

# SOCIAL MEDIA FOR CHARITY LEADERS

A QUICK 'HOW TO' GUIDE

ZOE AMAR & MATT COLLINS

**ZOE AMAR COMMUNICATIONS**

Strategy|Marketing|Communications|Digital|Social Media



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# INTRODUCTION

ZOE AMAR

&

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## A social sea change

There's been a noticeable change in the number of charity CEOs and leaders using social media over the last year. Once the domain of the communications or fundraising departments, canny leaders have realised that social media offers amazing opportunities to reach out directly to stakeholders, build valuable relationships and keep up to date with all the latest developments quickly.

Yet, as Simon Blake, CEO of Brook, says in the foreword to this guide, many leadership teams are still a little nervous of getting started on social media, or feel constrained by fears of saying or doing the wrong thing. Through our work as consultants we realised that there was nowhere for charity leaders to turn for advice in this area.

That's why we've come up with this guide. It's designed to demystify social media and offers quick and simple strategies to help you build a great social media presence, make the most of all the platforms and understand how successful you've been. Its publication coincides with the launch of our index of the top 30 charity CEOs on social media. Our guide shares the secrets of exploiting the power of social media as a leader.

Feel free to get in touch with us if you have any questions.

# ABOUT ZOE AND MATT

**Zoe Amar** MCIM is a charity marketing and digital communications expert and freelance consultant with extensive experience in developing and delivering marketing, digital communications and social media strategies. She advises charities regularly about digital media and her clients have included ActionAid, Anglia Ruskin University and the School for Social Entrepreneurs.



Zoe regularly shares best practice as a blogger for The Guardian, the Institute of Fundraising and CharityComms. She is on the advisory panel for The Guardian Voluntary Sector Network and The Chartered Institute of Marketing charity interest group. Zoe is also a Chartered Marketer.

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## **ZOE AMAR COMMUNICATIONS**

Strategy|Marketing|Communications|Digital|Social Media

**Matt Collins** is a digital marketer, communicator and trainer. He helps charities change the world and deliver their organisational objectives through social media (from first steps to extensive supporter and partner outreach), digital marketing through email marketing, analytics and content generation, as well as knitting it all together through strategic work.



In over 10 years in the voluntary sector, he has led fundraising and awareness raising campaigns online for the RAF Benevolent Fund, trained the digital teams at charities like RNIB, Action on Hearing Loss and Catch22, as well as helping organisations like Mind and YouthNet support vulnerable people online.

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Charities increasingly understand that online engagement is central to achieving their mission. As CEOs it's our duty to be an advocate, a champion, and a role model for using social media. We cannot be nodding wistfully at our fax machines, leaving our online presence to the 'young ones' in the organisation, if we want to maximise the full potential of social media for positive change.



### **Fear of the unknown**

In my first week at Brook, I talked about setting up a blog. There was a sharp intake of breath, followed by a quick analysis of the risks, as well as an animated discussion about the need for a clear social media policy. The assumption was that we would need to have this policy approved by the trustees. But it just felt wrong to ask for trustees' permission to communicate with our supporters, even if the platform was new.

**“THE ONLINE WORLD CONNECTS WITH AND ENGAGES PEOPLE. IT HELPS PEOPLE UNDERSTAND US AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS ORGANISATIONS.”**

It's understandable that CEOs, senior managers and trustees are concerned. The power of digital communication to amplify, accelerate, and expose creates a heightened sense of risk. But online engagement is overwhelmingly a power for good. The online world connects with and engages people. It keeps us up to date, it helps people understand us as individuals and as organisations. The fear it seems to invoke I would suggest is owing to our culture of polished policy statements and sign-off.

### **Learning to trust your team**

I don't necessarily agree with the content on different Brook social media accounts. Sometimes while I'm keeping my head down trying to work something out, our young volunteers are saying what they think in no uncertain terms. Without internal sign-off processes we must trust our teams to operate in uncharted territory. There are more platforms for organisational expression than there ever have been, so it has to be our values that provide the glue for holding our communication together across these platforms.

Less than 20 years ago I hand-wrote my dissertation. Can you imagine being told to hand-write your essay now? I have no idea what the online future holds, but one thing I do know for sure: we as CEOs need to be embracing digital, and empowering everyone in our organisations to do so too.

**This guide will help us to do just that.**

Simon Blake is CEO of [Brook](#) and you can find him on Twitter [@simonablake](#)

# HOW TO BUILD A GREAT PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

ZOE AMAR

In my work as a consultant, I'm often asked by charity leaders how they can build a powerful presence on social media. Before you start tweeting or blogging, it's useful to take a step back and do a quick brainstorm focusing on some key points.



## What's your personal brand?

What do you want people to say about your social media presence? Probably the same things that you'd like them to associate with you in real life. I recommend sitting down with your coach or another trusted professional in your network and mapping out the qualities you'd like to be known for, both online and offline.

## Set some goals

What do you want to achieve from using social media? It is not enough to start blogging or tweeting just because you feel that you should. Do you want to help your charity's campaigns reach a wider audience? Get to know MPs or journalists? Find out what your beneficiaries are saying about your charity? Be as specific as possible about your goals and you'll be more likely to achieve them.

**“AS A RULE OF THUMB, IF YOU'D THINK TWICE ABOUT SAYING SOMETHING IN REAL LIFE, DON'T PUT IT OUT THERE ON SOCIAL MEDIA.”**

## How will you find time for social media?

I always say that social media is like exercise; even 10 minutes a day will make a difference, and the more you do, the greater the return. However it can be a challenge finding space for this in a packed schedule. My tips are to download the apps for the social platforms you use to your smartphone, and keep an eye on things when you're on the move. Diarising five minutes to check in on social media first thing in the morning and five minutes at lunchtime also works well.

## The importance of trust

Boards and leadership teams often worry about 'saying the wrong thing' on social media, and of course a good social media policy is imperative for any organisation. Yet I also believe that we need to trust people to be sensible adults. As a rule of thumb, if you'd think twice about saying something in real life, don't put it out there on social media.

“Technology is the campfire around which we tell our stories.”

– Laurie Anderson

### Your secret sauce is you

We’re preparing for a different future. But the way in isn’t really through social media; it’s through behaviour change. A social media policy or guideline is worth diddly-squat if people don’t feel they are receiving positive signals and are forever looking over their shoulder. You cannot truly rally communities outside if you can’t rally the community internally. The good news is even the slightest posture change from you can have a positive ripple effect, so lead by example. This is now what we expect of you.

### The CEO sets the tone

This network of tools is inherently personal, and they rely on individuals like you finding your voice. This might not happen overnight – after all, these tools are our new colouring-in books, our new canvases.

### “SHOW YOUR INTENT; LISTEN; LEARN; COMMIT.”

Don’t hang up your passion with your coat each morning; express your own personality instead of sticking to the script. I’m not saying this is easy, but you will discover your flow, and only very occasionally get scuffed knees! But show your intent; listen; learn; commit. This is your unwritten plan, and too important to be left to the digital team.

### It’s good to talk

Ciarán Devane, the CEO at Macmillan Cancer Support told me, ‘seeing people sharing and debating interesting work is very useful in shaping ideas.’ Seeing opinions in real time and proactively sharing your charity’s culture and values can create a humanising effect that will draw people to be part of your community. Encourage your growing network to ask a question, offer a suggestion, or just grumble about the weather.

### Most importantly of all: you can only do this as an individual. Be yourself.

Steve Bridger is a Digital Advisor to Charities and you can find him at [www.stevebridger.com](http://www.stevebridger.com) and on Twitter: [@stevebridger](https://twitter.com/stevebridger)



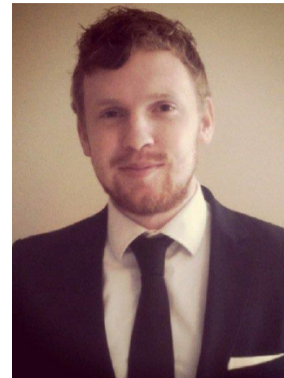
# WHY CHARITY LEADERS NEED TO BE AUTHENTIC ON SOCIAL MEDIA

STEVE BRIDGER

# THE BEST SOCIAL PLATFORMS FOR CEOs

BEN MATTHEWS

The number of social media platforms grows every year, but as a charity CEO there are only a few that need to be on your radar. You don't need to be on every available platform, from Google+ to Pinterest to Instagram – it's better to do a couple of social media platforms really well than many of them mediocrely.



## Where should you start?

Your proficiency on social media will develop naturally over time, so it can be useful to start with a channel where you can control your output more, compared to some of the more open or conversational platforms. It's not thought of as a traditional social media channel, yet starting a blog can be a great way to communicate your vision and share your charity's stories with your supporters.

**“IT'S BETTER TO DO A COUPLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS REALLY WELL THAN MANY OF THEM MEDIOCRELY.”**

Although one of the main uses of a CEO blog is to engage with employees as well as customers or supporters, a charity CEO blog will have greater impact with external audiences. A recent study showed that CEOs who blog reach external stakeholder groups better than on other kinds of social media platforms (see Weber Shandwicks' [Social CEO Study](#)).

Twitter can be the most helpful platform for quickly and easily building relationships with your employees, donors, supporters and the media. If you haven't used Twitter before, it can be a daunting prospect to start tweeting. But you don't have to tweet as soon as you've set up your profile – listening is just as important. First of all, just spend some time finding interesting people and organisations to follow and start listening. Get a feel for the conversations and community etiquette.

## Seek out your expert

If you want to start tweeting more regularly, spend an hour with one of your charity's Twitter champions and get them to set Twitter up on your phone and computer. They can show you how to find and follow new people, what search terms you'd like to keep track of, and best practice for engaging with people. Top tip: make sure you know where the 'new tweet' field is and where the search field is. You don't want to 'do an Ed Balls' and tweet your own name instead of searching for it!

**“YOU DON'T WANT TO 'DO AN ED BALLS' AND TWEET YOUR OWN NAME INSTEAD OF SEARCHING FOR IT!”**

Ben Matthews is Head of Comms at [FutureGov](#) and is [@benmatthews](#) on Twitter.



LinkedIn is often the first social network that leaders join, and is a fantastic tool for relationship building and gaining insights about stakeholders. Yet in my conversations with charity leaders I often find that they are not yet using it to its full potential. Here's how you can make the most of it.



# HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF LINKEDIN

ZOE AMAR

## 1. Update your profile and use a good, clear photo

That might sound obvious, but I am always surprised at the number of people who don't do this. You don't need to include every role you've had, just the ones which you think would be of most interest. Take some time to craft your headline carefully so that it includes keywords which mean that you'll show up in search results.

## 2. Share content

LinkedIn is often thought of just as somewhere to host your CV online and collect virtual business cards, but it is so much more than that. Share updates about what you've been up to and what you're thinking and it'll help keep you uppermost in the mind of your connections, developing relationships and revealing opportunities. Tip: when posting an update, you can select an option so that it is also posted to your Twitter account.

**“IT’LL HELP KEEP YOU UPPERMOST IN THE MIND OF YOUR CONNECTIONS, DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS AND REVEALING OPPORTUNITIES.”**

## 3. Use it for research

If you want to connect with that elusive director at a corporate or senior grant officer at a funder, try looking them up on LinkedIn. You'll be able to find some useful information about their interests, career history and who you know in common that will help you perfect your pitch to them. I have used this strategy many times to win successful partnerships.

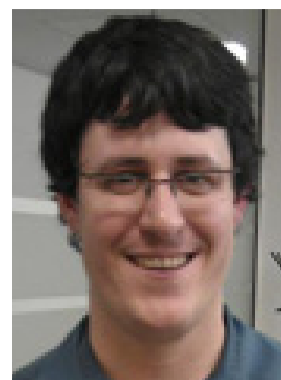
## 4. Don't forget about the groups

Whatever your professional interests are, there are some excellent groups on LinkedIn where fellow professionals are sharing useful insights and resources, including some great charity-specific forums.

# WHY CHARITY CHIEF EXECUTIVES SHOULD BLOG

ALEX SWALLOW

I think that all charity CEOs should blog and I want to briefly tell you why. I started my own blog last Spring so I'm in a pretty good position to tell you about some of the things I've learnt, and also some things that encouraged and helped me.



A blog is a really good way to raise the profile of things that you care about in the sector. This could be the organisation you volunteer for, or where you donate, as well as where you work. It's also a great way to build your own individual profile, and to help you network within the sector as well as outside of it.

## Sharing your thoughts

You can (and should!) share your blog on your social media platforms, which will provide a wide variety of opportunities for interaction. One of the most exciting things for me has been seeing that my blog has been viewed outside of the UK (reaching nearly 90 countries so far) which is really important when social issues are common all over the world.

Here are some basic blog tips I've found really useful:

- Try to choose topics that people are likely to have an opinion on
- Use photos – too much text on its own is boring
- Try to link your posts to topical issues (eg. issues in the news or particular national/international days or weeks)
- Find titles that grab people

## Be human

It's also important to share your personality and examples of your fallibility on your blog. You don't suddenly become perfect when you get this job title, and nobody should expect you to. Both you and the charity you represent will seem more approachable if you make some mistakes, so don't worry too much.

**“YOU DON'T SUDDENLY BECOME PERFECT WHEN YOU GET THIS JOB TITLE. BOTH YOU AND THE CHARITY YOU REPRESENT WILL SEEM MORE APPROACHABLE IF YOU MAKE SOME MISTAKES.”**

It's OK to talk about personal things. Allowing your readers to have a little bit of insight into your life beyond work – your passions, frustrations and musings – will show them that you are a real human being, and someone they therefore feel able to trust.

Alex Swallow is Chief Executive of the [Small Charities Coalition](#) – follow him on Twitter at [@alexswallow](#)

If a busy charity CEO like you is going to devote time to building a personal social media profile, you need to feel confident that you can measure its success. How do you know if it's working?

First of all, it's worth taking a bit of time to think about what your aims for social media are. Measuring your success will very much depend on what these are.



### **Campaign-based aims**

Social can provide a great platform for extending the reach and authenticity of your charity's campaigns. For example, when Parliament finally passed the Equal Marriage Act, Stonewall's CEO Ben Summerskill tweeted a 'thank you' graphic that was shared thousands of times. It was simple, timely and communicated his vision and gratitude effectively.

### **How can you measure campaign-based aims?**

Basic metrics like the number of retweets, the number of clicks on your links, and replies to your updates are a great way to measure the reach of your campaigns.

### **Spreading knowledge**

If one of your aims is to supplement your charity's work to spread knowledge like health awareness, you might want to share links to these resources.

Again, simple metrics like the number of shares and the reach of re-shares are helpful ways to measure the engagement. It can also be useful to register with services like Bitly and Buffer (which also helps you track your most popular content by designating it as Top Tweets) to track how many people click the links you share.

### **Building partnerships and relationships**

If you want to use social media to build relationships with partner organisations, journalists and other influencers, take note of the number of emails you send to or receive from the relevant people. How many meetings and projects were instigated due to the initial contact on social media?

If the relationships you want to build are with your geographically disparate staff and volunteers (an excellent function of social media), measure the number of replies your updates are getting. What engagements and interactions result? Of course, you do need to make efforts to tell them that you're on social media in the first place.

# HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU'VE BEEN SUCCESSFUL?

MATT COLLINS

## If you aim to stay informed

If you just want to use social media in order to stay informed, that's great! Simply check, periodically, that you feel more informed on key topics. Did you find information about a particular topic or event that you didn't see elsewhere? Are you finding relevant information more quickly on social than through other means?

**“OFTEN THE BEST WAY TO MEASURE THE VALUE OF YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE IS TO DO A SENSE-CHECK OF WHETHER YOU FEEL THE TIME YOU SPEND ON SOCIAL IS YIELDING ENOUGH RESULTS...”**

If it's increased visibility you're after, make a note of how often or how many people mention to you in person that they've seen one of your updates. This is how online and offline combine to make the biggest impact.

Most CEOs don't keep a meticulous list of metrics. Often, the best way to measure the value of your social media presence is to do an occasional, quick sense-check of whether you feel the time you spend on social is yielding enough results like the ones above.

# FIVE TIPS FOR CHARITY LEADERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

## 1. BE APPROACHABLE

Social media, especially Twitter, is an informal medium. Being warm and engaging is key.

## 2. REACH OUT TO PEOPLE

Whether you want to talk to beneficiaries, the media or your peers, social media represents a unique opportunity to build relationships.

## 3. SHARE INSIGHTS

People want to hear your opinion on the issues which matter to your organisation.

## 4. BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER

As a leader you have the power to build an influential community on social media which can help you and your organisation.

## 5. BE YOURSELF

Don't be afraid to talk about your interests as well as your job. People want to know about you as much as your charity.

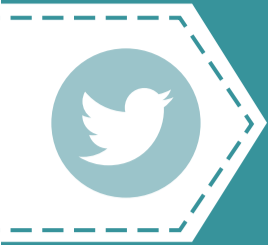
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