**How to Raise Awareness For Non-Profits Through Social Media Ad Grants**

[Kristopher Jones](http://www.searchenginejournal.com/author/kris-jones/) [March 3, 2015](http://www.searchenginejournal.com/raise-awareness-non-profits-social-media-ad-grants/125043/)

According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics ([NCCS](http://grantspace.org/tools/knowledge-base/Funding-Research/Statistics/number-of-nonprofits-in-the-u.s%22%20%5Co%20%22National%20Center%20for%20Charitable%20Statistics%20Number%20of%20U.S.%20Charities%20%3D%201.5%20million%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)), there are nearly 2 million non-profit organizations registered in the United States. Tens of millions of additional charitable organizations exist worldwide.

Common wisdom is that if you want to help a charity all you have to do is volunteer your time or donate money. The purpose of this post is to layout a plan for non-profits to benefit from programs that exist at YouTube, Google, and Facebook while also setting the stage for digital marketing professionals and agencies to get involved and help non-profits succeed with digital marketing.

#### Why is Digital Marketing Important to Non-profits?

Digital marketing in the form of YouTube videos, Google search marketing, and social media on Facebook and Twitter provide platforms for non-profits to easily and inexpensively “tell stories” of impact, share important information, and solicit charitable donations.

#### Remember the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge?

If you were like [me](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KII1YVjuPs4" \o "ALS Ice Bucket Challenge - Kristopher Jones from LSEO.com" \t "_blank) (and [millions of others](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ice_Bucket_Challenge%22%20%5Co%20%22ALS%20Ice%20Bucket%20Challenge%20on%20Wikipedia%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) around the world) you took the challenge by dumping a bucket of ice over your head (and challenging your friends to do the same) and/or donated $100 to the [ALS Association](http://www.alsa.org/%22%20%5Co%20%22ALS%20Association%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).

From July through August 2014, the campaign raised over $100 million dollars. Not a bad effort for two months, considering the New York Times [reported](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/22/business/media/ice-bucket-challenge-donations-for-als-top-41-million.html?partner=rss&emc=rss&smid=tw-nytimes&_r=0" \o "Ice Bucket Challenge on the NYT" \t "_blank) the ALS Association generated less than $20 million in all of 2013. Millions of people videotaped their challenge and posted videos to Facebook, YouTube, and dozens of other websites.

The various digital marketing campaigns went viral and not only raised an incredible amount of money for the ALS Association, but also shined an international spotlight of awareness and education on the rare and misunderstood disease referred to as ALS.

The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge demonstrates the power of digital marketing for non-profits. However, almost all non-profits lack the resources and expertise to execute a digital marketing campaign alone. In fact, while any non-profit can use digital marketing, many are unfamiliar with where to start, how much to do, and what if any resources are available to help.

#### Top Digital Marketing Platforms Available to Non-Profits

YouTube is free and allows any non-profit to quickly and easily upload video. The most powerful non-profit videos are the ones that tell stories of the people and families impacted by the causes the non-profit is fighting to serve. In most cases the non-profit can use inexpensive video equipment to shoot video. In my opinion, non-profits should avoid over producing videos – instead, the focus should be on the story and the person or family impacted by the cause.

Non-profits can benefit by ranking higher in Google’s free and paid search results. On the paid side of search marketing, eligible non-profits can benefit from the [Google Ad Grants program](http://www.google.com/grants/%22%20%5Co%20%22Google%20Ad%20Grants%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).

Google Ad Grants is the non-profit edition of AdWords. Google Ad Grants empowers non-profit organizations, through $10,000 per month in in-kind AdWords™ advertising, to promote their missions and initiatives on Google search result pages under “sponsored results.” However, managing and optimizing a Google AdWords account is challenging, and most non-profits do not have the resources to hire a professional to assist. In addition, if the non-profit is unable to spend $10,000 per month on Google AdWords the remaining budget does not carry over to the next month. This means that while it’s an incredible opportunity to have access to such a powerful program, the program itself isn’t enough (in my opinion). Non-profits need professional assistance to manage a Google Ad Grants budget.

Facebook is a powerful tool for non-profits to connect with potential donors and volunteers, but has several drawbacks non-profits must be aware. For instance, when a non-profit (or any business or person) posts to Facebook it only reaches only about 16% of its intended audience.

This means that if a non-profit Facebook page has 10,000 “likes” only 16% or 1,600 fans are reached when a post is shared. To connect with a larger audience, non-profits must buy Facebook Ads and currently Facebook does not have an ad grants program. While Facebook lacks an ad grants program like Google, they do allow eligible non-profits to add a “Donate” button to their Facebook Page. Once approved, the donate feature will appear beside Posts in News Feed shared by participating non-profits and at the top of their Facebook Pages.

I hope my research on this subject matter generates awareness that there are various programs available to help non-profits succeed with digital marketing.

Source: Adapted from <http://www.searchenginejournal.com/raise-awareness-non-profits-social-media-ad-grants/125043/>

Outline **two** possible marketing objectives of the ALS association prior to the Ice Bucket Challenge (2 marks)

|  |
| --- |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |

b) Explain how a nonprofit organization, such as ALS Association can use a product orientation and a market orientation (4 marks)

|  |
| --- |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |

c) Analyse **two** benefits for a nonprofit organisation using social media to meet their marketing objectives (6 marks)

|  |
| --- |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |

Sample solutions

**Outline the possible marketing objectives of the ALS association prior to the Ice Bucket Challenge**

The ALS association was most likely aiming to raise awareness of the ALS disease when they created the Ice Bucket Challenge. By creating a marketing campaign that went viral using social media, ALS hoped that people who use social media platforms such as Facebook would become aware of the cause and then continue to spread awareness about the disease.

Another marketing objective would have been to raise donations to the organization. The campaign by ALS had a specific donation system that required non-participants to donate money, and this increased total donations by 5 times than previous year.

2 marks

*Accept any other possible marketing objective*

**b) Explain how a nonprofit organization, such as ALS Association can use a product orientation and a market orientation**

A non-profit such as ALS could use market orientation strategies by focusing on what people in the community want from their organization and creating products and marketing campaigns based on the results. For example, ALS could use feedback on Facebook and Youtube sites or conduct surveys to find out what products people might like to purchase with the Ice bucket challenge on them (such as hats or t-shirts).

A non-profit could also use a product orientation in order to market it by creating new products that encourage people to buy them or donate money. For product orientation to work, it usually needs to be new and innovative. This would be something like the ice bucket challenge, in that it was an innovative marketing strategy, but with the main aim or raising money than raising awareness.

Total 4 marks

Mark as 2+2

Award **1 mark** for a definition/brief explanation of what each marketing orientation is and **1 mark** for an example of how it can be used by ALS

**c) Analyse the benefits for a nonprofit organisation using social media to meet their marketing objectives**

Non-profit organisations will use a range of social media strategies to meet their marketing objectives.

Social media sites such as Facebook and YouTube allow organization to broadcast their key messages to a potentially global audience quickly. Social media has led to viral campaigns that have especially helped non-profits, such as ALS association to raise awareness of an issue worldwide. However, the message does not always meet the intended target audience. For example, only 16% of Facebook posts reach another person who is interested in reading the post. This may create negative images of the organization if many people continually receive messages that they ignore.

Another benefit for non-profits using social media is the substantially lower cost compared to other possible strategies. Even though non-profits can earn large amounts of revenue, such as ALS who received $100 million in 2014, most of this is meant to go to social causes and not to be used for marketing. Therefore, having a low cost avenue to a global audience through social media is a great opportunity to meet their objectives. At the same time, social media is becoming an important marketing method and requires specialized marketing professionals to manage it successfully, just like traditional marketing. Even though it is low cost to use social media, it can still be expensive to use it well.

*Accept any other relevant benefits*

**6 marks**

Need to have 2 clear benefits balanced. Use the mark scheme

Maximum of 4 marks for 1 benefit

Maximum of 4 marks if no application to the case study.

