

2011 Social Good Survey

Fenton/Globescan



Introduction | The Age of Engagement

Welcome.

In 2010 the Fenton Forecast surveyed public views of nonprofit leadership and brands. This year, Fenton joined forces with Globescan to expand our research to include the United States and the United Kingdom — two of the largest giving markets in the world.

The world is still in the grasp of the recession. Giving has not rebounded. While the public places more trust in the ability of the nonprofit/charitable sector ahead of governments and corporations to bring about positive social change, an overwhelming majority report they will make donations to nonprofits/charities at the same or reduced levels as last year.

Nonprofits/charities are facing a challenging era — one in which they must adapt to fragmented attention spans and tighter wallets.

As nonprofits/charities attempt to sustain and expand their current donor base, one thing is clear: engagement is more critical than ever.

2011 Social Good Survey | Focus and Methodology

Focus

The *Social Good Survey* probed these questions, among others:

- How committed are people to donating to nonprofits/charities in the coming year?
- What are public attitudes about nonprofits/charities as drivers of change?
- What are the primary motivators behind people's decision to support a nonprofit/charity?
- What are the most effective ways nonprofits/charities can engage their constituents?
- How are people using social media in relation to the causes they care about?

Methodology

This research was conducted using online panels in the United States and the United Kingdom.

1,084 people aged 18 and over were interviewed in the UK.

1,131 people aged 18 and over were interviewed in the US.

All respondents have made a minimum donation to a nonprofit/charity in the past year (a minimum of \$20.00 in the US, or a minimum of £10.00 in the UK). All data is weighted to national census data in both the UK and US.

2011 Social Good Survey | Implications

The more nonprofits/charities deepen their constituents' experience with their organization and cause, the more likely people will be supportive – even through tough economic times. Nonprofits/charities that are nimble and diversify their engagement strategies will have the greatest impact going forward:

1. **ENGAGE on a personal level.** Personal connection to a cause is vital to donation decisions. When people have a close connection to the issue or cause, and ultimately then to the nonprofit/charity, their propensity to donate is higher. The more nonprofits/charities can bridge their issue to how people live, work, love, worship and play, the more intimately connected and committed supporters will be. While immediacy and urgency of need is an important concept to communicate, how much the issue or cause resonates on a personal level is clearly the most important driver of engagement and propensity to donate.
2. **ENGAGE to build trust.** Nonprofits/charities are considered to be the most effective at bringing about social change, ahead of corporations and government. Yet there are concerns about nonprofit/charitable operations and spending – despite low levels of knowledge about how cause-driven organizations are actually run. Research shows that those who report knowing more about how nonprofits/charities are managed are also more positive about their support. Nonprofits' charity engagement strategies should include transparent reporting on how they operate, use their donations and what results they are achieving. Drawing a clear link between donations and impact is crucial.

2011 Social Good Survey | Implications

- 3. ENGAGE through updates and actions on causes.** Particularly on social media, people value nonprofits/charities' ability to keep them informed about their activities and developments on the issues. They also value nonprofits/charities' action appeals, whether it involves signing a petition or volunteering. Nonprofits/charities should evaluate their social media programs to see if they offer timely and useful information, particularly information that is 1) not available in mainstream news; 2) adds insight and analysis, or 3) curates the deluge of information available. Encouraging interactivity and action will help deepen support and loyalty among constituents.
- 4. ENGAGE through multiple channels.** Nonprofits/charities cannot yet afford to abandon traditional media channels. While people are increasingly engaged across multiple platforms, the research suggests that the most effective way for nonprofits/charities to break through and persuade people to engage on an issue is to have a presence on television and other mainstream media. It appears that social networking sites are less likely than traditional media to reach new audiences. However, once engaged, social media can be critical for maintaining momentum and building a base of supporters.

Key Findings

1 Trust in nonprofits/charities is high, and they are perceived to be most effective as change makers.

People hold nonprofits/charities in high regard, both in terms of trust and their ability to bring about positive social change – ahead of government and the corporate sector.

Generally speaking, how much do you trust nonprofits/charities? % of respondents on a scale from 0 to 10 (no trust at all – a great deal of trust)		
	UK	US
No trust (0-3)	10%	9%
4-6	36%	35%
Trust (7-10)	54%	56%

How effective is each of the following institutions at bringing about positive social change? % of respondents selecting 7-10 on a scale from 0 to 10 (extremely ineffective – extremely effective)		
	UK	US
Nonprofits/charities	41%	55%
Media	36%	29%
National government	27%	19%
Local government	24%	22%
Private sector (for profit)	20%	32%

2 But giving to nonprofits/charities is stalled.

While there is not a dramatic reduction in the likelihood to donate to nonprofits in the next 12 months, most people’s donations are likely to remain the same and not grow over the next year.

Looking ahead over the next 12 months, how likely do you think it is that you will increase or decrease the amount of money you donate to nonprofits/charities?				
% of respondents				
	UK		US	
	2010	2011	2010	2011
Decrease (Highly likely and likely)	N/A	16%	11%	17%
Stay the same	N/A	72%	53%	65%
Increase (Highly likely, and likely)	N/A	12%	36%	18%

3 The more people care about a cause or nonprofit/charity the more likely they are to give.

The most mentioned factor for potential donors in deciding to financially support a nonprofit/charity is whether the issue or cause of that nonprofit speaks to them. Immediacy of need is not the driving factor. People are looking for a connection to something they believe in or strongly care about.

When making a decision to donate to a charity/nonprofit, which of the following is the most important? % of mentions of prompted reasons		
	UK	US
The charity/nonprofit is involved in an issue/cause I feel strongly about	54%	44%
The charity/nonprofit spends its money wisely and effectively	25%	26%
The charity/nonprofit helps people in my local area	4%	15%
The charity/nonprofit has helped someone I know	7%	5%
The charity/nonprofit has communicated its mission effectively to me	5%	5%
There is an immediate need for the funds	3%	5%

4 Less than half of people rate nonprofits/charities highly on spending their funds wisely and effectively.

While a clear majority believe that nonprofits/charities are having a positive impact and effective at getting their message across, less than half believe they do a good job of spending funds and managing operations.

Overall, how would you rate the performance of nonprofits/charities on the following aspects?		
% of respondents selecting 7-10 on a scale from 0 to 10 (very poor – excellent)		
	UK	US
Having a positive impact on the causes they are involved with	66%	70%
Effectively communicate their message to the general public	59%	61%
Having a strong public voice on issues that are important for their causes	58%	65%
Spending funds wisely and effectively	43%	46%
Effectively managing their operations	42%	48%
Influencing government and policy-makers to advance the cause of the charity/nonprofit	38%	42%

5 However, few admit to knowing a great deal about how nonprofits/charities are run and managed.

Although fewer than half of people rate nonprofits/charities highly on how they spend funds and manage their operations, only a fifth (22% UK) and third (32% US) of people say they have a high level of knowledge about how nonprofits/charities perform in these areas. Significantly, those who report higher awareness are also more likely to believe that these organizations are doing a good job of management and spending.

*Those selecting 7-10 on a scale of 0-10 (very poor - excellent)

**Those selecting 7-10 on a scale from 0-10 (nothing at all - a great deal)

***Those selecting 0-6 on a scale from 0-10 (nothing at all - a great deal)

Overall, how much do you know about how the nonprofits/charities are run and managed?		
% of respondents on a scale from 0 to 10 (nothing at all – a great deal)		
	UK	US
Nothing at all (0-3)	36%	26%
4-6	42%	41%
A great deal (7-10)	22%	32%

Overall, how much do you know about how the nonprofits/charities are run and managed?			
Overall, how would you rate the performance of nonprofits/charities on the following aspects?			
		UK	US
Spending funds wisely and effectively*	Know a lot about how nonprofits are run**	70%	73%
	Do not know a lot about how nonprofits are run***	41%	40%
Effectively managing their operations*	Know a lot about how nonprofits are run**	71%	73%
	Do not know a lot about how nonprofits are run***	40%	42%

6 People say social media is most important for staying current on nonprofit/charitable activities and taking action.

Social media is valued as a source for timely updates on nonprofit/charitable activities and issues as well as an important vehicle for taking action. Many also see the value in being able to display their support for a cause or a nonprofit/charity, and to connect with people who care about the same issues.

Many people get involved with nonprofits/charities and causes through social networking sites and social media. Please select the three most important things that social networking allows you to do in relation to nonprofits.

% of respondents mentions of prompted reasons	UK	US
I can stay up-to-date on what a nonprofit/charity is doing	30%	31%
I can take actions to support a cause (sign a petition, share information)	28%	29%
I can stay up-to-date on the issues I am interested in	22%	31%
I can display my support for a cause or a nonprofit/charity to my friends	20%	26%
I can connect with people who care about the same things I do	18%	26%
I can easily donate to a nonprofit/charity I believe in	17%	20%
I can easily make my views on an issue heard	15%	17%
I feel like I am more closely connected to the nonprofit/charity	10%	13%
I do not use social media	40%	28%

7 Signing petitions and encouraging others to join a cause are the top ways people get involved with a nonprofit/charity they trust.

US ONLY: Volunteering is a popular action that younger people would consider, with three-quarters of 18-24s saying they would be likely to volunteer their time.

How likely or unlikely would you be to take the following actions in support of a nonprofit/charity you trust?		
% of respondents selecting 7-10 on a scale from 0 to 10 (very unlikely – very likely)		
	UK	US
Sign a petition to support a cause or issue	75%	72%
Encourage my family, friend and co-workers to be interested in the nonprofit/charity	51%	58%
Participate in an event	44%	56%
Ask family, friends, and co-workers to donate money	43%	45%
“Like” the nonprofit/charity on Facebook, or follow it on Twitter	37%	49%
Make a regular monthly donation	34%	30%
Volunteer my time	32%	52%

8 The younger the respondents, the more likely they would be to consider a range of actions in support of a nonprofit/charity, and in particular engaging on Facebook or Twitter (Among 18-24s, 61% in the UK and 71% in the US).

How likely or unlikely would you be to take the following actions in support of a nonprofit/charity you trust?

% of respondents selecting 7-10 on a scale from 0 to 10 (very unlikely – very likely)

	UK						US						
Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Make a regular monthly donation	41%	37%	42%	29%	30%	26%	Make a regular monthly donation	36%	33%	38%	31%	20%	17%
Volunteer my time	46%	32%	35%	32%	29%	23%	Volunteer my time	75%	60%	58%	48%	34%	34%
Ask family, friends and co-workers to donate money	53%	41%	46%	40%	42%	39%	Ask family, friends and co-workers to donate money	56%	51%	47%	48%	29%	33%
Participate in an event	60%	51%	46%	43%	40%	32%	Participate in an event	76%	64%	62%	56%	41%	32%
Sign a petition to support a cause or issue	75%	80%	75%	79%	73%	72%	Sign a petition to support a cause or issue	81%	77%	77%	71%	61%	62%
'Like' the charity/non-profit on Facebook or follow it on Twitter	61%	53%	45%	37%	22%	11%	'Like' the charity/non-profit on Facebook or follow it on Twitter	71%	67%	60%	40%	24%	21%
Encourage my family, friends and co-workers to be interested in the charity/non-profit	65%	54%	50%	46%	46%	51%	Encourage my family, friends and co-workers to be interested in the charity/non-profit	68%	70%	61%	58%	41%	46%

9 Traditional media is still important for breaking through on an issue and inspiring engagement.

While social media and websites are important, a news story or a television commercial ranked higher as a persuasion tool for breaking through people's consciousness and inciting their willingness to engage an issue.

US Only: Social media posts are more popular with socially networked younger people (14%). However, still more of this group select stories on TV news (19%) and TV commercials/appeals as the most effective engagement strategy.

UK Only: Even among socially networked younger people, fewer (3%) select social media as the most effective way to persuade them to engage with a campaign or cause. The most effective way is through television commercials or appeals (31%), rather than TV news stories (24%).

What is the most effective way that a nonprofit/charity can use to try to persuade you to engage with a particular cause or campaign?		
% of respondents mentions of prompted reasons	UK	US
Getting stories on the television news	28%	25%
Producing television commercial/appeals	21%	12%
Having a dedicated website for the campaign	12%	11%
Holding a rally / community event / public forum	9%	16%
Sending direct mail	9%	14%
Writing articles in newspapers	7%	8%
Being engaged by a charity representative on the street	4%	4%
Getting a celebrity to back the cause	4%	2%
Posts on Facebook / Twitter / other social networks	3%	7%
Writing a blog	-	1%

Thank you.

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