Trends from the Twitterverse: How to turn your fundraising event into social media gold
Fundraising event success isn’t just about ticket sales. Ideally, your event will inspire donations and turn attendees into activists for your cause. As we’ll explain in this Britepaper, that’s why it’s more important than ever to engage your audience on social media. A stellar social strategy can help you generate publicity, improve understanding of your mission, and educate and involve the public.

Eventbrite has found that a single share of an Eventbrite fundraising event on Twitter generates around 30 additional page views, and $8 in ticket purchases. A single attendee has an average reach of 130 people on social media, and the potential to reach nearly 17,000 other users. But in such a noisy space, how can you encourage your audience to participate — online and offline?

To uncover how people really engage with events online, Eventbrite partnered with qualitative social TV platform Canvs. Together, we studied how people are talking about fundraising events on Twitter. We analyzed the past year’s Twitter conversation from 60 of the most popular events from across all event categories, using keywords, handles, and hashtags to ensure we captured every tweet. We read it all, and found some surprising trends with real, actionable insights for your social media marketing plan.

Overall, we found that people love to share plans to attend fundraisers on social. These “humblebrag” tweets account for an incredible 41% of total conversation. The takeaway? People feel proud to attend fundraisers, and want their networks to know. But trending on Twitter is all about real time, frequent posts.
Harness the hashtag

Good news! A remarkable 89% of hashtags used in tweets about fundraising events were “branded” — meaning unique hashtags created by the fundraiser. Compared to all other types of events, this was the highest percentage of branded tweets by far. When people use your branded hashtag, it’s easy to track the conversation around your event. Grouping the discussion under one umbrella also makes your cause more likely to trend. Be sure to include your hashtag in all of your tweets, and display it prominently at the event itself.

While pre-event conversation is thriving, our research with canvs shows that conversation drops off during during and after the event. Increasing conversation during the event is vital to increasing awareness. This Britepaper will walk you through the types of posts that make your event go viral, and give your cause a platform to raise awareness and increase donations.

Before the Event:
Hone in on the humble brag to build anticipation

As we learned in our study, 50% of Twitter conversations about fundraising events occur before the event. People are excited to share their support for your cause, which accounts for the majority of these tweets — 22% of tweets are from people announcing their own ticket purchase. These posts account for the largest share of all conversation, which is unique to the fundraising space. Across other event types, pre-event tweets accounted for an average of only 10% of conversation.

Social media allows people to modestly share their contribution to a good cause. But these posts aren’t just self-promotion — they’re event promotion. Eventbrite has found that 60% of Facebook shares are made after the sharer has purchased a ticket. These post-purchase shares inspire 20% more ticket purchases than a share by someone who hasn’t bought a ticket yet.
As an organizer, it’s in your best interest to motivate these “humble brags.” There’s no shame in asking directly — in fact, it’s an advantage. We found that 2% of pre-event conversations specifically used the word “retweet.” For example, you might motivate your audience to retweet you with a contest — anyone who retweets is entered in a lottery for tickets.

“Don’t have $2500 to attend Brad Pitts Make It RIght NOLA gala? for 10 bucks enter to win 2 VIP tickets here: http://gr.pn/1j0qbhM” – @architect_good, Twitter

Build up other types of pre-event anticipation

To build anticipation before your event, take a cue from other industries. In our study, only 3% of fundraising event tweets were about preparing for the event. On the other hand, our study noted that music event-goers frequently posted about getting ready. If you expect people to dress up for your fundraiser, why not encourage similar tweets? If you’ve landed a speaker or performer with a large network, ask them to tweet about their preparation.

During the event:
Inspire sharing with quotes and video

Pre-event tweets dominate the Twittersphere, but tweets during your event may pack the most punch. This might seem counterintuitive — after all, you can’t sell more tickets once the event begins. But Twitter’s algorithms rank frequent, real-time conversation highly to determine trending topics. If awareness of your cause is an important goal, during-event tweets are the best mode of delivery.

Keep the humblebrag in mind as you plan your day-of strategy. How can you inspire attendees and donors to share their participation, without crossing the line into actual bragging?
Our research shows that 83% of fundraising event-day conversation includes a quote, image, or video. Quotes are the most frequently shared, responsible for 78% of tweets. Most attendees are sharing inspiring moments from their keynote speaker, so encourage this behavior by making it easy. Consider incorporating quotes into your signage and decor, or hand attendees thank-you cards with motivational quotes on the cover. Remember, when attendees share your quote, they spread awareness for your cause.

Photos currently only account for 4% of media posts, which is much less than the average for events in general. Inspire more photo sharing with photo booths, fun props, and specifically designated “selfie areas.” On average, posts that include media receive 18% more clicks, 89% more favorites, and 150% more retweets. And don’t forget about hashtags — remind attendees to use your branded hashtags in any social posts.

Videos account for 19% of media posts, a higher percentage than seen by other event types. Be sure to share videos from the event — you can share shorter clips right away, even without professional editing. This gives attendees an opportunity to share after the event, and primes you to increase post-event press.

During the event is also a smart time to engage remote audiences. Music event organizers frequently use live streams and video posts to engage people who can’t attend. Fundraising events can do the same — share updates from the event online, provide donation opportunities for remote participants, and encourage your audience to register for the next event.

**Leverage FOMO**

Our study found that FOMO, or “Fear of Missing Out,” inspires only 1% of conversations in the fundraising event space. Other categories average closer to 8%. Don’t drop people off of your radar just because they missed the event. Create conversations that include your entire audience, and give them other opportunities to take part.
After the event:
Use PR to (humbly) highlight success

When it comes to social sharing after your event, there's good news and bad. First, the good: when we examined post-event Twitter conversations, we found almost no negative tweets. The conversations were divided almost equally between positive feedback from attendees, and media articles about the event. The bad news? These tweets account for only 4% of fundraising event conversations.

So how can you harness positive sentiment and keep the conversation going? First of all, be sure to retweet the positive feedback from attendees. This will encourage more engagement and serve as organic promotion. When you let your attendees speak for you, you’ll appear both proud and humble.

After the event, you should share inspirational moments and fundraising records with the public to generate positive press. Post-event media analysis is currently only 1% of Twitter conversation, and pre-event media is only 2%. On average, media analysis accounts for 12% of non-fundraising event conversations. Borrow PR strategies from other industries to generate your own press.

Looking at other industries, we found that conferences are especially successful at maintaining post-event conversation. About 40% of total conversation happens after a conference takes place, and over half of those posts include media coverage of the event. When we examined the posts, we saw a clear pattern. Conferences make videos of speakers available online, and when these inspirational clips are shared, they generate coverage. This strategy is easy to make your own — why not film and share your most video-worthy presenters?

We also took a look at endurance events — think races and triathlons. These events generate strong post-event media coverage, often by sharing the best times of winners or spotlighting athletes. Did your fundraiser break any records? Can you spotlight one huge contributor? Are there interesting stats you could share, possibly with an infographic or chart?
Continue the conversation with contests

As we’ve mentioned, many smart fundraisers hold “retweet” contests, asking people to retweet social copy to win tickets. Continue this strategy after the event to build excitement for next year. Consider sporadic contests, or raffles for tickets to your next event. You could ask previous attendees to share their favorite moment from your past event. The winner might be whoever drives the most favorites or retweets, or you might select a random winner.

Conclusion

Sharing and fundraising events go hand-in-hand. Your attendees are proud of their participation, and want to raise awareness of your cause. So as you think about your event strategy, tap into every opportunity to encourage social sharing — before, after, and during your event.
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