



[How one donor got recruited on Facebook](#)

by Miriam Kagan

As social media increasingly becomes a part of the nonprofit marketer's toolkit, many fundraisers are wondering whether the big mama of all social networks—[Facebook](#)—is really worth the effort and investment from a fundraising perspective.

Sure, we all know we can get people to “like” our page, maybe post some comments, watch some videos, but stories abound about the lack of success in terms of turning Facebook followers into donors. Yes, there's Facebook [Causes](#), and socially branded efforts by commercial marketers (check out the [Chase Giving campaign](#) for a great example). But can Facebook actually cultivate the kind of donor relationship that results in “real” donations?

Based on personal experience, I have to say yes. As a fundraising professional, I get *a lot* of solicitations—direct mail, online, telemarketing, you-name-it. And I read most of them. Every once in a while I get moved to give.

Below is the story of one organization that regularly receives donations from me, and my relationship with them exists entirely because of, and continues to be cultivated by, their Facebook presence.

I first became familiar with the [Wildlife Friends of Thailand](#) (WFFT) because a friend “recommended” it to me on Facebook. I am an animal lover, so I was eager to learn about what these folks were doing to help animals in Thailand.

Before you knew it, I was giving on their Web site 3-4 times a year. Why? Because the WFFT follows some very basic best practices that we all apply in our marketing programs every day, and is successfully using them on Facebook.

We all know the age-old truth that a compelling story of an individual will in most cases beat statistics and generalized calls to do “something” for “everyone.” So, instead of telling me about the plight of animals in Thailand and making me feel helpless about the magnitude of the problem, WFFT's posts are frequently focused on a specific need:

We need money to help transport Jane the elephant to our facilities. Here is how we found Jane the elephant, her condition, and why we need to help her.

They also do a great job of providing updates and showing my money at work:

Hey remember Jane the elephant that you helped us rescue? Well, [here are photos of Jane](#), us treating her, and here is how she is doing.

I'm convinced my money doesn't disappear in some giant hole of "helping animals," because they make me feel like my contribution is really accomplishing something on a regular basis:

Here are seven monkeys who've lived with us and we've helped support for six years. See them play in their new enclosure.

They regularly thank the community for its support:

It was hard for us to struggle through the political tensions in Thailand. Some of our largest volunteer groups cancelled. But, because of your support, we were able to continue on.

What WFFT is doing on Facebook is no different in its essence from the best practices of direct fundraising:

- Make the Ask relevant and compelling
- Provide updates and feedback on donors' money at work
- Engage donors as part of your cause and mission—turn them into constituents, not just wallets
- Create a two-way discussion (make donors feel a part of your mission every day)

The moral of our story: Sure, Facebook is a great way to cultivate a community, spread your brand. But tell people about your need in the right way, and it *is possible* to get people, or at least some of us, to open our wallets.

So, ask yourself this:

- Who in your organization owns your Facebook presence, and what does she/he/they believe its ultimate value proposition is for the organization?
- How thorough is your Facebook post follow-up?
- How frequently do you measure the impact of calls to action (if there are any)?
- Has your organization truly developed a strategic approach to Facebook fundraising that is able to measure the long-term impact to organizational revenue from Facebook donor cultivation efforts?

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