



**DIGITAL LEADERSHIP:
HOW TO SURVIVE AND
THRIVE AS A SOCIAL CEO**

**ZOE AMAR AND
MATT COLLINS**

social CEOs

ZOE AMAR COMMUNICATIONS

Strategy|Marketing|Communications|Digital|Social Media

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INTRODUCTION

ZOE AMAR AND
MATT COLLINS

This is the third year for the Social CEOs awards. It feels like much has changed since we started. According to Weber Shandwick, 8 out of 10 CEOs from the world's largest companies are now communicating through social channels, a rate which has more than doubled since 2010.

At the same time, we've seen a lot of negative press about the charity sector over the last year. And worryingly, it also seems as if the sector is becoming polarised between a minority of charities who are using digital in very sophisticated ways and those who are some way from achieving this, whether the barriers are caused by cultural resistance to digital or a lack of skills or budgets.

OUR GUIDE IS FULL OF INSIGHTS TO HELP LEADERS DEVELOP THEIR CONFIDENCE AND SKILLSET IN DIGITAL, WHETHER THEY ARE EXPERIENCED OR BEGINNERS

Through our work, we know that there is no better way for leaders to get the most out of digital than by trying these channels out themselves. It is the first step towards encouraging the charities they lead to go digital first.

And if the sector is to bounce back from the press stories we have seen recently, its leaders will need to be willing to have difficult conversations and to be bold about the difference their organisations are making. Social media will be vital in doing this.

Our guide is full of insights to help leaders develop their confidence and skillset in digital, whether they are experienced or beginners.

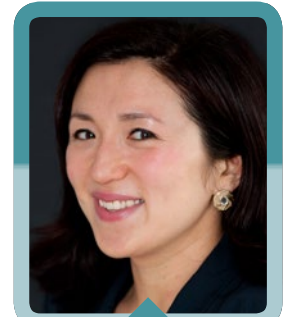
Our sponsors JustGiving, Grant Thornton and TPP Recruitment have shared their expertise, as has Deborah Alsina, CEO of Bowel Cancer UK. We've covered the topics which CEOs have told us are hot issues, from risk management to strengthening relationships with stakeholders, culture change, fundraising, how much they should reveal about themselves online and getting the most value from LinkedIn.

Do get in touch with us if you have any questions.

ABOUT ZOE AND MATT

Hi, I'm Zoe

Zoe Amar MCIM is the founder and director of Zoe Amar Communications, a marketing and digital consultancy. She and her team advise nonprofits regularly about social media strategies. Their clients have included The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, ActionAid, and Crimestoppers. Zoe writes for The Guardian Voluntary Sector Network about charities and digital communications and sits on their advisory panel. She is also an associate lecturer in social media at Anglia Ruskin University on its postgraduate degree in Charity and Social Enterprise Management. She is a trustee of a national charity.



ZOE AMAR

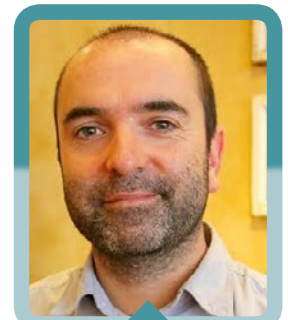
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ZOE AMAR COMMUNICATIONS

Strategy|Marketing|Communications|Digital|Social Media

Hi, I'm Matt

Matt Collins is the MD of Platypus Digital, a digital marketing agency for charities and other organisations doing great work. He's a digital marketer who believes in the life-changing power of the internet to spread charities' messages and connect their supporters. He spent 10 years working for charities large and small, from St John Ambulance and CSV to Chance UK and BeatBullying. He went on to train formally in digital marketing with General Assembly and set up Platypus Digital in 2014. They now deliver campaigns, training and consultancy for charities who want to use digital channels better to raise more money and reach more people.



MATT COLLINS

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OUR SPONSORS

The logo for JustGiving, featuring the word "JustGiving" in a bold, purple, sans-serif font with a trademark symbol.

The 2015 #SocialCEOs awards are in association with JustGiving

JustGiving is the world's largest social platform for giving. Since their launch in 2001, they've helped 22 million people raise over £2 billion (\$3 billion USD) for over 20,000 incredible charities. Their mission is to connect the world's causes with people who care.

They bring the best that technology has to offer to charities worldwide, and for the last two years running have been awarded Best Giving Platform by the Institute of Fundraising.

The logo for Grant Thornton, featuring a purple circular icon with a white dot inside, followed by the text "Grant Thornton" and "An instinct for growth" below it.

Grant Thornton

Grant Thornton's charity and not for profit team provide bespoke audit, tax and advisory services to over 800 organisations around the UK. Ranked third by income audited, our accredited specialists work from seven regional locations to ensure our clients are serviced by knowledgeable staff who are kept abreast on all charity sector and technical issues as they arise. Our involvement in the sector is vast including an annual seminar programme, NFP Interchange, our Non-Executive Forum for Not for Profit organisations run in partnership with the Guardian, membership of the SORP Committee, frequent commentary in the sector press, thought leadership on subjects such as governance in the top 100 charities as well as regular speaking and attendance at all key sector conferences.

For more information, please go to Grant Thornton's website or contact **Louise Hughes**, Not for Profit Marketing Lead on **020 7383 5100** or email louise.hughes@uk.gt.com

The logo for TPP Recruitment, featuring a stylized blue and green circular icon followed by the text "TPP" in blue and "Recruitment" in green below it.

TPP Not for Profit – the charity recruitment specialists

At TPP, all our consultants are sector specialists, able to offer the best advice and service to both our candidates and clients. TPP's divisions cover the full breadth of charity roles and we take pride in supplying the best staff available for our clients.

We also offer a range of **free services** to help support the not for profit sector.

FOREWORD

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

Two years ago Zoe and Matt launched #SocialCEOs

I am privileged they asked me to be on the judging panel. We were excited that social media was starting to change the way that civil society leaders operated. Matt and Zoe's inspired vision was that the #SocialCEOs awards would shine a spotlight on social media for good. In doing so they would provide inspiration, impetus and encouragement for more CEOs to play, learn, and discover the benefits of social media and what it can achieve for their organisation and their leadership. And so indeed #SocialCEOs has done.



SIMON BLAKE

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TIME AND AGAIN WE SEE THE RULES OF LEADERSHIP EVOLVING AND CHANGING AS A DIRECT RESULT OF SOCIAL MEDIA - WHETHER THAT IS IMPROVING STAFF, TRUSTEE AND SUPPORTER RELATIONS, DEMONSTRATING TRANSPARENCY AND BEING ACCOUNTABLE TO OUR BENEFICIARIES, CREATIVE FUNDRAISING OR KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE, EVIDENCE AND INTELLIGENCE SHARING.

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How leaders should use social media

As civil society leaders, social media affords us the opportunity to get our mission and message across. We can be serious and funny, human, personal and creative, open and accountable and provide information and challenge orthodoxy in ways we simply could not before we checked Twitter with our morning coffee. In affording us this potential we in turn must be bold, enabling our teams to experiment and using social media to learn what works. Leaders and organisations that are using social media well are not working to an established rule book. They are making the rules day by day, week by week and pushing the boundaries and seeking to ensure social media fulfils its potential to help achieve our mission and goals.

Can we rise to the challenge?

Of course social media is not a universal panacea or a silver bullet and realising the potential of social media is not without its challenges. We have to learn new ways of navigating the power of 24/7 communication, trolling, lack of nuance, real time feedback, disproportionate noise and focus on issues or events, quick judgement, personal attacks and offering little forgiveness for any mistakes. All can seem big challenges. For some, it seems a challenge too big to bother with at all - but something with this much potential to help us achieve our mission, some of it realised, and most of it yet to be, deserves our energy, our time and indeed our commitment to navigate its challenges and importantly to harness its benefits.

In 2015 we as CEOs cannot, in my view, be thinking about whether and why to use social media ourselves and in our organisations. Instead we must be thinking how do we use it, what works for us and how will we know if we have been successful. Crucially of course we must also ask how can we celebrate our successes and what can we try next.

HOW I MANAGE STAKE- HOLDERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Deborah Alsina is CEO of Bowel Cancer UK and you can find her on Twitter @deborahalsina

I was definitely not keen to start tweeting but agreed to do so after some arm twisting and it's opened my eyes to the possibilities of social media. It has become a core tool I use to manage relationships with a range of different stakeholders as well as a fantastic source of information and contacts.



DEBORAH ALSINA

Define your audience

My top tip for managing stakeholders as a charity CEO is to define your audience. Realising that and finding the answer has made my experience of using Twitter much more rewarding. If you are clear who you want to talk to – it can evolve over time - it will help you decide what to tweet about. I decided that my primary audience was people directly affected by bowel cancer and charity supporters. My secondary audiences include people interested in bowel cancer or health policy and charity sector colleagues.

Adapt your style

The second thing I learnt was about adapting my style to fit my audience. Whilst some of my tweets are to inform people about what the charity does or thinks about a particular issue, I know that engaging in real conversation with patients and their families has been really important. In fact it's enabled me to form strong long term relationships with a broad range of people. In turn that's given me great insight into bowel cancer treatment and care and the impact the disease has on people's lives.

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"I FEEL I'VE GAINED A LOT THROUGH USING TWITTER BUT IT'S ALSO BENEFITED THE CHARITY. WE HAVE DEVELOPED GREAT RELATIONSHIPS WITH VOLUNTEERS, FUNDRAISERS, AND CAMPAIGNERS AND FOUND CASE STUDIES."
.....

Blend the personal and professional

The third big piece of learning has been how to blend the professional and personal when communicating with stakeholders. As I have wanted to develop genuine interaction with people closely affected by bowel cancer it's been important that there is a good dose of me in my Twitter feed. Whilst I purposefully don't tweet that much about my home life, people respond positively when I occasionally do so. I believe that stakeholder communications on social media don't always need to be very formal to be effective and many people have fed back to me that they like tweeting with a real person not just a logo or job title.

How it's helped my charity

I feel I've gained a lot through using Twitter but it's also benefited the charity. We have developed great relationships with volunteers, fundraisers, and campaigners and found case studies. It's another channel to amplify our key messages. As a CEO, it can feel a bit scary to step into this world but it's a very rewarding and valuable way to build a community for our cause.

SHOULD CEOs BE MORE TRANSPARENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

Zoe Amar is Director of Zoe Amar Communications and you can find her on Twitter [@zoeamar](#)

There is no doubt that charities are under intense scrutiny from government and the media. We've seen a wave of negative stories recently, from CEOs' pay to how charities fundraise and communicate.



ZOE AMAR

The fact is that this level of attention from our stakeholders is not going away- in fact, it's likely to increase. The growing level of interest in these stories shows that there is appetite amongst donors, the public, politicians and journalists to understand what charities do, how they invest donors' funds and how they make a difference.

In these volatile times, charity leaders must focus on what they can control. Being visible and active on social media could pre-empt negative publicity, demonstrating that they and their organisations are open and engaged. So how can charity CEOs do this most effectively on social media?

Tell people about what you are doing

It may sound glaringly obvious but a quick win in showing how you make a difference as a leader is to explain what you are up to. Talk to people about who you're meeting with, events you're attending and what your staff are working on. If you run a national charity this is also a good way for regional staff to see what you're doing each day.

Share achievements

Why wait for the annual report to share your charity's impact? As the CEO, you can use social media to show how your team are making a difference there and then. It's also a smart way to help colleagues feel great about their hard work.



Be prepared to have challenging conversations.

Inevitably, given the current climate for charities, people may use social media to ask difficult questions about your charity. Avoid being defensive. Transparency is about being open in your approach and sharing information generously. Overall, if you are seen to be willing to engage on social media and talk about your charity's work then this will be very positive for its brand.

It takes courage for charity leaders to put themselves out there on social media, and to some it may even feel counter intuitive. But if we are to help the public understand what we do, how we offer value for money, and how our work changes thousands of lives for the better, then you may be holding the power to do that in the smartphone in your hand.

HOW CEOS CAN FUNDRAISE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Kirsty Marrins is
Content and Community
Manager at JustGiving
and you can find her on
Twitter [@londonkirsty](#)

Most charities rely on donations and people who do amazing things for them by fundraising. With more and more cuts in funding, never has fundraising been so important.



KIRSTY MARRINS

What better way for a charity CEO to truly understand the fundraising experience than to fundraise themselves and to share their fundraising efforts on social media?

This sends a message to the CEO's staff - I know fundraising is crucial for ensuring our charity is sustainable and I want to do my part.

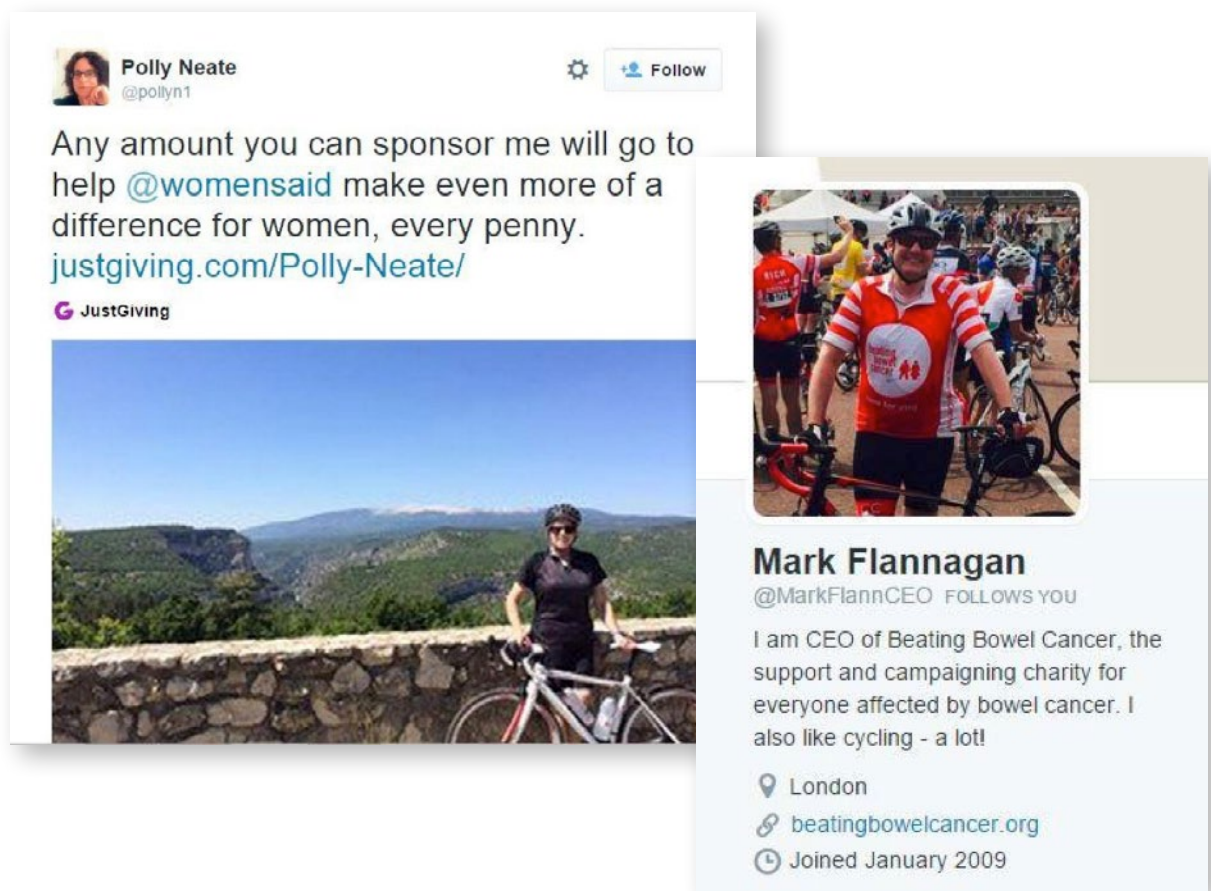
It also sends a message to the charity's supporters, who feel that the CEO is just like them. It shows that he or she cares deeply about this cause and is willing to really get involved.

On JustGiving, we see many CEOs fundraising for their charities in a variety of ways. Some choose to fundraise through a challenge event, such as a cycle ride or marathon whilst others take on denial challenges or don a wig or fancy dress. It doesn't matter if you can't run 5k let alone a marathon – there are plenty of ways to fundraise creatively, as these CEOs demonstrate:



HOW CEOS CAN FUNDRAISE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Kirsty Marrins is
Content and Community
Manager at JustGiving
and you can find her on
Twitter [@londonkirsty](#)



Through their personality and commitment, these CEOs are leading the way in combining social media and fundraising.

Top tips for fundraising CEOs

1. Shout about your fundraising

Take your followers on a journey through your fundraising challenge by tweeting about why you're taking on the challenge, how training is going, donation asks and what the money would mean for your charity. Get involved in relevant Twitter chats, such as #runchat.

2. Images matter

Don't be afraid to take a selfie of your fundraising challenge, like Lorraine Clifton CEO of Clic Sargent did with her wig for #wigwednesday.

3. Your bio says a lot

Include your charity's handle in your bio, a link to your charity's website or your own fundraising page and a nice image (Mark Flannagan, CEO of Beating Bowel Cancer, is a good example of a great Twitter profile)

4. Get trained up

Still got questions? Ask your social media team – they are the experts

HOW CEOs CAN USE SOCIAL MEDIA FOR CULTURE CHANGE

Rob Hayter is
Director at TPP
Recruitment

Embracing the possibilities that digital offers means that charities face a huge change to their culture and way of doing things, as it both enables and requires collaboration, excellent internal communications and the ability to move quickly.



ROB HAYTER

Encourage staff to be digital champions

If your charity wants to get the most out of digital you will need staff who can champion the organisation on social media.

However, it's very important that they have the support from senior management to do so. Organisations should be clear about their digital goals for the future and bear these in mind when bringing in new staff – recruit for the culture you want to have, not the one you have now.

Digital means that employees throughout the organisation can have just as much impact as the CEO on the public perception of your organisation and its work. This can be a great opportunity to give your brand a more convincing and human voice, as individual experiences from the front line tend to be very powerful but it requires an open hands-off approach and lots of trust.

A GOOD EXAMPLE OF AN ORGANISATION INVOLVING THEIR EMPLOYEES IN THEIR SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY IS THE AFRIKIDS BLOG, WHICH WAS CREATED AS A WAY “TO GIVE EVERYONE IN THEIR ORGANISATION A VOICE.”

Work with HR and senior management

After all, while individual social media accounts belong to individuals, not organisations, any remarks made about the brand could be in the public domain forever. Just adding an “all views my own” disclaimer to an online profile isn't enough to stop a negative comment from an individual reflecting badly on the organisation as a whole.

HR and Senior Management need to work together with your staff to ensure that everyone has clear guidelines on how to talk about your charity, its mission and work, and crucially, what not to say. Then employees should be encouraged to make the brand their own and talk about their work in their own voice.

Empowerment is key

A good example of an organisation involving their employees in their social media strategy is the AfriKids blog, which was created as a way “to give everyone in their organisation a voice.” The blog is updated by different members of staff with a mix of human interest, opinion posts and plenty of images. According to AfriKids' founder Georgie Fienberg, “We use the blog's content to drive new audiences to our website with a view to spreading the word and generating interest in what we do.” This ultimately leads to new partners and donors – the lifeblood of our organisation. Helping your staff embrace social media themselves can ultimately lead to stronger communications and networks with your supporters, but it's vital that it's managed carefully.

SOCIAL MEDIA - TIME TO GET PERSONAL

Matt Collins is MD of Platypus Digital and you can find him on Twitter [@charitychap](#)

Social media is by its very nature a personal business. You need to share your own thoughts, feelings and details about how you spend your spare time. But you're the CEO, don't you have to be careful with how much of that stuff you share with those who work for you?



MATT COLLINS

Watercooler chat matters

Think of social media as an enormous watercooler, with millions gathered round it. We all indulge in that idle chit chat and gossip. Some of the most important morsels are discovered here, the scraps that help you get things done, even if they're just ideas.

The difference with this watercooler though is that it has the most influential and most important stakeholders sharing their most intimate thoughts around it. If you don't pay your dues by getting personal, who will share those mission-critical scraps with you?

Should I connect to my staff on social media?

Connect to your staff on social and one of two things happens:

- You share updates and snaps from your personal life - now your staff know about your personal life.
- They share updates and snaps from their personal life - now you know about your staff's personal lives.

Either way, the dynamic between you changes, even if imperceptibly. So the culture at your organisation changes.

Now, this is only a problem if this doesn't align with the organisational culture you want to build (assuming you have a clear idea about that). If you want a tight-knit vibe, connect away. If you want a more distant one, stay separate.

On Twitter, you can always follow and not always reply to their updates if you do read personal ones - depending what they're like, your staff may feel snooped on if they know the boss reads everything they put out there.

How much should I share on social media?

Remember, you're not an RSS feed. If you just churn out organisational news stories on social media, nobody will bother engaging with you.

If you are sharing news from your organisation, always add a feeling layer on top of the fact - are you delighted, excited, outraged? Tell us!

Finally, to whatever extent you feel comfortable, talk about your personal life and thoughts. The only rule you need to apply here is instinct - if something in you is stopping you pressing 'tweet' on an update, don't do it.

Remember, being personal gives you personality. And it's a rare leader who gets far without a fair dose of that.

MANAGING RISKS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Louise Hughes is Not for Profit Marketing Lead at Grant Thornton LLP and you can find her on Twitter @truswelltown

As the figurehead of an organisation, the Chief Executive will always be there to be scrutinised whether it be from commentary in the newspaper, to the 'voice' on social media.



LOUISE HUGHES

Be it Richard Branson, who famously faux-passed in front of his six million followers with 'Space is hard – but worth it' on the day of the fatal Virgin Galactic crash last year, to Ryanair's Michael O'Leary seemingly forgetting the true reach of Twitter by commenting 'Nice pic. Phoarrrr!!' when a female fan posted a photograph of her airplane journey on his Twitter feed.

The risks these tweets impose on the person, but more importantly, an organisation's brand can be huge so it's really key that the person behind the tweet is taking responsibility and is aware of the risks social media brings. So...

Have you had training?

Has your media training been extended to the digital world? Specific training and guidance on social media for every level, from board to operational staff and volunteers, helps different roles to understand the risks and manage them. Keep the guidance and training simple, easy to access and remember, and people are more likely to engage in it.

Are you in the know?

As Chief Executives, you should be kept abreast of any 'breaking news' or latest developments (both internally and externally) that may affect or be related to your charity. The processes around these latest developments should be enforced to determine whether it is appropriate that you engage in conversation on that particular news story, or whether it is more appropriate to refrain in case the subject could be seen as insensitive. As Chief Executives, your first thought should be to check in with these processes, and not act before that. This could be critical in avoiding a 'Richard Branson' moment.

Authenticity is key

Your own voice will be much more engaging for beneficiaries, giving your own personal thought and passion for the cause. By having your own account, this is your chance to create your own 'human touch', a chance for everyone to see that you care about the charity you lead. This is you taking control of your own message but it should be one taken with care. This should be different from the charity's, where the posts, in many cases, are constructed by professionally trained individuals who will have a more 'structured' approach to what they are saying.

As a social CEO, you already have a personal and vested interest in social media, but it is always important to check back to make sure you have the basics right when using these channels in attracting new beneficiaries.

HOW TO USE LINKEDIN TO REACH DECISION MAKERS

Zoe Amar is Director of Zoe Amar Communications and you can find her on Twitter @zoeamar

In the UK alone LinkedIn is used by 364,000 policy makers, 406,000 journalists and 19,000 CSR Directors. Just think about that for a moment. With so many decision makers on this platform, is your charity reaching them?



ZOE AMAR

LinkedIn might just be the nonprofit world's best kept secret for reaching senior influencers in the worlds of business and government. However, these people often receive many connection requests. Even if they do accept you, you may have your work cut out staying top of mind in their network. After all, the average CEO has 930 connections on LinkedIn. Here are my tips to help develop these relationships.

- **Know who you want to reach.** What are your charity's goals and how can connecting with influencers on LinkedIn support that? The more specific you are the more easily you will be able to search for these stakeholders on LinkedIn.
- **Start with who you know.** Use the add connections tool on LinkedIn to find out who you already know on there. Spend two minutes a day updating your network by connecting with people who you've worked with or had meetings with.
- **Ask for introductions.** If you can see that someone you really want to get to know is connected to someone in your network, ask for an introduction. Whenever people ask me to do this I'm happy to help.
- **Remember that connecting is just the start.** Post regular status updates and blogs. These should differ slightly from Twitter and Facebook; as LinkedIn is a professional network, you should use a more professional and formal tone of voice. However, don't use LinkedIn to broadcast. Your aim should be to increase engagement and start conversations. So share something you've found useful (e.g. a great article or insight), news about what you're working on, or ask a question that'll get people talking.

LINKEDIN IS A COMPETITIVE NETWORK TO GET NOTICED ON BUT IF YOU FOLLOW THESE TIPS CONSISTENTLY YOU SHOULD BE REMEMBERED BY ALL THE RIGHT PEOPLE.

TEN TOP TIPS FOR SOCIAL CEOS

- 1. Social media is a massive opportunity.** Use it to represent your charity well, reflect how important your work is, and improve transparency.
- 2. Share personal as well as professional updates.** This will make your social media presence more human and approachable.
- 3. Tell your followers about what you're working on.** Your followers will value personal insights which show how you are making a difference.
- 4. Share expert information on your cause.** This will position you and your charity as thought leaders and the 'go to' experts in your field.
- 5. Develop valuable relationships with decision makers on social media.** Share useful information, have topical discussions and slowly build support for what your charity does.
- 6. It's ok to have challenging conversations.** If people disagree with you, as they might, be as nice and professional as you would be if it was a face to face discussion.
- 7. Share your fundraising journey.** If you're fundraising for your cause, share selfies, training stories and updates from the whole experience.
- 8. Encourage staff to use social media too.** You can all be strong representatives of your cause and support each other as you do.
- 9. Use LinkedIn as a professional space.** Get introduced to people who can help your charity and share professional content.
- 10. There are no rules on social media - only guidelines.** Experiment and see what works for you.

Get in touch

Get in touch to find out how we can help you.

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For more tips check out socialceos.org

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