

Tweet Tools for Fundraisers

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Ten tips for turning tweetups into fundraising and engagement engines.

Social media tools such as Twitter represent a new platform for strategically driven online member engagement and fundraising.

Tweetups—meetings organized through Twitter—provide associations and nonprofits opportunities to bring members together and raise funds for a worthy cause. The mantra for Tweetups is simple: Engage. Support. Have fun.

Done correctly, Tweetups have proven to be very successful. On March 25, 2010, Twestival Global engaged 14,117 people around the world and generated \$444,700 for Concern Worldwide's humanitarian efforts. In November 2009, Tweetsgiving engaged participants throughout the world and generated about \$36,000 for Epic Change's support of the Mama Lucy Schools in Africa. And, late in 2009, the Christmas Spirit Foundation's TweetUp4Troops experiment honored veterans and generated support to provide a free farm-grown Christmas tree to an additional 63 military families. Whether you are a 501(c)(6) or 501(c)(3) association, a Tweetup lets you engage your members or donors, support a cause, and have fun. From these success stories, we gleaned 25 tips and techniques for use of Twitter as a membership engagement and fundraising tool. With input from online crowdsourcing and attendees at the 2010 Great Ideas Conference, we've narrowed it down to 10 top tips:

- 1. Keep it simple/make it easy.** Make it painless and secure to donate and to spread the story and message. To make messages re-tweetable, we recommend 110 or fewer characters.
- 2. Do not ask for money first.** Start by building a community around your cause. Then, ask for support. Use the "listen, engage, and influence" framework.
- 3. Provide a link to donate.** Help people make donations quickly and easily. Put a donate button up front on the web, your blog, and Facebook.
- 4. Remember to thank hosts/donors/sponsors.** Thank people on Twitter (or other social networks). Retweet when they post about your organization.
- 5. Be transparent and illustrate where money goes.** Show where contributions go and what they support. Be transparent about use of funds and include a "leader board" for fundraising updates.
- 6. Communicate personally and tweet status regularly.** Interact with your followers. Direct message them back with some bit of information that shows you took the time and effort to read about them.
- 7. Make your web presence strong and the site easy to navigate.** Even if your member engagement or fundraising campaign is time focused, communicate year-round to build your online community. Refresh your content. Use stories to share what you are doing as a result of the community's engagement and support.

8. Engage your existing network. Start with your existing community and grow from there. In addition to social media, consider email marketing to engage your community. Network, network, network, and find others who will spread your message.

9. “Manage” your volunteers. Seek volunteers aligned with your cause. Personally recruit a core of local hosts; use both social media and traditional means for this recruitment. “Manage” the volunteers and ensure they abide by your values, message, and purpose. (Remember, they are hosting an event and generating financial support in your name.)

10. Select and use a hashtag (#). Your hashtag should be short and easy to remember. Examples: The 2010 Great Ideas Conference was #ideas10; Trees for Troops uses #T4T. Start using the hashtag early.

Engage. Support. Have fun. Tweetups can help achieve your organization’s goals.

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