



## Nonprofits Need to Be on TikTok: Here Are 4 Steps to Thrive

By Stephanie Minor

The social media craze that started with music and dancing videos has exploded into a worldwide phenomenon with more than three billion downloads across the globe.

I'm talking about TikTok, of course, the fastest-growing platform of short-form videos, entertainment and information that is worth exploring for every nonprofit.

Why? TikTok videos have the ability to gain a huge audience – and even go viral. And there are options for building awareness and raising donations that make it appealing to nonprofits.

Moreover, TikTok has become a hub of creativity, connection and opportunities to learn. It is creating activists from a younger generation and becoming the new go-to for nonprofits wanting to increase their audience, raise money, and even create fun and engaging content without a lot of tech or production.

Founded in 2016, the short form video host began to reach its height in popularity in the U.S. in June 2020, when many young people found themselves home searching for the latest in entertainment due to the coronavirus pandemic. Now a global phenomenon in more than 150 countries, according to Forbes, TikTok is more accessed than Google and its services Google Maps and Gmail. The social media platform is also more popular than Instagram and could surpass Facebook.

While much of social media has been branded as targeted for and by young people, many platforms have begun to expand beyond that demographic, often drawing in adults with quick images, graphics, and – now more than ever – videos. That's where TikTok comes in.

Let's look at four steps for nonprofits to make the most of this popular social media platform.

### 1. Spend Time Looking Through TikTok Videos

See what patterns arise, how music is used and what people are commenting on or liking most often. There are several trends that happen on TikTok, where people repeatedly use a certain dance, music or audio clip. Sometimes they put their own spin on it to make it most relevant to their population.

For example, voiceovers, in which a specific audio clip is placed over a video, are incredibly common and easy to create. Nonprofits like the Catskills Animal Sanctuary, Jacksonville Humane Society, Nashville Humane Association, United Way, American Red Cross and many others focused on Giving Tuesday and Red Nose Day fundraising campaigns have found these videos effective ways to build awareness and tell stories.

While TikTok videos are relatively easy to make and the built-in editing is intuitive, purchasing some minor equipment can also be helpful. This equipment includes a dedicated cellphone for making videos and sharing with different members of the staff, board or volunteers, and different types of lighting, such as a ring light, to improve the quality.

### 2. Consider What Stories or Information to Highlight — and Which Ones Will Drive Donations.

As nonprofits start to build and create videos, they should determine how these fit into their current social media strategy and ongoing communications campaigns, and especially how the videos can be shared across multiple platforms. Using features such as auto-captioning and text-to-speech conversion also increases the videos' accessibility to all.

Creating challenges for people to participate in, providing informational videos, leveraging other marketing partners, and creating fundraising campaigns are all ways TikTok can be useful.

Nonprofits, like the Movember Foundation, which is focused on men's health issues, have successfully used TikTok to create short videos advertising its upcoming awareness campaigns, using similar imagery and messaging across all of its marketing channels.

### 3. Investigate Fundraising Features

After nonprofits have started to build up a following on TikTok (no matter how small), they should look into the platform's available fundraising features, including donation stickers that can be added to videos and live streams to collect donations, as well as displaying "Fundraiser" tags, which allow users to link a nonprofit in their profile under their bio. TikTok requires organizations to create profiles on Tiltify and Benevity Causes in order to be eligible to use donation stickers and ensure that donations will go to the right place.

### 4. Target Gen Zers and Millennials

While the demographics are growing, TikTok provides an excellent opportunity to connect with a younger audience — specifically Millennials and Gen Zers — immediately and more personally. More than 50% of TikTok's global audience is

younger than 34. They've grown up with technology, the internet and especially social media.

Within the next five years, these two groups will become the largest generation and the next group of donors to flood the market. A majority of them embrace diversity and equity, and they care about many of nonprofit causes, including the environment, social justice, animal rights, freedom of expression and more.

Marketing to Gen Z and Millennials, particularly through platforms like TikTok, taps into a group of passionate, digitally oriented activists and advocates. For example, nonprofits like Diversability focused on people living with disabilities, are finding great success reaching this demographic through TikTok by providing videos created by and for people with different abilities.

These are just a few ways for nonprofits to get started. TikTok is unlikely to go away anytime soon and is a worthwhile investment of time for nonprofits. More and more nonprofit social media teams that are managing Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, are integrating TikTok into the growing list to help their organizations expand their audience, build awareness, raise money and thrive. These are just a few ways for nonprofits to get started. TikTok is unlikely to go away anytime soon and is a worthwhile investment of time for nonprofits. More and more nonprofit social media teams that are managing Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, are integrating TikTok into the growing list to help their organizations expand their audience, build awareness, raise money and thrive.

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