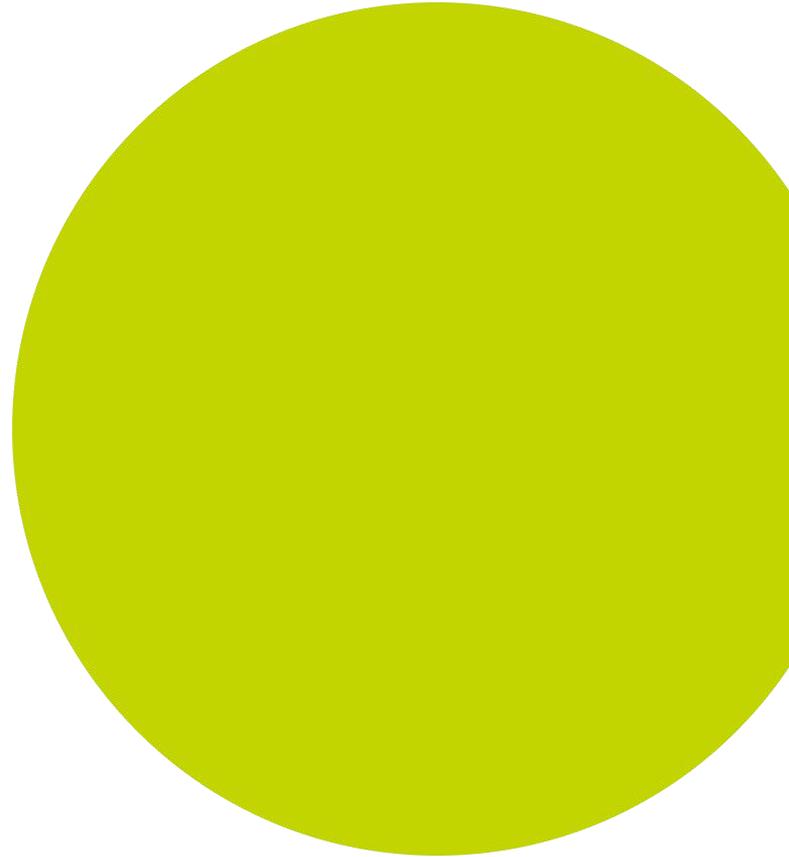


DIGITAL METRICS THAT MATTER:

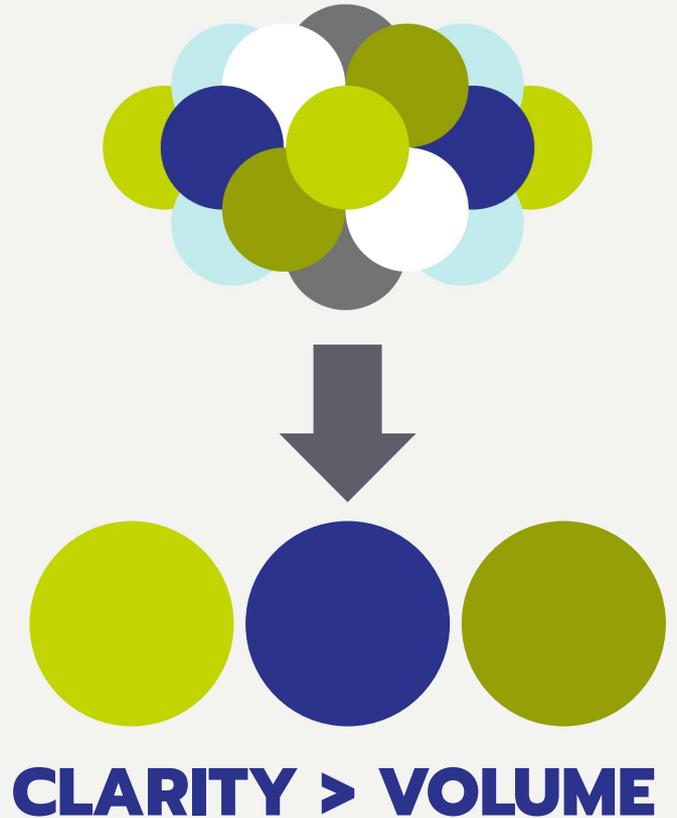
What Nonprofits Should Track and Why

WFF Communications
Capacity-Building Seminar

February 2026 • Led by Tim Whitley



**Fewer numbers.
Better
decisions.**



What is the main problem you want to solve through marketing?

Use the chat  or unmute to share



Reaching the right people more consistently



Understanding who our real audience is



Helping people understand who we are and what we do



Turning interest into real action

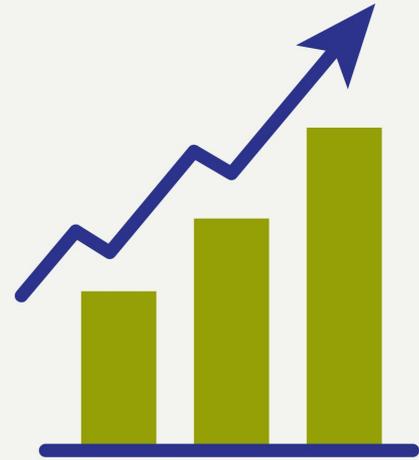


Using limited time and budget more effectively

the problem is
reporting ≠ decisions

Your Takeaway

How to turn marketing **data**
into an effective **strategy**
that drives **results**



Data follows strategy.

Anchor



one primary goal + definition of success

Audience



specific people + one action

Channel



avoid the "everywhere trap"

Map



make the plan real (ownership + 30/60/90)

Check



choose 3 KPIs; avoid vanity metrics;
course-correct, don't panic

The metrics that matter...

For any channel, you are looking for three things:

-  **1. Outcome:** Did we get the result we needed?
-  **2. Leading indicator:** Are we building momentum before the outcome shows up?
-  **3. Quality:** Was it the right audience and the right action, or just noise?

Marketing Funnel + Channels for Nonprofits



Reaching new or lightly familiar audiences

- Earned media / news placements
- Organic social media
- Paid social media (advertisements)

Building familiarity and credibility

- Partnerships (co-promotions, shared content, newsletters)
- Organic social media
- Website (informational pages)

Encouraging participation/action

- Email (event invites, reminders, follow-ups)
- Website (high-intent action pages: registrations, downloads)
- Paid social media (retargeting ads)

Driving commitment and conversion

- Email (targeted calls to action)
- Website (high-intent action pages: donations, applications)
- Partnerships (referrals, co-hosted campaigns)

Deepening relationships and maintaining long-term trust

- Email (thank-yous, impact updates, reports)
- Organic social media (recognition, storytelling)
- Partnerships (ongoing collaboration, shared wins)

Website Metrics

where intent becomes action



What's your primary goal?



**Donation
Completions**



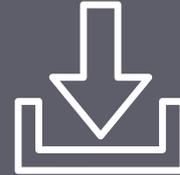
**Volunteer
Form
Submissions**



**Event
Registration
s**



**Newsletter
Sign-ups**



**Contact
Form
Submissions**



**Phone
Calls**

Leading Indicators for Website Performance

If your website reports are showing:

More ***sessions*** on “high-intent” pages = website visitors are visiting pages where they can take an action (Donate, Contact Us, Register, etc.)

More ***engaged sessions*** = website visitors are visiting pages where they can take an action

More ***returning users*** = users won't always act on the first visit, this means you're still in their decision-making journey

It's moving in the right direction!

True or False:

**More website traffic = better
website performance**



Conversions are

Review conversion rates on your website by **landing page** and by **traffic source**

-  Find which pages inspire action
-  Understand which messages resonate
-  See which channels reach audiences

Conversion = action completed on page

Email Metrics

the nonprofit's workhorse



What's your primary goal?



**Donation from
Email**



**Volunteer
Sign-ups from
Email**



**Event
Registrations
from Email**



**Traffic to
high-intent
web pages
from Email**



**Phone
Calls from
Email**

Leading Indicators for Email Performance

If your email reports are showing:

Click-through rate = to the primary action

Click-to-open rate = if available—helps separate subject line from content

It's moving in the right direction!

Quality Metrics for Email Performance



**List Growth
Rate**



**Unsubscribe Rate
& Spam Flags**



**Segment
Performance**



**Donations from
Email**



**Volunteer Sign-
Ups from Email**



**Event Registrations
from Email**



**Traffic to High
Performance Pages**



**Phone
Calls**

Organic Social Media Metrics

where relationships are built over time



What are your goals with social media?

Primary



Traffic & Actions to Website

- Donations
- Sign-ups
- Event Registration
- Calls

Secondary



Audience Trust

- Repeat engagement (likes, comments, saves)
- Profile visits
- Content shares by peers or partners



Message Amplification & Brand Awareness

- Post reach and impressions
- Shares and reshares
- Mentions or tags by aligned organizations

Leading Indicators for Organic Social Performance

If your reports are showing:

Shares / Saves / Comments = Messages are resonating with audiences

Video completion rate = Messaging is clear and story is being told (not just views of the video then clicking off)

Profile actions = Profile visits, link clicks – one way to route traffic to your website for further actions

It's moving in the right direction!

Quality Metrics for Organic Social Media Performance

Look to your website for supporting data on organic website performance



Landing page engagement from social traffic

(engaged sessions, time on page)



Conversion rate from social traffic

(completion of contact/donation/register forms)



Audience mix

(are you reaching donors/volunteers? or mostly peers/staff?)

Which metrics are most useful for tracking social media performance?

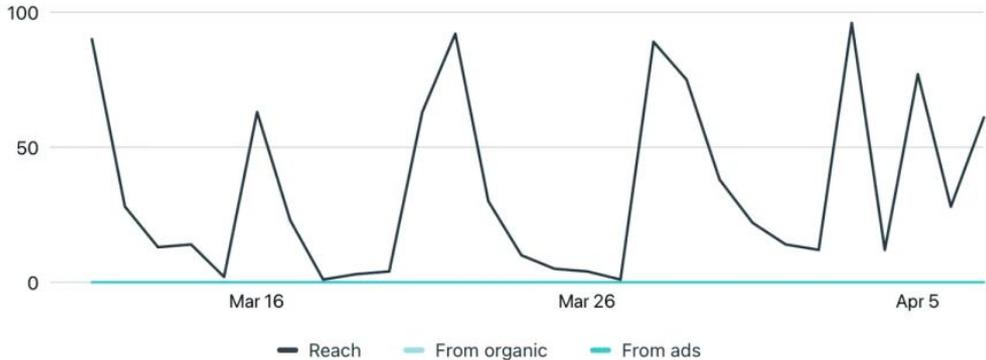
- A. Likes, Comments, Shares**
- B. Reach & Engagement**

For the big picture: Reach & Engagement

“Going Viral” ≠ Social Media Success

Performance

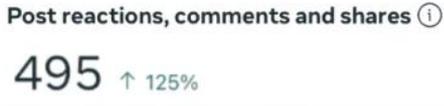
Daily Cumulative ⓘ



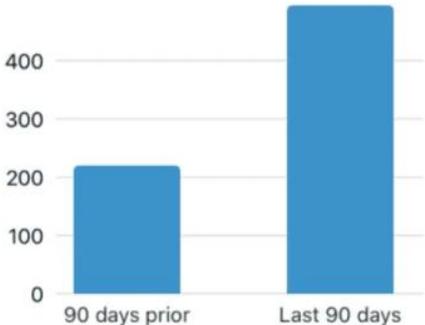
Reach breakdown



Engagement



Total from last 90 days vs 90 days prior





Paid Social Media
(if running ads)

amplifying what works

Outcome Metrics for Paid Social Media (ads)

Understand the **value** of your conversions. When determining spend, identify the values of:

- **Cost per donation**
- **Cost per lead**
 - Volunteer
 - Newsletter
 - Event registration
 - Call
- **Return on ad spend**
 - If it can be measured reliably

The key to running successful ad campaigns?

Starting Strong is the

1. Strong Messaging

Use data to understand what messaging points are already resonating with viewers

2. Strong landing page

Use data to build pages that inspire action

Quality Metrics for Paid Social Media Performance

What leads/conversions are you getting, and how's the cost per action?



Conversion rate by audience and creative

- Donations from email
- Volunteer sign-ups from email
- Event registrations from email
- Traffic to high-intent pages from email
- Phone Calls



Cost per qualified action

(not just cost per click)



Takeaways



Diagnose

Awareness issue?

low reach / low opens

Message issue?

reach/opens are fine, but clicks are low

Offer/CTA issue?

clicks exist, but conversion is low

Friction issue?

conversion drops on mobile, forms are long, steps are confusing

Audience issue?

activity exists, but it is the wrong people or low-quality actions

**When the numbers change...
don't panic.**

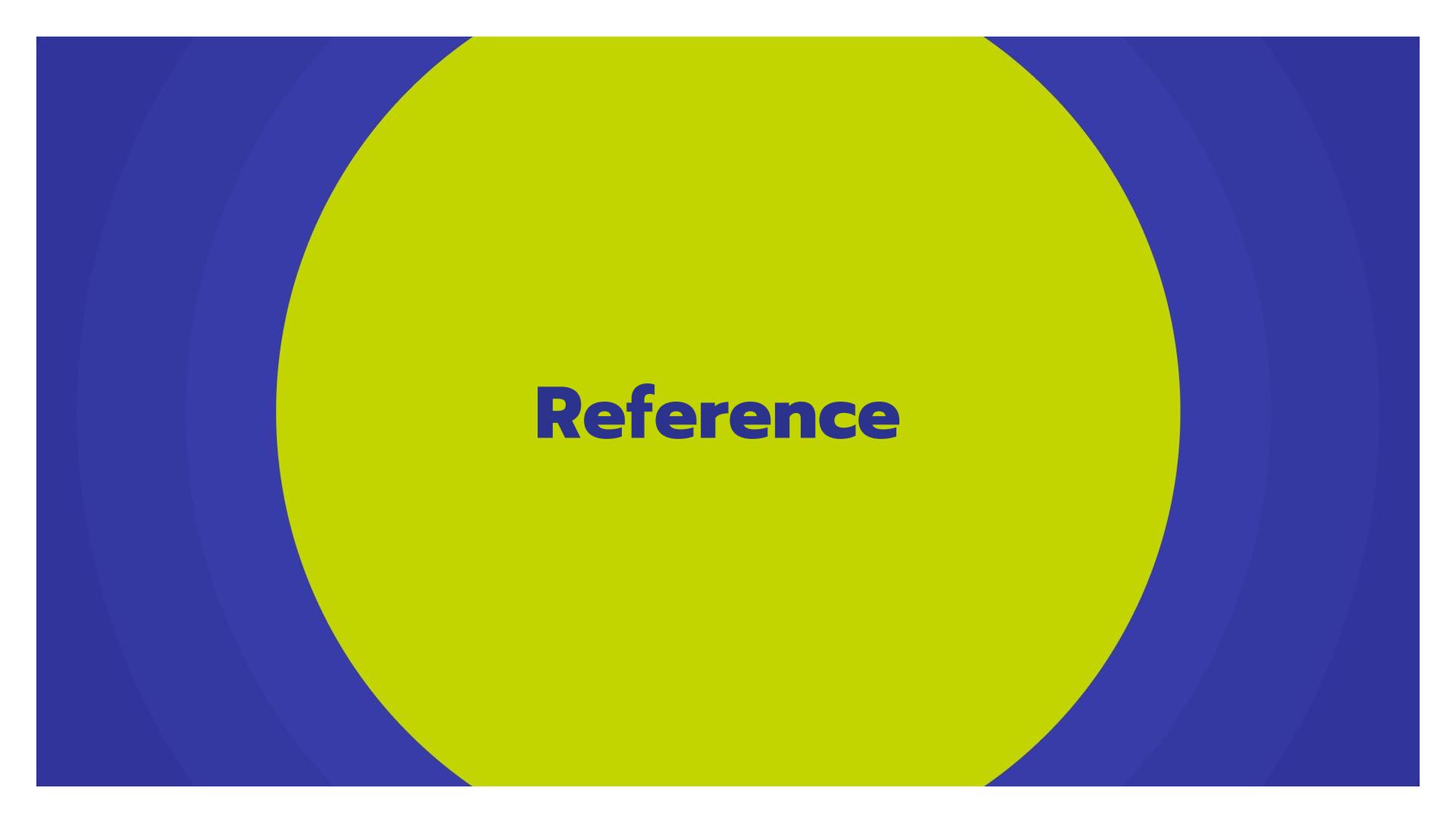
Instead...

**How do you
review your data
without
drowning in
numbers?**



Pick **3 KPIs** per primary goal

1. One **outcome** KPI
achieves mission/business result
2. One **leading indicator**
shows momentum early
3. One **quality** KPI
proves it's the right audience
and/or action



Reference

Data Reporting Tutorials



[Set up Analytics for a website and/or app](#)

+ [Use Analytics with your site](#)

Google Marketing Platform

Tag Manager

[Introduction & getting started with Google Tag Manager](#)

Data Reporting Tutorials



[Set up Analytics for a website and/or app](#)

+ [Use Analytics with your site](#)



[About Meta Ads Reporting \(paid\)](#)

+ [Create reports in Meta Ads Reporting](#)

+ [Navigate to Meta Ads Reporting](#)

+ [View and manage reports in Meta Ads Reporting](#)

[Insights on your Facebook Page \(organic\)](#)

+ [How to see Insights for your Page or professional profile on Facebook](#)

+ [Navigate to Meta Business Suite](#)

[View account and ad insights on Instagram](#)

Data Dictionary

| Term | Definition |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Reach | Unique people/accounts who saw your ad/content at least once. |
| Impressions | Total times your ad/content was shown (includes repeat views). |
| Frequency | Average times each person saw your ad (impressions ÷ reach). |
| Clicks | Total clicks on the ad (may include multiple clicks by the same person). |
| Link Clicks | Clicks that specifically go to a destination (website/landing page/app store). |
| CTR (Click-Through Rate) | % of impressions that resulted in a click (clicks ÷ impressions). |
| CPC (Cost Per Click) | Average cost per click (spend ÷ clicks). |
| CPM | Cost per 1,000 impressions ((spend ÷ impressions) × 1,000). |
| Spend / Cost | Total amount spent during the reporting period. |
| Session | A visit to your website/app (starts when a user arrives). |
| Users | Unique visitors/accounts during the reporting period. |
| Engagement | Interactions with content (Meta: reactions/comments/shares/clicks; GA4: engaged behavior). |
| Engagement Rate | % of sessions that were engaged (GA4: engaged sessions ÷ sessions). |
| Conversion | A completed action you value (purchase, lead, signup, call, etc.). |
| Conversion Rate | % of clicks/sessions/users that produced a conversion (varies by platform). |



STRATEGY • PERFORMANCE
RESULTS



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