or suffering from mental illness, as well as families slipping through the hunger safety net (<http://www.philabundance.org>).

## **Social Penetration Theory**

Social psychologists Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor created the Social Penetration Theory (SPT) as a way to describe how relationships are formed through different degrees of self-disclosure. Self-disclosure is the process of deliberately revealing information about oneself that is significant and would not normally be known by others (Adler, Procter II, & Towne, 2005). According to the theory, there are four types of information that we share. The first type is Clichés, which are regular, every day responses we provide in social settings. They can be used to acknowledge someone's presence, are usually considered causal, and do not qualify as self-disclosure. The second type of information we share is Facts. Facts may or may not be qualified as disclosure, as they must fit the criteria of being intentional, significant, and not otherwise known. Disclosing important information suggests a level of trust and commitment to the other person that signals a desire to move the relationship to a new level (Adler, Procter II, & Towne, 2005). Even more revealing than Facts, is the third type of information we share, or Opinions. Opinions expose more information about oneself than facts do. The fourth and final type of information we self-disclose is Feelings. This is the deepest level of disclosure as the speaker or communicator is revealing more about how they feel – which in turn creates a clearer picture of how your relationship might develop (Adler, Procter II, & Towne, 2005).

Now that the literature has been reviewed, one can look at the methodology in which this study was conducted.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

Explanatory research methodology was used in evaluating content messaging through Facebook. Explanatory research highlights underlying causes and explanations of events, as well as helps make sense of events (Rubin, Rubin & Piele, 2005). Additionally, artifact research was conducted through a literature review. Qualitative and quantitative data was found by reviewing the statistics collected on each nonprofit over two weeks and was then used to lend support to, or discredit, findings regarding the research objectives.

By conducting preliminary research on the Facebook pages of each nonprofit, the researcher was able to contrive several types of messages each nonprofit posted to their page. From there, a coding scheme was created to label each message into one of eight specific categories: News; Events: Past Events, Present Events, or Future Events; Fundraising or Soliciting Volunteers; Issues; Soliciting Stories or Narratives; or Miscellaneous. It was also decided that a message could only be coded as one type of message (i.e.: news, not news and event).

Secondly, the researcher explored the responses to messages sent out by each nonprofit to create a coding scheme for supporter responses. The responses were labeled into six specific categories: Accolades, Praise, and Thanks; References; Outreach or Support; Story or Narrative; General Response or Statement; or Miscellaneous. The process for coding was refined as the first week of coding began, and the researcher was able to make additions to include all of the types of categories needed to successfully label each message from the nonprofit, as well as each message from the supporters.

Additional information was collected, such as the number of entries the nonprofits posted to Facebook each day, the number of responses the messages received in a day, the number of responses to posts (or “sub posts”) each day, the number of “likes” each post and sub post received, and how many friends or fans each nonprofit had on each day of the coding week.

The time period for coding was as follows: The first coding week was conducted November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010 to November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010, and the second coding week was conducted January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011 to January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011. The researcher allowed the entire week for comments to be posted to messages. This tactic enabled adequate time for supporters to respond to each message. However, some information required collection each day, such as the number of friends or fans each page had on a specific day. This particular information helped show the growth of the nonprofit over time.

### **Foundation Messaging Defined**

To understand each message, one must first be familiar with the meaning of each category messages were labeled as. For Foundation Messaging there were eight categories under which a message could be labeled: News; Events: Past Events, Present Events, or Future Events; Fundraising or Soliciting Volunteers; Issues; Soliciting Stories or Narratives; or Miscellaneous. They are defined below.

#### ***News***

News was defined as any type of Public Relations about the organization. News could not include information about an organization’s event since there was a separate category under this name. One example of a News post occurred on the Special Olympics

page on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011. It read: “Get live updates and pictures from the memorial service for R. Sargent Shriver on Twitter.” This was not categorized as an event since it was not promotional for the Special Olympics, but rather was news about the passing of Mr. Shriver.

### ***Events***

Events were defined as any event promoted by the organization. Additionally, the events were separated into three different categories: Past, Present and Future. This was to aid in discerning whether an organization was giving information about an event that already happened, if they were promoting a current event, or if they were promoting an event that was to take place at a later time. An example for an event occurred on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011 on the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation page. It read: “Thank you to everyone who voted for us in the Shane Co. “We Donate, You Win!” sweepstakes! Because of your support we were the charity with the largest percentage of votes – helping us win 71% of the Shane Co. donation!” This was also coded as a past event since the event had already taken place.

### ***Fundraising/Soliciting Volunteers***

Fundraising and Soliciting Volunteers was defined as any post in which the organization encouraged supporters to raise money, provide help of some sort, or specifically asked for supporters to help solicit more friends or fans of Facebook. An example of a Fundraising/Soliciting Volunteers post took place on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011 on the Philabundance page. It read: “Friends – its Fight Hunger Friday so don’t forget to do at least one thing in honor of the fight against hunger today! Need ideas? Visit our website.”

### ***Issues***

An Issue was defined as any post in which issues about the organization or their supporters was discussed. On November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010 an example of an Issue took place on the Cystic Fibrosis page. It read: “We’re pleased to share the first of 5 new segments in the Partnering for Care Webcast series, a special series designed to help you or your child with CF thrive. In this segment hear from CF dietitians to learn how to maintain a healthy CF weight and a healthy CF diet.” This was an issue more than an event since it centered around two CF issues, diet and keeping weight on CF patients.

### ***Soliciting Stories or Narratives***

It should be noted this section was added to the list of categories after noticing a special kind of messaging implemented several times while doing preliminary research on the Special Olympics page. Soliciting Stories or Narratives was defined as any post that asked thought-provoking questions or specifically asked for a story or narrative about a topic. On November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010 an example of a Soliciting Stories or Narratives post occurred on the Special Olympics page. It read: “Here’s a great challenge – if you had only three words to describe your Special Olympics experience, what three words would you use?” This tactic was employed by the Special Olympics on several occasions and was very successful in gaining supporter responses.

### ***Miscellaneous***

Miscellaneous posts were defined as any posts that did not fit any of the previous seven categories and did not warrant creating a new category. On January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011 an example of a miscellaneous post occurred on the Special Olympics page. It read: “‘I believe in faith, hope & love. I believe that they have the greatest power.’ – Sargent

Shriver, 1915 – 2011.” This was a quote by Sargent Shriver about the Special Olympians and was posted on the page after his passing.

Additionally, it is imperative to understand the coding of supporter responses. The responses were labeled into six responses: Accolades, Praise, and Thanks; References; Outreach or Support; Story or Narrative; General Response or Statement; or Miscellaneous.

### **Responses Messaging Defined**

#### ***Accolades/Praise/Thanks***

Accolades/Praise/Thanks were coded when supporters responded to a post with a general sense of appreciation. An example of this type of response was recorded on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010 on the Special Olympics page. It read: “Way to go.”

#### ***References***

References indicated any supporter response that encouraged the organization or their supporters to seek information elsewhere – away from the organization’s Facebook page. On November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010 the Special Olympics had this type of response when a supporter wrote: “Check out this post about why the R word is horrible.

[http://www.theredneckmommy.com/2010/03/05/why-you-shouldnt-use-the-r-word/.](http://www.theredneckmommy.com/2010/03/05/why-you-shouldnt-use-the-r-word/)”

#### ***Outreach/Support***

Supporters asking for help defined Outreach/Support messages. This was seen on the Special Olympics page on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010 when a supporter said this: “My town needs more sports,” and was referring to the Special Olympics asking what supporters favorite Special Olympics sport was.



### ***Story or Narrative***

When supporters engaged in telling a story about himself or herself or someone they know, it warranted a code of “Story or Narrative.” This type of response was seen on the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation’s Facebook page on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010. It read: “This brought tears to my eyes—I pray so much that is [this] trial is successful, so my 3-year-old daughter (with 2 copies of 508) and so many, many other will benefit from it!!!!”

### ***General Response/Statement***

A general response/statement was something that simply answered a question stated by the organization, but did not tell a story or have basis for any other codes. On January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011 a General Response/Statement was made on the Special Olympics page after wake announcements were made regarding Sargent Shriver. It read: “R.I.P!”

### ***Miscellaneous***

Miscellaneous responses did not fit into any of the above categories and did not seem to have valid or pertinent information to the subject at hand. An example of a Miscellaneous posts took place on the Special Olympics page on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011 when a response read: “Jennifer did you see this are [or] am I late as usually?”

### **Content Messaging**

In the realm of social media, any published message is competing with hundreds of thousands of other messages at any given time. As an organization, it is key to spend much of your creative attention on content. This tactic helps generate leads by way of “likes” and comments. It opens the line of communication and subsequently allows for relationship building through a social-media forum.

Social media is characterized largely if not completely by the content trail – ratings, reviews, comments and more – that it leaves on the Social Web, and by the voting processes and related assessments that clearly mark what the crowd thinks of this content (Evans, 2008).

By measuring the number of responses to each individual message given within a coding week, the researcher was able to discern which types of content solicited the most responses, and therefore would more than likely be considered a successful post by the organization.

The key, after all, is to converse with your customer – if you ever hope to attract them in the first place, not to mention keep them. And there’s nothing better than using your content as the starting point in being social – as a kind of cornerstone for building an environment where customers can have a conversation with your company as well as with each other (Meyerson, 2010).

In the case of the Special Olympics, this organization employed a clever style of attracting responses to messages. The label for content messaging named “Soliciting Stories or Narratives” was created especially for this organization as they purposefully asked supporters to tell how they felt about a situation, or to tell a story about their Special Olympics experience. This tactic was rarely, if ever, used by the other organizations in the case study – leading to a clear-cut comparison in supporters’ responses. The more responses or more time spent generally correlates with higher interest: in the social sense, higher interest typically follows from an experience that has been relatively more influential (Evans, 2008).

Additionally, the concept of content being key is helpful to all organizations looking to use a successful social-media strategy. Peter Freer, e-marketing specialist and principal of Toronto-based Messageworks says social media ROI is less about lead generation and more about supporting the brand and marketing efforts as a whole, with a

key component being customer engagement and retention (Hanes, 2011). With social media, customer engagement and retention all lies within content creation. Without clever, engaging or noteworthy content, one cannot expect to attract or keep supporters coming back to their site. Furthermore, on days when organizations do not produce any messages, organizations risk losing valuable time in which they could have connected with supporters.

Of course, there were limitations to the validity of this study when analyzing content messaging. The study encompassed a two-week period in time, which only provides a snapshot of each organizations' tactics on Facebook. Additionally, the researcher could have misconstrued a supporter response. It should also be noted that how supporters responded to an organizations message on Facebook might not be the way they would respond in real life.

## Chapter 4

### Results

Overall, it can be concluded from the results obtained in this study that the use of Facebook to reach out to, maintain, and recruit new supporters is a valid tactic for organizations to use. The specific outcomes reached by each particular organization in this study are highlighted below. Since Special Olympics yielded the most quantitative and qualitative results, we will first take a look at their results.

#### *Special Olympics*

In analyzing week one (see Appendix C-1), the days with the most response totals are November 2<sup>nd</sup> (92 responses), November 4<sup>th</sup> (84 responses) and November 5<sup>th</sup> (156 responses). Each of these days is categorized as “Soliciting Stories or Narratives.” In analyzing week two (see Appendix C-2), the breakdown of days is more difficult because there were several posts each day. This was due to Sargent Shriver’s passing. To clearly analyze the messages that received the most responses one has to view the daily breakdown of posts and responses to those posts.

On January 18<sup>th</sup> (see Appendix C-3), the three posts that received the most supporter responses were Post #1 (239), Post #3 (104) and Post #5 (97). Post #1 was categorized as “Miscellaneous,” and was letting supporters know that the Special Olympics Facebook page had surpassed 100,000 fans. Post #3 was categorized as “News,” and was a family statement about the passing of Shriver. Finally, Post #5 was listed as “Soliciting Stories or Narratives,” and was asking for tributes to Shriver from supporters.

In reviewing week one (see Appendix C-1), November 2<sup>nd</sup> documents 20 Feelings, however, there are two posts for this date. In looking at the data specific to this day (see Appendix C-4), Post #1 actually holds the most Feeling responses with 18 of the 20 for the day. Post #1 is labeled as “Soliciting Stories or Narratives.”

In reviewing week two for Depth of Disclosures – or Feelings – (see Appendix C-2), there are low numbers of Feeling labels. This can possibly be related to the information being sent out in week two, which was mostly having to do with the death of Shriver (or News).

### ***Cystic Fibrosis Foundation***

In examining week one (see Appendix B-1), the day with the most response totals is November 5<sup>th</sup> (52 responses). This post was coded as “News,” and was information about a drug that is doing well in clinical trials.

In examining week two (see Appendix B-2), the day with the most responses was January 19<sup>th</sup> (29 responses). This post was coded “Events – Past,” and was regarding a successful fundraising initiative the Foundation had with the Shane Company.

In analyzing week one (see Appendix B-1), only one day recorded Feelings. On November 5<sup>th</sup>, seven Feelings were recorded in response to a post coded, “News.” The post was about a drug in the CF Pipeline that was proving to be very successful in clinical trials. This may have induced feelings as patients and/or families of patients felt the need to disclose their feelings on this potential life-saving medicine.

In analyzing week two for Depth of Disclosures – or Feelings – (see Appendix B-2), there was only one Feeling recorded on January 19<sup>th</sup> in response to a post labeled

“Events – Past.” It was the same post mentioned in the analysis of Research Question 1, and encompassed information about a successful fundraising event.

### ***Philabundance***

In interpreting week one (see Appendix A-1), there were only a total of four responses recorded for the entire week, and in week two (see Appendix A-2), there was only one response recording for the week.

The only Depth of Disclosure received by Philabundance was on November 1<sup>st</sup> (see Appendix A-1); the posts labeled “News” received an Opinion. There were no Feelings recorded during the two-week coding process for this organization.

Upon review of the results, we can delve into the discussion of what these results mean in the scope of this case study.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion

The data in this study support current published literature on social media best practices, especially in underlining the importance of content and relationship management. In looking back at the three research objectives, a clear picture of success when using Facebook to build relationships can be seen.

#### **Review of research objective one: What kinds of messages receive the most supporter responses?**

In comparing the amount of messaging for each organization, the researcher found clear indications that Special Olympics used messaging to reach out to its supporters more frequently. Subsequently, this allowed for more responses from supporters, which in turn allowed for more quantitative data to be assessed with each coding section. The amount of responses received for Special Olympics in the two-week coding period totaled 592, while Cystic Fibrosis received only 91 total responses, and Philabundance only received five total responses. The researcher concluded that the high number of responses was due to two important factors. One factor was that Special Olympics messaged its supporters nearly every day. This supports earlier discussion that creative messaging warrants more supporter response. It's also interesting to note that all of the Special Olympics' messages were categorized as "Soliciting Stories or Narratives" for the entire first week of coding. The second factor involves the death of Sargent Shriver during the second coding week; resulting in several posts daily from Special Olympics with several hundred responses. The implications of this will be discussed more in the Limitations section.

It is worth noting the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation did not use “Soliciting Stories or Narratives” in any of their posts during the coding weeks, and had a total of 91 responses in those two weeks. Comparatively, Special Olympics had a total of eight “Soliciting Stories or Narratives” posts with a total of 592 supporter responses during the two-week period. This data shows a possible correlation between “Soliciting Stories or Narratives” and receiving supporter responses.

It was difficult to utilize any quantitative data and compare to the other two foundations when analyzing Philabundance. The reason for this was the small number of supporter responses received during the coding period. The low numbers can be attributed to a couple of factors: one being that Philabundance has the lowest number of followers, and the other being the Foundation did not post often.

Overall, one can conclude this: the more messages sent by the organization, the more responses it received. However, content messaging plays an important role in this conclusion as well since the more creative messages received more responses.

**Review of research objective two: What kinds of messages receive the deepest level of disclosures (Feelings) according to the SPT?**

In looking at Figure 5-1, a similar outcome is apparent for both Special Olympics and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Philabundance was the only organization in the study that did not receive any fourth-level Feelings when comparing supporter responses to the SPT. In fact, the organization was only able to solicit one deeper-level disclosure according to the SPT with the Opinion it received on November 1<sup>st</sup> (see Appendix A-1).



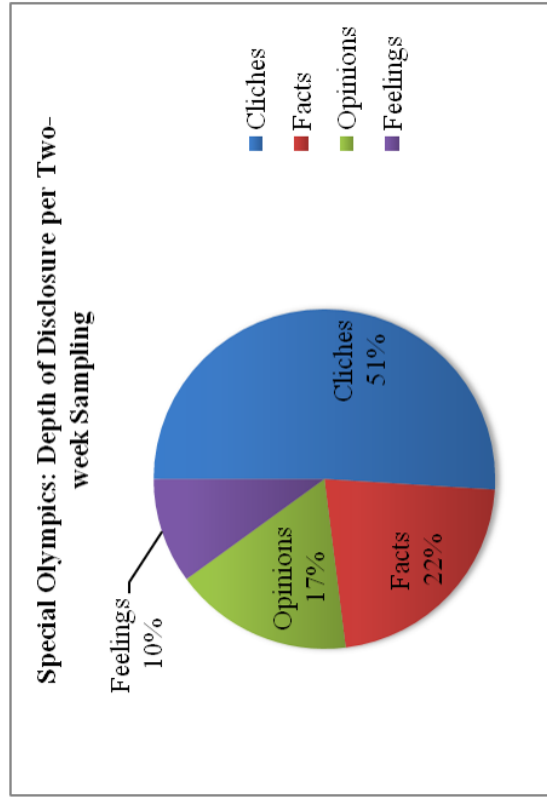
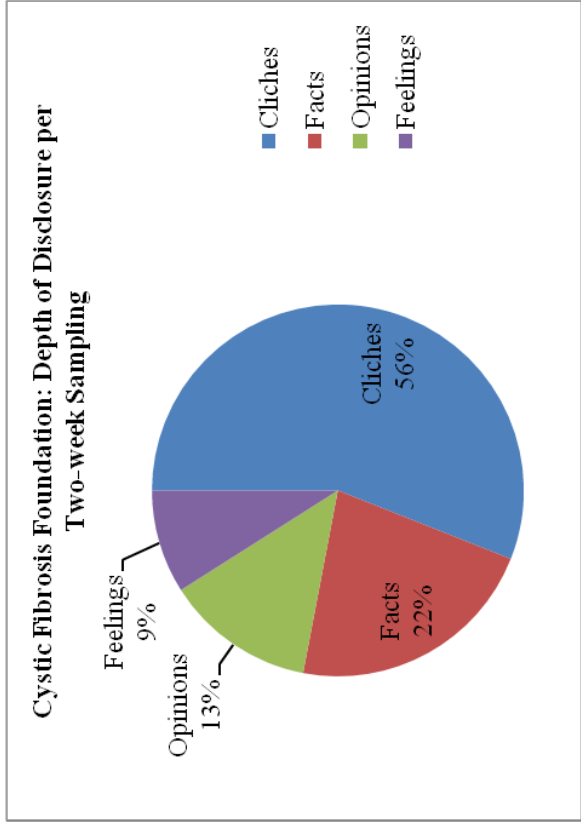
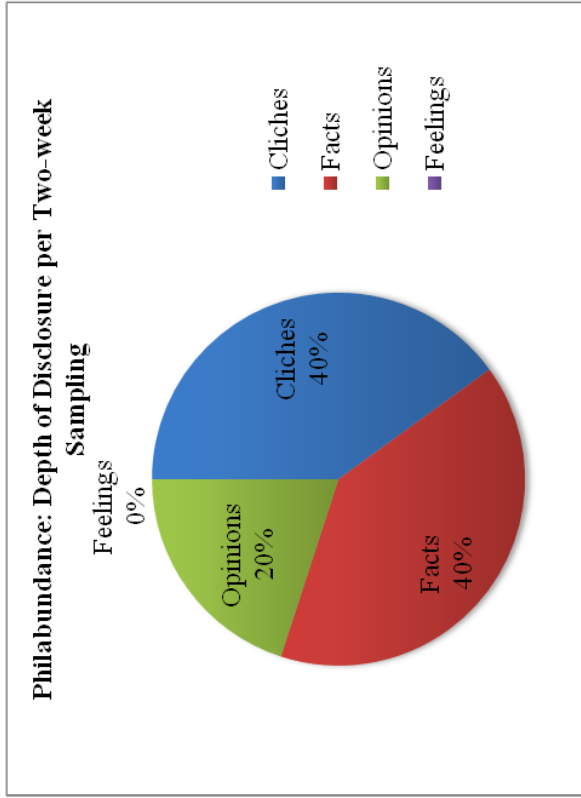


Figure 5-1: Comparison of each of the three organizations in this study focusing on the depth of disclosure per two-week sampling.

The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and Philabundance had several days where they did not publish posts. This information denotes that when there is nothing for supporters to respond to, the organization risks losing any type of disclosure, most importantly the fourth-level feelings disclosure, where most meaningful relationships are formed. In other words, relationships cannot be formed when supporters are not being solicited to respond or beckoned by creative content.

**Review of research objective three: What are the current impacts and implications of using Facebook as a means to build meaningful relationships? And is there a ROI?**

In comparing the Research Objectives, there are two conclusions that can be made. One, most of the responses received by the organizations through Facebook were lower-level disclosures according to the SPT. However, when using creative messaging, such as “Soliciting Stories or Narratives,” organizations may encourage supporters to engage in relationship building through the deeper-level disclosures of opinions and feelings. This would then denote an attainable ROI since the objective of the organizations is to network and expand their sphere of influence through relationship management.

Two, when the organizations are not posting messages of any kind, they are not receiving supporter responses, and therefore cannot receive disclosures on any level. The effect of this action causes the organization to miss out on opportunities to connect with supporters and expand its network. In regard to ROI, since there is no investment, there can be no return.

### **Limitations to Research Findings**

The major limitation of this study was the limited amount of time in which the researcher followed and coded the organizations' responses. Since there was only one week coded during November of 2010, and one week coded during January of 2011, there is no general overview of the organization's patterns when messaging their supporters.

Secondly, a major complication with the Special Olympics was the passing of the foundation's founder, Sargent Shriver. Since this happened at the start of the second coding week, the majority of that week's posts were about his death. This may have triggered an abnormal amount of "feeling" messages due to the nature of the situation.

### **Ideas for Future Research**

The researcher recommends the organizations initiate their own form of metrics or recording to measure the results of their content messaging. It is also advised that the organizations post messages on most days, if not daily, since the data in this case study implicates more relationship building through frequent and creative content messaging.

In other areas, it may be beneficial to conduct similar research with for-profit organizations to see if the effects and patterns remain consistent, or are specific to the nonprofit sector.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

Social media has presented organizations with a new way to reach out to supporters and to build meaningful relationships without face-to-face interaction. If used correctly, this new forum can generate valuable tools for nonprofit and for-profit organizations alike to use when building, maintaining, or soliciting new relationships with supporters or customers. By sending messages with creative, thought-provoking content – especially those messages which engage the supporter to respond with a story or narrative – frequently, nonprofits can seek to engage supporters from all over the globe; breaking all boundaries imposed on them by time, space and finances.

The use of content messaging through Facebook requires more study. The learning curve for social media is large, and will more than likely continue to grow, change or evolve into something completely different in years to come. However, in this case study, the data is clear in showing that by not posting or messaging often an organization risks losing out on important disclosures given by its supporters. And in these disclosures lay the pathways to building meaningful relationships. In other words, one main takeaway organizations can use from this case study is that the most successful way to utilize Facebook as a forum to reach new supporters is simply to use it – and often.

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**APPENDIX A-1**  
Philabundance Coding Week 1

	11/1/2010 Totals	11/2/2010 Totals	11/3/2010 Totals	11/4/2010 Totals	11/5/2010 Totals	11/6/2010 Totals	11/7/2010 Totals
<b>Daily Qualitative Info</b>							
Number of entries	1	0	2	0	2	0	0
Number of responses	1	0	1	0	2	0	0
Number of "Likes" for main entry	4	0	7	0	5	0	0
Number of responses to sub-posts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of "Likes" for sub-posts	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Foundation Messaging</b>							
News	1		1		1		
Events - Past					1		
Events - Present			1		0		
Events - Future					0		
Fundraising/Soliciting Volunteers					0		
Issues					0		
Soliciting Stories or Narratives					0		
Miscellaneous					0		
<b>Responses Content</b>							
Accolades/Praise/Thanks	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
References	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Outreach/Support	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Story or Narrative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
General Response/Statement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Depth of Disclosures</b>							
Clichés	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Facts	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Opinions	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feelings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Other</b>							
Number of Friends/People that "Like This"	4719	4721	4729	4738	4745	4754	4759

**APPENDIX A-2**  
Philabundance Coding Week 2

	1/17/2011 Totals	1/18/2011 Totals	1/19/2011 Totals	1/20/2011 Totals	1/21/2011 Totals	1/22/2011 Totals	1/23/2011 Totals
<b>Daily Qualitative Info</b>							
Number of entries	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
Number of responses	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Number of "Likes" for main entry	0	0	2	9	2	0	0
Number of responses to sub-posts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of "Likes" for sub-posts	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Foundation Messaging</b>							
<b>News</b>							
Events - Past							
Events - Present			1				
Events - Future				1			
Soliciting/Soliciting Volunteers					1		
Issues							
Soliciting Stories or Narratives							
Miscellaneous							
<b>Responses Content</b>							
Accolades/Praise/Thanks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
References	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Outreach/Support	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Story or Narrative	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
General Response/Statement			0	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Depth of Disclosures</b>							
Clichés	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Facts	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Opinions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feelings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Other</b>							
Number of Friends/People that "Like This"	5,193	5,192	5195	5201	5203	5205	5210

**APPENDIX B-1**  
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Coding Week 1

	11/1/2010 Totals	11/2/2010 Totals	11/3/2010 Totals	11/4/2010 Totals	11/5/2010 Totals	11/6/2010 Totals	11/7/2010 Totals
<b>Daily Qualitative Info</b>							
Number of entries	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
Number of responses	0	0	4	5	52	0	0
Number of "Likes" for main entry	0	0	42	156	235	0	0
Number of responses to sub-posts	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Number of "Likes" for sub-posts	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
<b>Foundation Messaging</b>							
News					1		
Events - Past							
Events - Present							
Events - Future							
Fundraising/Soliciting Volunteers							
Issues				1			
Soliciting Stories or Narratives							
Miscellaneous			1				
<b>Responses Content</b>							
Accolades/Praise/Thanks	0	0	0	0	36	0	0
References	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Outreach/Support	0	0	0	5	1	0	0
Story or Narrative	0	0	3	0	14	0	0
General Response/Statement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
<b>Depth of Disclosures</b>							
Clichés	0	0	3	4	23	0	0
Facts	0	0	1	1	15	0	0
Opinions	0	0	0	0	7	0	0
Feelings	0	0	0	0	7	0	0
<b>Other</b>							
Number of Friends/People that "Like This"	96317	96317	96412	96481	96565	96640	96724



**APPENDIX B-2**  
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Coding Week 2

	1/17/2011 Totals	1/18/2011 Totals	1/19/2011 Totals	1/20/2011 Totals	1/21/2011 Totals	1/22/2011 Totals	1/23/2011 Totals
<b>Daily Qualitative Info</b>							
Number of entries	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Number of responses	0	1	29	0	0	0	0
Number of "Likes" for main entry	0	119	316	0	0	0	0
Number of responses to sub-posts	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Number of "Likes" for sub-posts	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
<b>Foundation Messaging</b>							
<b>News</b>							
Events - Past			1				
Events - Present							
Events - Future							
Fundraising/Soliciting Volunteers		1					
Issues							
Soliciting Stories or Narratives							
Miscellaneous							
<b>Responses Content</b>							
Accolades/Praise/Thanks	0	1	24	0	0	0	0
References	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Outreach/Support	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Story or Narrative	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
General Response/Statement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Depth of Disclosures</b>							
Clichés	0	0	21	0	0	0	0
Facts	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
Opinions	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
Feelings	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Other</b>							
Number of Friends/People that "Like This"	102,176	102,238	102,287	102,291	102,312	102,334	102,484

**APPENDIX C-1**  
Special Olympics Coding Week 1

	11/1/2010 Totals	11/2/2010 Totals	11/3/2010 Totals	11/4/2010 Totals	11/5/2010 Totals	11/6/2010 Totals	11/7/2010 Totals
<b>Daily Qualitative Info</b>							
Number of entries	1	2	1	1	1	0	0
Number of responses	50	92	22	84	156	0	0
Number of "Likes" for main entry	68	165	92	467	54	0	0
Number of responses to sub-posts	0	0	0	25	0	0	0
Number of "Likes" for sub-posts	15	11	21	100	6	0	0
<b>Foundation Messaging</b>							
News							
Events - Past							
Events - Present							
Events - Future							
Fundraising/Soliciting Volunteers							
Issues							
Soliciting Stories or Narratives	1	1	1	1	1		
Miscellaneous		1					
<b>Responses Content</b>							
Accolades/Praise/Thanks	1	4	0	0	1	0	0
References	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Outreach/Support	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Story or Narrative	47	43	6	38	3	0	0
General Response/Statement	2	44	15	39	152	0	0
Miscellaneous	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Depth of Disclosures</b>							
Clichés	2	5	1	5	153	0	0
Facts	21	48	14	11	1	0	0
Opinions	19	19	2	43	0	0	0
Feelings	8	20	5	16	2	0	0
<b>Other</b>							
Number of Friends/People that "Like This"	92,837	92,856	92,965	93,065	93,206	93,311	93,452

**APPENDIX C-2**  
Special Olympics Coding Week 2

	1/17/2011 Totals	1/18/2011 Totals	1/19/2011 Totals	1/20/2011 Totals	1/21/2011 Totals	1/22/2011 Totals	1/23/2011 Totals
<b>Daily Qualitative Info</b>							
Number of entries	1	5	9	7	7	2	0
Number of responses	21	67	33	28	19	29	0
Number of "Likes" for main entry	89	599	804	447	527	191	0
Number of responses to sub-posts	0	0	1	0	0	10	0
Number of "Likes" for sub-posts	2	30	30	11	14	32	0
<b>Foundation Messaging</b>							
News	1	2	6	5	3	2	
Events - Past		0	0	1	0	0	
Events - Present		1	0	0	0	0	
Events - Future		0	0	0	0	0	
Fundraising/Soliciting Volunteers		0	2	1	0	0	
Issues		0	0	0	0	0	
Soliciting Stories or Narratives		1	1	0	1	0	
Miscellaneous		1	0	0	2	0	
<b>Responses Content</b>							
Accolades/Praise/Thanks	20	36	21	19	15	12	0
References	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Outreach/Support	0	2	0	1	0	0	0
Story or Narrative	1	6	8	7	1	6	0
General Response/Statement	0	19	2	1	3	2	0
Miscellaneous	0	3	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Depth of Disclosures</b>							
Clichés	15	59	22	16	15	11	0
Facts	6	4	8	9	3	5	0
Opinions	0	1	3	3	0	11	0
Feelings	0	3	0	0	1	2	0
<b>Other</b>							
Number of Friends/Fans/People that "Like This"	100,096	100,242	100,243	100,367	100,403	100,523	100,743

**APPENDIX C-3**  
Special Olympics Coding Week 1

	<b>1/18/2011 Totals</b>	<b>Post #1</b>	<b>Post #2</b>	<b>Post #3</b>	<b>Post #4</b>	<b>Post #5</b>
<b>Daily Qualitative Info</b>						
Number of entries	5					
Number of responses	67	11	5	34	8	9
Number of "Likes" for main entry	599	239	79	104	80	97
Number of responses to sub-posts	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of "Likes" for sub-posts	30	4	1	19	5	1
<b>Foundation Messaging</b>						
				X (family statement on Shriver passing)	X (statement from President/CEO of SO)	
<b>News</b>	2					
<b>Events - Past</b>	0					
			X (teaming up with the NCAA)			
<b>Events - Present</b>	1					
<b>Events - Future</b>	0					
<b>Fundraising/Soliciting</b>						
<b>Volunteers</b>	0					
<b>Issues</b>	0					
						X (asking for tributes/link to tributes)
<b>Soliciting Stories or Narratives</b>	1					
		X (letting supporters know SO surpassed 100,00 fans)				
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	1					
<b>Responses Content</b>						
Accolades/Praise/Thanks	36	5	2	19	5	5
References	1	1	0	0	0	0
Outreach/Support	2	2	0	0	0	0
Story or Narrative	6	2	2	1	1	0
General Response/Statement	19	0	0	14	2	3
Miscellaneous	3	1	1	0	0	1
<b>Depth of Disclosures</b>						
Clichés	59	8	5	32	6	8
Facts	4	2	0	1	0	1
Opinions	1	0	0	0	1	0
Feelings	3	1	0	1	1	0
<b>Other</b>						
Number of Friends/Fans/People that "Like This"	100,242					

**APPENDIX C-4**  
Special Olympics Coding Week 1

	11/2/2010 Totals	Post #1	Post #2
<b>Daily Qualitative Info</b>			
Number of entries	2		
Number of responses	92	87	5
Number of "Likes" for main entry	165	97	68
Number of responses to sub-posts	0	0	0
Number of "Likes" for sub-posts	11	8	3
<b>Foundation Messaging</b>			
News			
Events - Past			
Events - Present			
Events - Future			
Fundraising/Soliciting Volunteers			
Issues			
Soliciting Stories or Narratives	1	X	
Miscellaneous	1		X (video on SO)
<b>Responses Content</b>			
Accolades/Praise/Thanks	4	0	4
References	0	0	0
Outreach/Support	0	0	0
Story or Narrative	43	43	0
General Response/Statement	44	44	0
Miscellaneous	1	0	1
<b>Depth of Disclosures</b>			
Clichés	5	2	3
Facts	48	48	0
Opinions	19	19	0
Feelings	20	18	2
<b>Other</b>			
Number of Friends/People that "Like This"	92,856		

## **Jennifer Brooke Ballard**

Academic Vitae

131 Lisa Drive, Paoli, PA 19301

Email: jbb5075@psu.edu, brooke.ballard@gmail.com

### **EDUCATION**

The Pennsylvania State University, Brandywine Campus, Media, PA May 2011

- Cooper Honors Program
- Bachelor of Arts in Communications, option in Corporate Communications
- Minor in English
- Honors in Communications and Civic & Community Engagement

### **HONORS THESIS**

An Evaluation Measuring the Patterns and Effects of Nonprofit Messaging Through Facebook  
Spring 2011

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Susan Fredricks, Associate Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences

Thesis Reader: Dr. Laura Guertin, Associate Professor of Earth Sciences

### **WORK EXPERIENCE**

The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Dallas, TX 2006-2009

*Director of Special Events*

- Responsible for networking and identifying potential donors and corporations interested in supporting the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
- Developed programming for new foundation endeavors
- Managed and maintained relationships and partnerships with foundation supporters, event committees, and volunteers

### **INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE**

Progressive Business Publications, Malvern, PA Summer 2010

*Assistant Editor, 3-credit internship, paid position*

- Responsible for producing market-quality publications and online Editorial content

### **AWARDS**

Outstanding Academic Achievement Award 2009-2010

Outstanding Academic Achievement Award 2010-2011

### **SCHOLARSHIPS**

- International Studies Travel Scholarship 2010
- The David and Florence Newman Scholarship 2010-2011
- Osher Reentry Scholarship 2010-2011

### **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SERVICE**

Lion Ambassadors, Penn State Brandywine

*Secretary and Treasurer 2009-2011*

- Met with executive board weekly for general planning meeting
- Met with Lion Ambassadors' bi-weekly for general planning meeting

- Gave campus tours to perspective students
- Participated in campus-recruitment events throughout the year

Planting a Seed Project, Penn State Brandywine

*Volunteer 2010*

- Helped with fundraising efforts to raise money to supply Taggart Elementary School with fruit for their meals

Human Trafficking Project, Penn State Brandywine

*Volunteer 2011*

- Helped with social media efforts to raise awareness and to help solicit donations for Courtney's House – a home in Washington D.C. for victims of sex trafficking.

### **INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION**

Penn State Brandywine's International Program in Dublin, Ireland

March 6 – March 13, 2010

- Enrolled in ENG 296 – Independent Studies Creative Projects (3 credits), KINES 081 (1.5 credits) – Independent Studies
- Traveled throughout central and northern Ireland
- Visited the Cliffs of Moher, Trinity College, Saint Anne's Cathedral, Queen's University, and Belfast City Hall

### **CERTIFICATIONS**

Institutional Review Board (IRB) – Passed human subjects test

### **COMPUTER SKILLS**

- GarageBand
- iMovie