



**FOSTERING**  
**BRIGHTER**  
**FUTURES**  
™

Beautiful Social Research Collaborative  
Social Media Analysis: Facebook  
Prepared for TCCWB, December 2016  
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## Summary of the Client Mission

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The main purpose of the Texas Council of Child Welfare Board (TCCWB) is to help children who are experiencing any sort of abuse or neglect in their homes, and place them in a safe environment with adequate resources. The organization's efforts are advocated through their website and social media outlets. TCCWB also promotes foster care through the sponsorship of various events, which provide support for those who are involved in the foster care system, and bring awareness to others about foster care.

TCCWB's core belief is that children who cannot defend themselves should not be discriminated against in this world; every child should have a home. There are basic life skills that are necessary to learn in order to be functioning humans. It is imperative that children have positive influences in order to learn these skills, which is only able to occur in a safe and loving environment. Our client's motives are driven by the reality that many children do not have a forever home. To educate others on this subject our client uses their most prominent social media for their cause, Facebook.

## Summary of Social Media Messaging & Storytelling

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In order to spread a message on social media it is necessary to begin by telling a story. By properly telling a story an organization is able to connect with their audiences and ultimately show why their organization's message matters. Social media provides a platform for companies, brands, and organizations to share their stories. As Aaker and Smith discuss, a storyteller must be able to engage with their audience in order to be successful. For instance, the Bernie Sanders Campaign was successful in utilizing social media to engage with an audience outside of the circle of politically involved people. By connecting with people from all over the country in all different walks of life, the Bernie Sanders Campaign was able to first learn about and understand the lives of so many different people, and then go on to tell their stories and spread that message throughout the country—thus working towards the core goal of the campaign, bringing people together.

So why is it that a story resonates so much with an audience? In "Narratives and Social Movements," Davis states "reader/listeners who identify with the storyteller step into the story, recreate the world it presents, and retain the experience. They make, in short, the story their own" (p. 17). The story is what enables the brand, company, organization etc. to truly connect with their audience. However, in order to be successful at connecting with an audience the story must be told in the proper way. Digital storyteller Joe Lambert advocates seven elements crucial to telling a story: point of view, dramatic question, emotional content, the gift of your voice, the power of the soundtrack, economy, and pacing. Each of these elements caters towards the different senses of the audience. Similarly, Gary Vaynerchuck explains that there are six characteristics of a good story: it's native, it doesn't interrupt, it doesn't make demands (often), it leverages pop culture, it's micro, and it's consistent and self-aware. These characteristics ensure that a story flows well for an audience, is comfortable, and doesn't feel like it is being forced on them.

Once a story has been effectively told through a video, the final step, as John Hlinko explains, is finding a multiplier. A multiplier is a person with a large social media following who literally multiplies the amount of viewers a story can potentially receive. To find these multipliers it is

necessary to market your content towards a specific demographic that will feel inclined to share it with their followers.

## Summary of Client Social Media Use

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The Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards actively uses Facebook and their website. The organization has a Twitter account, but does not use it often. Fostering Brighter Futures (FBF) is a TCCWB campaign that only exists on Facebook.

TCCWB’s website is a great representation of the organization as a whole, and allows for many questions about foster care to be answered, while still providing adequate information about TCCWB itself. As Dave Kerpen explains in his Huffington Post article, “7 Reasons Why Nonprofits Need to Ramp Up Their Social Media Presence,” a website is the first step towards gaining a following, but social media platforms are where you make a presence and voice for your organization. As the seventh reason in the article discusses, being able to tell a story is what makes these platforms so engaging, because you are able to tell an organization’s story more effectively and quickly than ever before.

TCCWB uses their website for updates on events and general information in order to point people to one platform. This then gives them a general idea about what they do as an organization.

Facebook, the most prominent platform used by TCCWB, is used primarily because of the demographics of the social media site. According to “Social Media User Statistics & Age Demographics for 2014,” the highest number of active Facebook users (56 million) are from the ages 35 - 54, which points to why this site is the only platform being regularly utilized by the organization. The use of this site does make sense, since the majority of people who use Facebook of are parenting age, which allows the topic of foster care to resonate and possibly reach a direct target audience.

## Analysis of One Social Media Space

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We have analyzed the Fostering Brighter Futures Facebook page, and after a thorough investigation, have come to the conclusion that FBF needs a more effective social media strategy if they want to successfully spread their positive message about foster care. In order to get to a point where a large audience will see their posts and want to check in on their page frequently they will need to come up with a robust strategy that keeps posts frequent and consistent.

The page has a matching header image and profile picture—both showing the Fostering Brighter Futures logo—which makes the page look professional and put together. Their posts display what Vaynerchuck lists as “The



Figure 1. Fostering Brighter Futures Facebook infographic

characteristics of great content and compelling stories.” Two specific excellent characteristics of the page are that the content is native—that is, the posts are designed to fit where they are placed and are specifically created for their targeted audience—and they are consistent and self aware in that they are all based around the same idea of foster care and do not stray towards random topics. Their three most prominent posts are an infographic based on a foster care statistic (Figure 1), a link to an article about foster care, and a status asking if anyone had a foster care success story that they would like to share. All of these posts would be considered native because photos, statuses, and links to articles are what the audience of the Facebook page would expect to see, which is why the content is being posted. Their posts are also consistent and self aware because they are all strictly about foster care.

The content that the FBF page has on their page helps aid in explaining their mission, but it could benefit them greatly to build on their content by formatting their page in a way that connects with their audience in order to make people want to stay on their page. For example, Facebook includes the features “cause” and “about,” both which provide spaces for organizations to briefly explain their cause and who they are. This allows users to better understand the mission

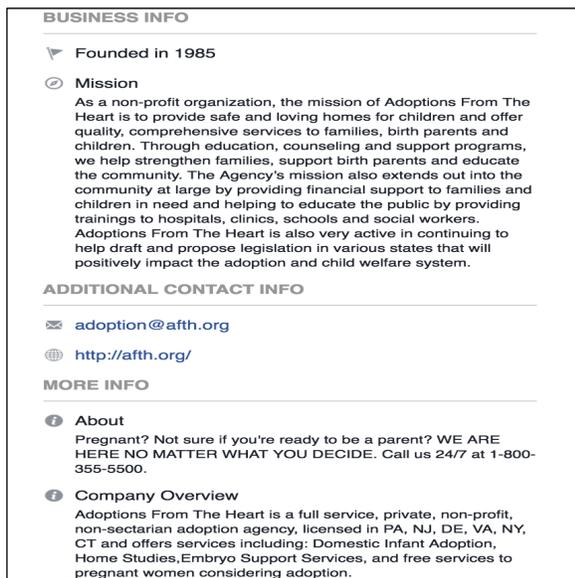


Figure 3. Adoptions of the Heart Facebook about page

Adoptions from the Heart (Figure 3). As soon as a user sees the Adoptions from the Heart page they know exactly what their mission is and get a sense of familiarity. Creating a sense of familiarity through social media is important because it allows the audience to get to know the organization better regardless of the fact that they are not actually meeting with these people in person.

The Fostering Brighter Futures’ Facebook page explains their mission by enacting their messages through posts of photos, infographics, and the sharing of relevant articles, but their mission could be expressed further. They could benefit from posting more to create a connection with a greater community. Out of their three posts, they have one article shared from a website titled, tribtalk.org written by a man named James Frank (Figure 4). Frank’s article is filled with a lot of solid information, but sharing more personal stories would definitely benefit their cause. More



Figure 2. Fostering Brighter Futures Facebook about page

of the page and the organization. Both the cause and about boxes on the FBF page are empty, which creates an automatic disconnect between users and the organization because it doesn’t give users any explanation of who the people behind the page are and what they want to accomplish. Above is a screenshot of the FBF cause and about boxes (Figure 2), and to the left is a screenshot of

the cause and about boxes on the page of a Philadelphia non-profit organization called



Figure 3. Adoptions of the Heart Facebook about page

positive stories relating to foster care, as to that is what their mission seems to ultimately be about, would definitely help the Fostering Brighter Futures page be used to its highest degree. Along with this article from [tribtalk.org](http://tribtalk.org), also on their Facebook page they have their logo of the campaign uploaded and one infographic relating to foster care. Infographics are a good and effective way to get a message across, so more postings of these would also be beneficial.

These three posts, although they do not tell much of a story, do give a general idea of what Fostering Brighter Futures is about. One promising post, however, asks if anyone would like to share “a foster care success story” (Figure 5). The post below suggests that FBF is thinking about storytelling and heading in the right direction with their social media use.



Figure 5. Fostering Brighter Futures Facebook post

The content that the Fostering Brighter Futures Facebook has posted is a great start to tell their story; however, in order to really tell their audience who they are they will need to post much more content. The Facebook page itself only has 7 total likes. The goal of the Fostering Brighter Futures campaign is to show the world that foster care is a wonderful and extremely important thing, thus diminishing the common belief that the foster care system is corrupt and children who enter into it face abuse. However, based on the Facebook page alone it would not be easy to see that is the message they are trying to spread. On September 2nd, the page shared a link to an article titled “Time to change our approach to managing child protective services,” by Texas Representative James Frank, in which Frank points out some of the flaws within legislation and within the CPS agency that result in the foster care system itself looking bad. He states, “Those who work at CPS have an incredibly difficult job, and they only seem to receive attention when a tragedy occurs. Yet, many of the approximately 30,000 current foster children find good homes and go on to thrive.” Both the article and the caption that Fostering Brighter Futures provided with the post are perfect examples of a post that spreads the campaign’s message. The only problem is that only a few people actually saw it because of the page’s lack of a following. If FBF

were to make posts similar to this one on a regular basis and reach out to people who would be interested then they would be much more successful in spreading their message.

## Conclusions and Suggestions

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TCCWB has been successful in many aspects of their social media use. In terms of the Texas Council of Child Welfare Board's Facebook account, the organization updates their page regularly, which has gained them a significant following as well as post shares. Fostering Brighter Future's Facebook page is relatively new, but the only content consists of an article shared, an infographic, and a post about our visit. All of this info is consistent with what the organization is hoping to portray, and is a great start for the account, but more is still needed to be done. Together, these two accounts can work to boost each other's likes, shares, and page visits. By TCCWB posting about FBF a beneficial and effective link will be made, allowing for the very similar audiences to visit each of the pages.

Though FBF does successfully handle certain aspects of their organizations media, there are still areas in which it could improve. One such area would be within their already successful Facebook accounts. FBF could improve by increasing the number of posts, and doing so with more personalized content that is directly tailored to the problem. In addition, by creating more interactive posts, followers can be reached with more information. Rather than simply liking the post, followers can instead gain intriguing information in which they would be able to share to their followers. In order to produce a successful account a posting strategy will need to be formulated in order to stay consistent, as well as timely upkeep on comments, and an informative about page. Finally, the creation and upkeep of a Twitter and Instagram account will allow for FBF to be present across all platforms, and therefore reach a greater following.

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