Strategies and Techniques for Promoting Alumni Donation Rate in Colleges in New Media Environment

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Abstract

In the "Internet Plus" era, new media has brought great convenience to the dissemination of university foundations and brought many challenges. The article systematically analyzes these challenges and elaborates the strategies and techniques in the field of fundraising of new media from three aspects: the establishment of a new media communication ecosystem, the establishment of a sustainable relationship with audiences, and the integration of public welfare projects.

Keywords: college foundation, new media, fundraising

I. CHALLENGES FACED BY UNIVERSITY FOUNDATIONS IN THE NEW MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

New media refers to social communication tools represented by videos, Weibo, Wechat, blogs, and various types of instant messaging devices. Compared with traditional media, it has the characteristics of timely, interactive, and mass communication. In the era of "Internet Plus," colleges and universities' foundations also actively utilize it for publicity, promotion, interaction, information disclosure, and data collection, while the ultimate goal is public fundraising. However, in practical, due to the characteristics of the new media, the foundations of universities and colleges are facing significant

challenges in the combination of new media and fundraising functions, which are mainly reflected in following aspects.

1.   The cost of opening new media is low, but operating costs are high.

In thousands of foundation's new media platform, it is challenging to stand out from the crowd, and it is more difficult to attract long-term attention and establish long-term contacts. Note that, many university foundations and administrative departments are working together and developing a new media channel. However, they have accustomed to using traditional media for maintenance, and cannot get rid of the one-way indoctrination, in which situation, precious audiences will be lost, and attention and fund-raising will be unsatisfactory.

2.   New media has the attributes of media that need to be combined with "offline" activities.

New media has been selected by universities and college foundations because of their vivid and varied forms of expression. However, with the rise of more and more celebrities, films, media, and other "self-media," the frequency of exposure of public welfare organizations on the SNS platform has decreased. Effectiveness is limited if relying solely on sharing and interactive communication between users. Some colleges and universities' foundations have become "indifferent" and "new media dependency syndromes," which means they can be seen on Weibo, WeChat, or blogs, but they are rarely seen in the real world. The number of fundraising plans issued was large, but the quality was general. This made the effect of dissemination and fundraising significantly reduced.

3.   There are many new media tools and a broad audience, but it is the most important to build new media ecosystem.

There are many different types of new media tools, but each tool has its practical focus. Audiences of different industries and ages also have their preferences and points of interest. Some university foundations solely rely on a particular new media tool or publish the same content on the different platform. Due to the lack of interconnection with other nonprofit organizations,   no initiative to focus on the new media tools of the donors, and no segmentation of the audience, the incompleteness of the ecosystem has limited the influence of new media fundraising.

II. FUNDRAISING STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES FOR UNIVERSITY FOUNDATIONS IN THE NEW MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

The ultimate goal of the use of new media by college and university foundations is to raise funds better, but the effect of raising funds on the internet directly is not satisfied,

and even valuable audience resources may be lost. Public fundraising is a systematic project involving many factors such as the reputation, concept, donation atmosphere, contacts, project design, and channel construction of university foundations. New media, as a communication tool, has different stages in fundraising. The strategies and techniques are mainly reflected in following aspects.

1. Create an ecosystem for new media and atmosphere for fundraising.

The concept of charity donation has not yet entered the hearts of the people, and the atmosphere of public contribution is not stable. Therefore, in the use of new media tools, it is required that the foundation must transmit its ideas through various channels around its purposes. For example, through the history of school history, donations, beneficiary deeds, donations, project progress and establish their image. In the process of dissemination, the foundation must pay attention to segment different audience groups and select various media tools to create a new media communication ecosystem based on their age preferences and usage characteristics. For example, classified from social tightness, blogs and microblogs are typical weak relationship open media. Articles can be searched by anyone, but there is no significant commonality and direct contact between audiences. WeChat is a typical strong relationship closed media, articles can only be conveyed to some specific people those have common or contact. Classified from the depth of reading, blogs, and web pages are re-reading media, suitable for publication of a formal and in-depth analysis of articles, Weibo, WeChat belong to light reading media, so the content should not be too long and too formal. Therefore, different new media should adopt different strategies. On the official homepage and blog, the foundation can use deep and long texts to impress relatively old audiences and use high-quality original articles to attract new viewers. On Weibo, younger audiences can be attracted by the use of graphics and short text-based content. At the same time, comments and messages can be used to form a public opinion effect. In WeChat, because it is a typical strong relationship media, it can be used for alumni and audiences who have had a history of donations to conduct public welfare activities. Also, different new media tools are suitable for different language styles. For college foundations, an overly serious form is not desirable, but it must not be too lively.

2. Use the new media tools to establish a continuous relationship with the audience and gather people for fundraising.

At present, fundraising for foundations on the Internet is faced with the problems of a small number of audiences and a lack of relationship. In this case, the communication between the communicators and the audience becomes more and more critical. Regarding durability, interaction is divided into long-term interaction and short-term interaction. From the perspective of depth, it is divided into three levels and progresses from shallow to deep. The first level is concerned, usually by "like" or "comment"; the

second level expresses willingness to become communicators, usually through "sharing" and "reproducing"; the third level is the highest and most difficult That is, the audience is willing to the participation. The specific way is to sign up for public welfare activities or online donations and to spread the involvement in their new media tools to form a second donation mobilization.

For a foundation, a successful communication strategy should be "20% of comments + 50% sharing or forwarding + 30% of personal experience". To achieve this effect, operators of new media must convert low-level and short-term interactions to high-level, long-term interaction. There are mainly the following strategies. First, make the audience feel warm and valued by actively expressing their concern for them so that they feel warm and appreciated. For example, holiday greetings, questions and answers, thanks for high-quality reviews and comments, and active accounts. Second, attract audiences' participation in discussions by actively creating topics. Topics should be combined with public interest hotspots and difficulties, authenticity, and timeliness instead of being fabricated or old. The process of audience participation in discussions is also the process of creating content. Third, attract audiences to participate by using celebrity effects. For example, the foundation may invite principals, well-known alumni, and outstanding teachers and students to participate in network interactions and use their power to promote their influence on the Internet. Fourth, alumni, teachers and students and enthusiastic audiences are recruited to serve as network volunteers. Through employing some volunteers who are keen on public welfare undertakings and familiar with the use of new media to reach the goal of using their power to expand the impact of the Foundation on the Internet. The age levels of volunteers must be significantly different so that they can reach different levels of groups. Fifth, maintain the existing groups of donors and beneficiaries by sending regular emails. E-mail is more formal and more targeted than various types of short messages and can enhance the recipient's ownership. University Foundations can express their concern and gratitude to those who have had their donation records in the e-mail, promote the foundation idea to former beneficiaries, and promote their new media accounts, especially the WeChat public account, and strive to transform a donation relationship. The long-term donation relationship transforms the potential donation relationship into a real donation relationship.

3. Utilize new media tools to serve public welfare projects, integrate penetration, and expand channels for fundraising.

At present, for many college foundations, the use of donations received is mostly limited. It requires the foundation to integrate the use of new media into the spirit of offline projects and establish an "online release" - "offline experience" - "online sharing" fundraising model. First of all, "online release" means that before the project is set up, it can use the new media to preheat the topic, attract audience participation

and discussion, and use public opinion to trigger everyone's donation expectations. Because of the characteristics of the new media itself, the audience is relatively young. Fundraising projects should be characterized by the low threshold, short cycle, and clear results. The low threshold means that each person's fundraising amount is not high, and it is better not to exceed 1,000 yuan. Otherwise, it will affect the audience's participation enthusiasm. The short-term cycle means that the project has a short period from the start of fundraising to the completion of the project. It is best to calculate it on a monthly basis and not exceed one year. The clear effect is that the theme of the project is clear, the implementation effect is obvious, and even an immediate effect can be achieved. Projects that require long-term investment and effects that are difficult to quantify should not use online fundraising because it is difficult to arouse the interest of the audience. In addition to publicizing and promoting by new media tools (including foundations, school, celebrity, and volunteers) after the project is established, attention should also be paid to integrating with traditional media such as school newspapers, school TV program and alumni associations to spread to the most audience in a short time. Followed by "offline experience." The practice has proved that fundraising activities need more support from actual actions, and cannot rely solely on the power of public opinion on the Internet. "Offline Experience" is divided into two categories. One is fundraising for schoolteachers, students, and alumni. It can be used for fund-raising purposes such as setting up stalls and selling charity performances. The other is for companies with aspirations for donations. The foundation can work with donors to develop a variety of offline charitable activities for teachers, students and alumni (can also be beneficiaries of the project). By actively publishing the fundraising process, results, and publishing donations, potential donors can be converted into online donors.

III. CONCLUSION

The new media has strong attributes of tools and media. When the new media are used by college foundations, they must adopt a cautious attitude. They should not be overly relied upon, nor can they ignore exclusion. For non-profit organizations, fundraising is a systematic project. When the fund uses new media to raise funds, it must establish a project-centered and interactive-centered philosophy. Mastering the laws and using them reasonably can achieve the desired results.

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