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Social Media Strategies to Increase Professional Membership Association Dues Income

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Robert John Spangler

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Walden University
2017

Abstract

Social Media Strategies to Increase Professional Membership Association Dues Income

by

Robert John Spangler

MBA, Centenary College, 2008

BS/BA, Centenary College, 2005

Doctoral Study Submitted in Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

December 2017

Abstract

Social media strategies can play an important and specific role in nonprofits by increasing membership dues income. However, insufficient data exists supporting effective strategies for social media in professional membership associations, potentially affecting both business managers within those associations and the stakeholders they represent. The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore social media strategies that nonprofit marketing professionals used to increase professional membership association dues income. The sample included 7 nonprofit marketing professionals in a New Jersey-based professional membership association. Social exchange theory and social influence theory formed the conceptual framework. Data collection occurred using semistructured interviews, a review of campaign data, review of social media, and directly observing a social media planning meeting. Yin's 5 steps for qualitative data analysis formed a logical and sequential process for analysis. An overarching theme, actionable strategies to increase dues income in professional membership associations, emerged with 5 themes, including engagement with social media connections; a comprehensive, coordinated strategy; and establishing trust. The implications for positive social change include the potential to help professional membership associations to increase revenue and better support their social advocacy missions, which could include an improvement in community service activities, benefiting both association members and small and large communities across the United States.

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Dedication

I dedicated this study to Carmen Spangler; Larry and Lois Spangler; Robert and Gladys Spangler; John and Madelon Dennis; Jose y Maria de Los Angeles Lopez; Alejandro, Claudia, and Alexa Fernandez; Larry R. Spangler; and Robert C. McNinch.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Businesses increasingly depend on social media to meet their objectives (Parveen, Jaafar, & Ainin, 2015), and some businesses specifically use social media for marketing and engagement generating activities (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Companies that engage with consumers on social media experience higher quality relationships with those consumers (Hudson, Huang, Roth, & Madden, 2016). In addition, many nonprofit organizations use social media to support traditional marketing and communications strategies (Appleby, 2016), and social media can play an important and specific role in nonprofits by increasing membership dues income (Unnikrishnan, Taylor, & Aldrich, 2016). However, before using social media, nonprofits may benefit from exploring effective social media strategies (Hatzfeld, 2014). The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to study social media strategies that seven nonprofit marketing professionals used to increase membership dues income in a professional membership association.

Background of the Problem

More than half of adult internet users in the United States use two or more forms of social media, a leading form of two-way consumer-to-consumer (C2C) and business-to-consumer (B2C) communication (Hudson et al., 2016). Specifically, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms are part of the day-to-day lives of internet users (Saxena & Khanna, 2013). However, social media platform diversity and the volume of advertising on social media make developing and implementing social media strategies that increase income in businesses challenging (Ladipo, Nwagwu, & Alarape, 2013).

Businesses of all kinds attempt to capitalize on the social media phenomenon by engaging in social media advertising (Pate & Adams, 2013). However, although many nonprofits use social media, limited research supports their overall effectiveness in nonprofit organizations (Kane, Alavi, Labianca, & Borgatti, 2014). Furthermore, nonprofit organizations that do not implement effective social media strategies risk their long-term sustainability (Fields, 2014). In their 2016 study on the use of social media to boost membership retention in voluntary professional associations, Unnikrishnan et al. (2016) used social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) to theorize that nonprofit associations can enhance membership retention rates with social media, consequently increasing member dues income. Specifically, Unnikrishnan et al. postulated that by providing value and reciprocal interaction as found in social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), professional membership associations could both retain more current members and attract new members. Whitney and Gale (2015) argued that membership dues constitute one of the primary sources of operating income in nonprofit associations. The lack of research into nonprofit social media strategies identified by Kane et al. (2014) and the use of social media strategies to increase dues income in nonprofit organizations supported the need for this study.

Problem Statement

Nonprofit organizations that do not implement effective social media strategies risk their long-term sustainability (Fields, 2014). Since 2009, 97% of the 200 largest nonprofit organizations use social media (Brown, 2015). Social media provides nonprofits with new opportunities to increase income (Saxton & Wang, 2013), playing an important and specific role in membership and membership dues income growth (Unnikrishnan et al., 2016). The general business problem that I addressed in this study was that underusing social media strategies results in lost income in nonprofit associations. The specific business problem that I addressed in this study was that some nonprofit marketing professionals lack social media strategies to increase professional membership association dues income.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore social media strategies that nonprofit marketing professionals used to increase professional membership association dues income. The sample included seven nonprofit marketing professionals in one New Jersey-based professional membership association who excel in executing social media strategies to increase income from membership dues. The implications for social change of this study include the potential to help professional membership associations to promote their social advocacy missions, which could include the advancement of social goals, the reduction of social inequalities, and community service activities.

Nature of the Study

This study was qualitative in nature. According to Sauerland, Krix, van Kan, Glunz, and Sak (2014), researchers use the open-ended questioning model of qualitative methodology to achieve a depth of understanding not available using other research methods (Sauerland et al., 2014). Conversely, researchers use quantitative methodology to capture and measure specific data (Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013). Quantitative methodology did not apply to this study because the specific focus on measurable data provided limited means to explore context or any unpredictable factors that contributed to social media effectiveness. Some researchers also observed that combining the data analysis of quantitative research with the flexibility of qualitative research to conduct a mixed-methods study provided increased understanding by using more than one method to study the same concept (Cameron & Molina-Azorin, 2014; De Leeuw, Green, Dyakova, Spanswick, & Palmer, 2015). This study did not include a mixed-methods approach because a contextual study of social media strategies to increase membership dues income in a professional membership association was qualitative; mixed-methods research is helpful only when necessary to employ more than one method to understand a topic.

A single case study design was the foundation for this study. Singh (2014) contended that single case studies provide a deep, context-based understanding of a business problem. Before selecting a case study design, I considered phenomenological design, narrative design, and case study design. A narrative design did not apply to this study because narrative research provides a focus on storytelling and linear sequences (Paschen & Ison, 2014). Phenomenology, which includes investigation of individual experiences with a phenomenon (VanScoy & Evenstad, 2015), was a much closer match. However, researchers use case study designs to conduct context-based explorations of a case or cases within their environment and produce an in-depth understanding of how something happened or confirmation of learning when something occurred (Yin, 2013), making a case study design the best choice for this study.

Research Question

The research question for this study was: What social media strategies do nonprofit marketing professionals use to increase professional membership association dues income?

Interview Questions

1. What (if any) social media strategies have you used that led to increased membership dues income in this 501(c)(6) professional membership association?
2. If you have used effective social media strategies that led to increased membership dues income in this 501(c)(6) professional membership association, what makes each of the strategies you have used effective?
3. What social media strategies have you used that have not been effective in increasing dues income in this professional membership organization?
4. What makes each of the strategies you mentioned in the previous question ineffective?
5. How do you measure whether a social media strategy has increased dues income in this professional membership organization?
6. How do you determine which social media strategy to use when seeking to increase membership dues income in this 501(c)(6) professional membership association?

7. What value, if any, do you place on engaging in two-way social media communication with individuals by sharing information that provides a benefit or value?
8. What value, if any, do you place on establishing a sense trust or a shared mindset with connections when using social media strategies to increase membership dues income in this 501(c)(6) professional membership association?
9. What factors present the biggest threats when using social media strategies to increase membership dues income in this 501(c)(6) professional membership association?
10. What would you recommend to 501(c)(6) professional membership associations seeking to develop and implement effective social media strategies designed to increase membership dues income?
11. What additional experiences have you had regarding the use of social media to increase membership dues income in 501(c)(6) professional membership associations that pertain to this study?

Conceptual Framework

In the author's seminal work on social exchange theory, Blau (1964) argued that social exchange theory helps researchers to explain the structure and process governing the relationship between individuals and groups. Researchers use social exchange theory to explain how individuals seek out exchanges with other parties when they benefit in some way, and how social exchange relationships exist until a relationship is no longer beneficial to one or both of the parties (Blau, 1964; Huang et al., 2016). Researchers also use social exchange theory to investigate business relationships, including key motivators in consumer social media participation (Liu, Min, Zhai, & Smyth, 2016), making this theory ideal for this study on using social media to increase dues income in nonprofit professional membership associations.

The conceptual framework of this study also included social influence theory to interpret and explain how people adopt new attitudes and beliefs. Kelman (1958) stated the effects of social influence include categorization into three connected processes: (a) compliance, (b) identification, and (c) internalization. According to Hsiao and Chiou (2017), compliance occurs temporarily when an individual accepts the influence of others and exhibits an attitude or behavioral change. Conversely, identification occurs when individuals attempt to mimic the attitudes and behavior of others to look like those individuals (Albert et al., 2017), and internalization represents attitude changes that are lasting and have become a part of an individual's core beliefs (Kelman, 1974). Finally, Cheung and Lee (2010) extended social influence theory as a means to understand consumer reaction to social media advertising.

Definition of Terms

Bulletin board system network: Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) are networks of computers that used telephone lines to allow individual users to connect and communicate with each other (Huang, 2010).

Crowdsourcing: Crowdsourcing is the act of outsourcing a task, such as compiling information, to the public rather than to a designated person or organization (Saldanha, Cohendet, & Pozzebon, 2014).

Electronic word-of-mouth (*E-WOM*): Any positive or negative statement made widely available and distributed informally from person-to-person via electronic communication is electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) (Sharifpour, Khan, Alizadeh, Akhgarzadeh, & Mahmodi, 2016).

Millennial: The Millennial generation is the generation of individuals born between 1981 and 1997 (Payton, 2015).

Professional membership association: Professional membership associations are nonprofit organizations made up of individuals from a specific industry or profession that advance public and professional advocacy causes on behalf of their members (Markova, Ford, Dickson, & Bohn, 2013).

Social media: Social media are website-based communities providing users with a way to post online content and interact individually or with organizations (Lucas & Ward, 2016).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Generally undiscoverable presuppositions that a researcher believes true are assumptions (Bernard, 2013). In this study, assumptions included that participants provided honest and ethical answers to interview questions. Another assumption was that participants remembered key details regarding nonprofit association social media strategies that increased membership dues income in professional membership associations during interviews or other data collection techniques. A final assumption was that participants avoided personal bias when they provided study data.

Limitations

Kirkwood and Price (2013) stated that limitations are elements the researcher cannot control, but potentially influence the results of the study. The amount of resources organizations devote to social media strategies may affect the results of those social media campaigns (Zorn, Grant, & Henderson, 2013.) Therefore, one limitation was the potential inability to replicate findings in all organizations. Another limitation was that some nonprofit associations remain reluctant to use social media because of concerns surrounding regulations by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and other governing bodies regarding how organizations solicit donations and support (Berkman, 2013). The geographic area studied was an additional limitation, as this study only included New Jersey-based association marketing professionals. Finally, the number of association marketing professionals included in the study limited the information to their perspective(s), which may not be inclusive of the nonprofit professional population as a whole.

Delimitations

Delimitations help to focus a study by establishing parameters surrounding research (Denscombe, 2013). The primary delimitations of this study were an exclusive focus on social media strategies that increased membership dues income in professional membership associations and the size of the target population. Another delimitation was that this study included nonprofit marketing professionals in one nonprofit organization, which served as the single case. The final delimitation was the geographic restriction of this study to New Jersey.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

This study includes contributions to the academic body of knowledge regarding social media use in nonprofit associations. Professionals within nonprofit associations use social media as a platform for electronic advocacy and promotion (Guo & Saxton, 2014). However, because of the rapid pace of technological evolution and the relatively new development of social media, insufficient research exists regarding social media use in nonprofit associations (Chapman, Miller-Stevens, Morris, & O'Hallarn, 2015; Saxton & Wang, 2013). Because of this lack of research, marketers face challenges when determining the effectiveness of the social media strategies they develop and use (Lee & Hong, 2016). This study is of value to the practice of business because of the potential to provide insight(s) into social media strategies that increase professional membership association dues income. The research directly applies to nonprofit associations by exploring specific strategies used by nonprofit marketing professionals to increase membership dues income in a professional membership organization.

Implications for Social Change

Nonprofit associations contain groups of like-minded individuals who unite in support of a specific industry or social cause (Nank & Alexander, 2012). Nonprofit associations advocate the needs of their respective constituents and promote social change using a wide variety of techniques, including social media (Guo & Saxton, 2014). However, Kane et al. (2014) argued that although many nonprofit associations use social media, research is scarce regarding which social media strategies are most effective in nonprofits. The implications for social change in this study included the potential to increase membership dues income in professional membership associations, consequently helping them to increase their ability fulfill their social missions, which can include the advancement of social goals (Shier & Handy, 2016), and the reduction of social inequalities and promotion of community service activities (Grønbjerg & Prakash, 2016).

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

This study includes 257 references, 85.9% of which are peer reviewed, and 85.9% have publication dates between 2013 and 2017. As a subsection of this study, this literature review includes 166 references, 88.5% of which are peer reviewed, and 86.1% have publication dates between 2013 and 2017. Although this research includes many databases, the Business Source Complete/Premier database, the Science Direct database, and Google Scholar were the primary sources of literature referenced in this study. A database filter limited search results to peer-reviewed journals, and peer-reviewed status included verification on journal websites and within the Ulrich database. Search terms included *social media strategies*, *social media use*, *history of social media*, *social media in business*, *social media adoption*, *association*, *nonprofit social media, nonprofit social media use*, *social exchange theory*, *social influence theory*, *social exchange theory and social media*, *social influence theory and nonprofit organizations*, *professional membership associations*, *history of associations*, *nonprofit associations*, *nonprofit* *associations*, *social media and nonprofit relationships*, and *social media in associations*. Also included are doctoral studies matching the necessary criteria and containing information of value to this study.

Insufficient research exists regarding social media used in nonprofit associations (Chapman et al., 2015; Saxton & Wang, 2013). Kane et al. (2014) observed that although many associations engage in social media use, the nature of social media itself makes research supporting its best use or effectiveness in nonprofit associations unclear. Hatzfeld (2014) established that associations potentially benefit from exploring and identifying effective strategies before engaging in social media to maximize results. The need exists for researchers to identify and review relevant related literature to gain a deeper and context-based understanding of social media strategies that increase professional membership association dues income. This literature review includes related business theories and relevant social media and nonprofit information, and focused on the following three main topics: (a) social exchange theory and social influence theory as related to the conceptual framework; (b) a foundation of important nonprofit and social media related information; and (c) points of intersection between the nonprofit social media use and the business theories identified.

This study includes the seminal social exchange theory works of Gouldner (1960) and Blau (1964), and information from the creator of modern social influence theory, Kelman (1958). The study also includes a comprehensive analysis of social exchange theory and social influence theory. Examples of social exchange theory and social influence theory use in doctoral studies complete the critical analysis of the conceptual framework.

This literature review includes a brief analysis of case study research to connect concepts emerging from the critical analysis of the literature on social media, nonprofit associations and the conceptual framework. Yin (2013) provided the primary rationale for a single case study design, whereas scholarly articles by Houghton, Murphy, Shaw, and Casey (2015) and Singh (2014) provided context and further supported the use of a single case study design in this study. Incorporating a case study design also strengthens the critical analysis of data, because case study exploration highlights the key strength of qualitative research, which Sauerland et al. (2014) stated is the ability to achieve a deeper understanding of the resulting data than from other research methods.

The remainder of this literature review includes a wide-ranging exploration of the unique circumstances that led to the popularity of modern social media, unique features of nonprofit associations, and nonprofit social media use. An analysis of social media, nonprofit associations, and social media in nonprofit associations includes a focus on exploring social media strategies that increase professional membership association dues income. The analysis also includes evaluation of reviewed literature in the fields of social influence theory and social exchange theory to provide the context necessary to understand and interpret those standpoints.

Introduction and Review of the Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore social media strategies that increase professional membership association dues income. In qualitative research, the conceptual framework provides context and a structure supporting the purpose of a study (De Leeuw et al., 2015). The conceptual framework of this study included two complementary theories, each based on one aspect of the research question: What social media strategies do nonprofit association marketers use to increase professional membership association dues income? First, this section includes a review and analysis of literature surrounding social exchange theory as related to social media strategies. Next, this section includes review and analysis of literature surrounding social influence theory as related to the influence of nonprofit associations on consumer decision-making.

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), which originated from economic exchange theory, provides insight into business relationships of all kinds including key motivators in consumer social media participation (Harrigan, Evers, Miles, & Daly, 2017). Social exchange theory focuses on the reciprocity of actions, or exchange, between businesses and consumers (Blau, 1964). Social exchange theory provides a fitting theoretical foundation for researchers investigating online consumer purchasing (Shiau & Luo, 2012), making the theory an ideal fit for the study of social media strategies that increase professional membership association dues income.

Nank and Alexander (2012) observed that nonprofit associations include groups of individuals who support specific industries or social causes. This study includes social influence theory in the conceptual framework to understand the business relationship between group membership and social cause advocacy on social media strategies that increased membership dues income in professional membership associations. Applying a qualitative method to social influence theory as well as a mathematic formula to determine why beliefs and behaviors develop, Dilmaghani (2014) theorized social institutions potentially exert social influence that affects marketing and advertising. Moreover, in their 2013 study on advertising response on social media, Soares and Pinho (2014) conducted a qualitative study with 126 questionnaire responses and used social influence theory to gain an understanding of the connection between perceived enjoyment and social influence, as well as consumer reaction to social media advertising.

Social exchange theory. Social exchange theory is the conceptual foundation for this study. The decision to include social exchange theory stems from several documented examples of peer-reviewed literature and doctoral studies applying the theory to a wide variety of business investigations. Social exchanges use social capital based on (a) structural elements such as connections through social interaction, (b) rational elements originating from relationships such as trust, and (c) cognitive elements such as shared mindsets (Oparaocha, 2016). This study incorporated all three of Oparaocha's (2016) social capital categories.

Conducting early research into social exchange-based interaction, Gouldner (1960) observed that when individuals interact reciprocally in social environments, they engage in social exchanges. Building on Gouldner's research, and developed out of economic exchange theory, Blau's (1964) seminal work on exchanges is used by researchers to explain the relationship between individuals and groups. Accordingly, researchers use social exchange theory to explain how parties affect the actions of each other through exchanges; individuals seek out exchanges with other parties where they benefit in some way, and social exchange relationships exist on an ongoing basis until a relationship is no longer beneficial to one or both of the parties (Blau, 1964; Huang et al., 2016). In their 1993 quantitative study on motivation and attrition of female coaches in high schools and colleges in the United States, Weiss and Stevens (1993) surveyed 153 current and former female coaches and further explored the connection between beneficial relationships and social exchanges. Weiss and Stevens argued that social exchange theory might aid researchers in interpreting individual preferences to avoid negative experiences and seek positive experiences in exchanges.

As a key component of this study, critical analysis of social exchange theory includes investigating parallels between social media and social exchange theory. First, Blau (1964) recognized that social exchange theory explained the interaction between two parties that control and consume information, and Shiau and Luo (2012) stated that social exchange theory provided support as a theoretical foundation for researchers investigating consumer-focused online commerce activities. Later, Lucas and Ward (2016) reported that social media are website-based communities providing users with a way to post online content and interact individually or with organizations. The overlapping themes of social media use and social exchange theory uncovered by Blau and Shiau and Luo demonstrated that social media motivation may be explained using social exchange theory and provides justification for this study.

Shiau and Luo (2012) conducted a quantitative partial least squares regression analysis on Data from 215 valid samples collected using an online survey and used social exchange theory to understand the differences between online and in-person consumer purchasing. Ultimately, Shiau and Luo asserted that wide-scale consumer use of social media affects online purchasing. Dijkmans, Kerkhof, and Beukeboom (2015) conducted a quantitative analysis including data collected from 3531 survey participants from the Netherlands who used KLM airlines in the 2 years prior to the study, and they used social exchange theory to identify a positive connection between the time businesses spend engaging with consumers and the resulting level of social media interaction they have with consumers. Chan-Olmsted, Cho, and Lee (2013) and Kenney, Kumar, and Hart (2013) also argued social media activity encompasses the following: conversation, participation, community formation, information openness, and connectedness. Finally, social exchange theory indicated a reciprocally beneficial social media exchange includes regular interaction between organizations and their customers or constituents (Shiau & Luo, 2012).

In addition to explaining interaction on social media and consumer motivation, social exchange theory provided insight into which elements of social exchanges may provide benefits for both individuals and organizations. Blau (1964) introduced the concept of trust into social exchange theory, postulating that trust increases among participants in a social exchange over time as relationships develop, deepening the ability of the participants to influence actions. Accordingly, trust is important in this study because of emerging as a theme as to why individuals acted on media strategy designed to increase membership dues income in a nonprofit membership organization. Tyrie and Ferguson (2013) extended Blau's social exchange model by conducting a descriptive qualitative study, including interviews with seven participants, to determine how businesses understand the nature of the component parts of the value derivation process and their interactions from their arts sponsorship relationships. Through their research, Tyrie and Ferguson confirmed that, in addition to building relationships with trust, individuals create relationships with organizations and individuals when they expect to benefit in some way. Building on the research of Blau, but separating from a focus on trust, Cook, Cheshire, Rice, and Nakagawa (2013) also applied social exchange theory to the relationship between businesses and individuals and argued that social exchanges create power, influence, and elevated status among people and businesses.

According to Harrigan et al. (2017), successful social exchanges provide a high return in value to participating individuals by increasing loyalty and engagement. The exploration of these successful exchange models, which use motivation and behavioral influence, is central to this study. In particular, the practice of customer engagement, or reciprocal communication that provides value to customers, gained popularity in many industries (Harrigana et al., 2016). In their quantitative study of 556 survey respondents in Australia, So, King and Sparks (2014) found that customer engagement leads to increased customer loyalty, trust, and overall brand perception. Building on the work of So et al. (2014), Harrigan et al. (2017) also applied quantitative methodology to survey 195 United States–based consumers spanning 42 of the 50 states and determined that regardless of industry studied, social exchange theory is a suitable conceptual framework for customer engagement research. Moreover, Harrigan et al. (2017) observed that successful social exchanges are essential for marketers to help consumers to identify with and interact with brands.

Specifically, Harrigan et al. (2017) stated that social exchange theory explained how information dissemination in online communities and social media influences behavior. If individuals or organizations disseminate information valuable to community members, the information can lead to reciprocal benefits and trust between the information source and individuals consuming the information in the community (Harrigana et al., 2016). The work of Harrigana et al. builds on the earlier work of Blau (1964), who asserted that social exchange consists of deliberate actions taken by individuals seeking a positive return on those actions.

Research indicated the success of social exchanges when members find participation beneficial (Tyrie & Ferguson, 2013). Weiss and Stevens (1993) stated that successful social exchanges require a more beneficial relationship between both parties in the exchange than other collaboration models to establish success. Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) offered early support for this model by contending that social exchange theory governs the influence one participant exerts on another when participant interaction leads to an action in a social exchange.

Social exchange theory also applies when studying strategies that lead to social advancements supporting overall brand image. For example, Slack, Corlett, and Morris (2015) conducted an exploratory case study on an energy company in the United Kingdom to understand engagement in corporate social responsibility programs. Building on Blau’s (1964) model regarding social exchanges within organizations not economically motivated, Slack et al. ultimately observed that social ideals and motivation, as opposed to financial motivation, could successfully cause individuals to take action in a business setting. Slack et al. made significant contributions to the application of social exchange theory to business practice and recognized the need to measure individual actions by economic value and social value.

The application of social exchange theory to economic value and social value supported this study because of the ability to establish the credibility of social exchange theory as a means to understand interactions between people and businesses. Holm, Eriksson, and Johanson (2015) extended social exchange theory by conducting a quantitative study of 36 business relationships of supplier firms in Germany, France, and Sweden, with customer firms in France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Specifically, Holm et al. (2015) used social exchange theory to understand driving forces behind increasing profit and depth through business relationships, further supporting the overall use of social exchange theory in this study of social media strategies to increase profit (in this case, membership dues income).

Tsai, Chang, Cheng, and Lien (2013) supported a secondary business use for social exchange theory by conducting a quantitative study on knowledge sharing not motivated by economic factors in the information technology (IT) sector by Taiwanese firms deploying a knowledge management system. Focusing on motivational catalysts for action, Tsai et al. analyzed data from 251 survey results and found that individuals exchanging implicit knowledge held expectations regarding trust, self-efficacy, and a two-way relationship, and that motivation related content builds on all three expectations. Tyrie and Ferguson (2013) also applied social exchange theory to motivational exchange content and sought to determine how participants in a social exchange find value from sponsoring the arts. Although social exchanges that are not motivated by economic factors may not directly contribute to income generation, Tsai et al. and Tyrie and Ferguson observed that trust, confidence, and relationship building resulting from motivational exchange content reinforces beneficial relationships. Similarly, Hsu, Chuang, and Hsu (2014) used social exchange theory to understand information sharing and collaboration, and they argued that trust, commitment, reciprocity, and power were all precursors to successful exchanges. Accordingly, social exchanges that are not motivated by economics are of interest to this study.

Shiau and Luo (2012) combined motivation with purchasing intention and applied social exchange theory to a quantitative investigation of online purchasing intention and satisfaction. Shiau and Luo sought to understand how social exchange, trust, and vendor creativity influenced the decision-making process and led to consumer satisfaction. Study findings indicated that social exchange and trust both play a significant role in customer satisfaction, although vendor creativity is not necessarily a motivating factor (Shiau & Luo, 2012). As a result, the possibility exists that organizations potentially increase satisfaction, sales, and income by implementing a social network where buyers exchange information (Shiau & Luo, 2012).

Several qualitative studies include social exchange theory in their conceptual framework. Shipp (2010) conducted a consensual qualitative research study including seven individual interviews and a focus group and used social exchange theory to investigate knowledge sharing among school counselors. After evaluating several different theories, Shipp selected diffusion of innovation theory and the theory of reasoned action in conjunction with the social exchange theory to explain the how and why knowledge sharing affects behavior. Additionally, Shipp observed that social exchange theory potentially explains how exchange groups form and evolve. An explanation of how exchange groups form and evolve is of benefit to this study providing insight into preexisting motivating tendencies that may influence group actions or reactions to social marketing campaigns.

Researchers use social exchange theory to study relationships in social exchange situations (St. John, Guynes, & Vedder, 2014; Tavares, van Knippenberg, & van Dick, 2016). Chou and Hsu (2016) extended social exchange theory by utilizing it to conduct a quantitate investigation of the online buying intentions of 469 online customers, the relationships customers maintain with the organizations they purchase from, and customer attrition, and found that the perception of receiving a benefit from the exchange was a key motivating factor for customers. Attrition is the regular loss of members faced by nonprofit associations (Fumagalli et al., 2013; Helmig, Ingerfurth, & Pinz, 2014). Chou and Hsu's application of social exchange theory applies to this study by (a) providing a possible means to explain attrition in social exchanges involving nonprofit associations, and (b) providing insight into online income generation.

Forrest (2010) similarly used the listening guide method and social exchange theory to conduct a qualitative study of nine scholarship recipients who completed college at least 10 years before their participation. Forrest investigated the relationship between scholarship providers and the recipients of scholarships. Focusing on the reciprocal benefit concept included in social exchange theory, Forrest sought to understand how the recipient of a scholarship returns value to the scholarship provider. Building on the business case for social exchange theory, Forrest emphasized Blau's (1964) discussion on the economic ramifications of social exchange. Ultimately, Forrest asserted that social exchange theory is consistent with the foundation of microeconomic theory because every action includes an expectation of reciprocation. Forrest's study established the importance of combining social exchange theory and knowledge-based perspectives in a study.

Social exchange theory does not explain every situation. For example, Weerts and Ronca (2008) conducted a quantitative study with a binomial logistic regression model to classify alumni donors including active donors, active volunteers, and both active donors and active volunteers. Analyzing data from 1,076 survey respondents from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Weerts and Ronca found that social exchange theory only governs relationships when a natural exchange between two parties exists, as opposed to a need for information or perceived value to be equal on both sides. Weerts and Ronca's conclusion builds on Blau's (1964) earlier finding, that when the benefit that a member of the exchange receives is not as significant as the cost of participating in the exchange, that party leaves the exchange and the relationship dissolves. An additional challenge presented is that social exchange theory relies on the expectations of at least one of the parties in the exchange (Blau, 1964). Finally, actions govern social exchange theory; however, some individuals engage in an action, but do not exchange in social media (Forrest, 2010).

Social influence theory. Social influence theory provides researchers with insight into how group membership influences individual behavior (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Kelman (1958), the creator of modern social influence theory, stated that social influence theory helps researchers to explain a behavioral or attitudinal change that is the direct result of social influence. However, in addition to recognizing the occurrence of a change in attitude or behavior, Kelman postulated it is important for researchers to understand the factors underlying those changes as well as whether they are temporary or permanent. Accordingly, Kelman stated that the effects of social influence include categorization into three main processes of influence: (a) compliance, (b) internalization, and (c) identification. In the case of this study, Kelman’s process of identification is used to explain social media strategies that increase dues income in a professional membership association, and how the process of identification can help researchers to explain the strategies of (a) driving engagement on social media using social influencers and (b) establishing trust on social media with social influencers. Kelman’s process of compliance is also included to explain how encouraging members to introduce new people to the professional membership association’s social media posts can increase dues income.

In addition to the processes of compliance, internalization, and identification, there are other factors researchers should consider when using social influence theory. First, Kelman's (1958) social influence theory included an emphasis on the length of time social influence is effective. For example, while the process of compliance can be temporary, the process of identification and internalization may prove lasting. Second, social influence is only focused on larger shifts in attitude and behavior and does not explain specific new skills learned or brief changes in beliefs or attitude. Third, social influence theory is only applicable when the influencer utilizes an individual's expectations or values to provide the stimulus and clear path to make an action available to an individual, and the results of the influence includes categorization into broad categories like attitudes and actions. Finally, Kelman (1961) and Albert, Ambroise, and Valette-Florencec (2017) observed that the process of identification and internalization help researchers to explain how celebrities influence the attitudes and behavior of individuals when they align with a brand.

There are determining factors that lead to each of the three main types of social influence. According to Kelman (1958), those determining factors are (a) the power of the influencer, (b) how important the effect of the influence is, and (c) the significance of the response the influencer is attempting to achieve. In the case of this study, I identified all three determining factors while researching how the identification aspect of social influence theory explains social media strategies for increasing engagement and trust in the brand in a professional membership association. Additionally, Cheung and Lee (2010) observed that individuals might move throughout Kelman's three processes of influence when using social media because social media constantly introduces individuals to new users that could potentially exert one of the three processes of influence on them. Finally, there are several underlying factors of the processes of compliance, identification, and internalization in social influence theory. Subsequent subsections include details regarding these specific underlying factors.

Compliance in Social Influence Theory. Kelman (1958) observed that compliance occurs when individuals appear to adopt beliefs or ideas from an influencer they value or respect, whereas internalization occurs when a person incorporates the values or ideas of the influencer into their belief structure to achieve satisfaction. According to Hsiao and Chiou (2017), compliance occurs temporarily when an individual accepts the influence of others and exhibits an attitude or behavioral change. Moreover, compliance is directly tied to the expectations of an individual to achieve satisfaction or enjoyment as a result of an attitude or behavioral change; the overall social influence of compliance does not represent a permanent change (Kelman, 1958; Cheung & Lee, 2010).

Compliance is not necessarily a permanent process. All three of Kelman's (1974) processes of influence may work separately, or in sequence when individuals engage in group interaction. For example, Cheung and Lee (2010) observed although it is only temporary, compliance applies to the study of social media. In support of this, Cheung and Lee stated that when an individual is searching for a group technology like social media, compliance plays an important role in the selection process regarding which platform to use because the individual has had no previous experience with the platform. However, Cheung and Lee also observed that once compliance occurred and an individual adopted a platform and started interacting, the processes of internalization replaced compliance in importance and in understanding whether or not that individual would continue to remain a member of the group. Dilmaghani (2014) also observed the evolutionary nature and fluidity of Kelman's three processes of influence, noting that individual consumption can begin as a means to increase status and develop into social compliance.

In the context of social networks and social media, Soares and Pinho (2014) defined Kelman's process of compliance as social pressure on an individual that leads to a change in their attitude or behavior. However, in their review of group intentions to accept advertising on social networks, Soares and Pinho postulated that the other processes of influence in social influence theory, identification and internalization, are better suited than compliance when identifying community influence. A key consideration for Soares and Pinho was the community component of social media, which allows individuals to connect with other individuals and organizations and join online communities. These conclusions directly support the work of Cheung and Lee and their assertion that once compliance occurred and an individual adopted a platform and started interacting, the processes of internalization replaced compliance in importance.

Identification in Social Influence Theory. According to Kelman (1958), identification represents attitude changes that have become a part of an individual's core beliefs and, therefore, is more lasting and satisfying than compliance. Kelman (1974) also stated that identification occurs when people adopt the beliefs of an influencer because they want to create a deeper connection or affiliation with the influencer. Much like compliance, identification may be a fluid process or a step in between either of the other two processes in Kelman's model of social influence. In support of this, Cheung and Lee (2010) observed that individuals might move throughout Kelman's three processes of influence when using social media because of the nature of social media itself, in that individuals constantly encounter new influencers that could ~~also~~ exert one of the three processes of influence. Accordingly, the processes of identification may change as a result of social media encounters.

Identification differs from compliance and internalization in that individuals attempt to mimic the attitudes and behavior of others to look like those individuals (Albert et al., 2017). In this way, Albert et al. and Kelman (1961) observed that the process of identification helps researchers to explain how celebrities influence the attitudes and behavior of individuals when they align with a brand. Additionally, Soares and Pinho (2014) observed that the processes of identification and internalization are more applicable than compliance when identifying community influence on social media. Soares and Pinho also postulated that enjoyment was a key factor in identification when individuals use social media. Finally, Cheung and Lee (2010) argued that after an individual has participated in an online group for an undefined but extended amount of time, and has gone through a sequential process of compliance and internalization, identification, or social identity, will occur. Cheung and Lee also postulated that when an individual changes from compliance to internalization or identification, the influence of compliance, and the underlying motivational factors, may become less influential as other factors become more important.

Internalization in social influence theory. Much like identification, Kelman (1958) found that internalization represents attitude changes that are lasting and have become a part of an individual's core beliefs, and as such provide satisfaction. However, unlike both identification and compliance, which can both include a degree of mimicking, internalization only occurs when an individual truly changes their attitude or behavior because they consider the beliefs and values of an influencer to be similar to their own (Albert et al., 2017; Soares & Pinho, 2014). In the context of social media and online group activity, Cheung and Lee (2010) also found that once compliance occurred and an individual adopted a platform and started interacting, the process of internalization became important in understanding whether or not that individual continued their use of the technology.

Soares and Pinho (2014) observed that like identification, internalization is applicable when identifying community influence on social media. Some researchers identified an emotional benefit to the individual while in the process of internalization. Specifically, Kelman (1974) postulated that the benefit of internalization is the result of the new attitude of beliefs, as well as the attitudes and beliefs themselves. Finally, Albert et al. (2017) and Kelman (1961) observed that, much like the process of identification, internalization could help researchers to explain how celebrities influence the attitudes and behavior of individuals when they align with a brand.

Other uses of social influence theory. Other categorizations exist surrounding social influence theory. For example, according to Ellemers, Kortekaas, and Ouwerkerk (1999), the three central categorizations of social influence are (a) cognitive, (b) affective, and (c) evaluative influence. Cognitive social influence represents an individual’s understanding of being a member of a group or social network (Soares & Pinho, 2014). Affective categorization represents an individual’s connection as a member of a group, and evaluative categorization represents an individual’s perception of their social position as a member of the group (Ellemers et al., 1999). These categorizations demonstrated the value of social influence in this study. Zhang, Guo, Hu, and Liu (2016) conducted a quantitative study on Sina, a preeminent Chinese microblogging platform, and applied structural equation modeling to test research hypotheses using data from 685 completed questionnaires. Zhang et al. further contributed to the research surrounding social influence theory by identifying the connection between marketing, relationship building, and knowledge sharing on social media, as well as the value online community members.

Cheung and Lee (2010) similarly extended social influence theory as a means to understand consumer reaction to social media advertising by conducting a quantitative study using data from 389 online questionnaires. Cheung and Lee found three main influencers that work collectively: subjective norm, group norm, and social identity. Of the three influencers, subjective norm is the most important because of its role in affecting individual social media site preference, while group norm represents an individual's tendency to mirror others actions and social identity represents an individual's awareness of their identity in an online community (Cheung & Lee, 2010). Soares and Pinho (2014) also used social influence theory to conduct a quantitative study on data supplied by 126 marketing and communication students, aged 18-35, to identify the connection between perceived enjoyment and social influence, as well as consumer reaction to social media advertising. Ultimately, findings indicated that social identity and group intention positively affect consumer perceptions of advertisements on social media (Soares & Pinho, 2014).

Applying a qualitative method to social influence theory, as well as a mathematic formula to determine why beliefs and behaviors develop, Dilmaghani (2014) observed that families, religious groups, political groups, and other social institutions could influence individual reactions toward marketing and advertising. Similarly, an increasing number of nonprofit associations support social change initiatives in their local governments (Shier & Handy, 2016), connecting the findings to Dilmaghani's (2014) research. Liu, Safin, Yang, and Luhmann (2015) conducted qualitative research on 125 undergraduates at Stony Brook University regarding the effects both direct and indirect social influence have on selflessness and philanthropy related activities on social networks. Liu et al. argued that although research supported the conclusion that philanthropic and selfless activities potentially generate social influence on social networks, identifying whether the same activities could generate indirect social influence or viral behavior required further research. After conducting a study on the effects of social influence, Liu et al. lacked evidence that selflessness and philanthropy related activities on social networks provide indirect social influence.

Fan, Miao, Fang, and Lin (2013) conducted a quantitative study on establishing the adoption of electronic word-of-mouth (WOM) messaging through consumers' perceived credibility using a total of 443 responses collected from a survey posted on BBS and Facebook. Ultimately, Fan et al. found consumers may respond differently to social media communications from brands than to communications from individuals. Understanding the difference between consumer response to brands and individuals on social media is important to this study as such information provides clarity into the effectiveness of social media strategies. Notably, consumers trust and rely heavily on information provided by other consumers because that information originates from personal experience (Fan et al., 2013). Book, Tanford, and Chen (2015) extended social influence with a quantitative 2 x 3 between-subjects experimental design on two studies; the first study included 210 subjects, and the second included 199 subjects. Book et al. researched the value of C2C reviews of products, and the corresponding effect C2C product reviews have on consumer purchasing and advertising, and found consumers value reviews provided by other consumers most when the reviews fall within the consensus of other consumers. These findings support the effect of cognitive social influence proposed by Ellemers et al. (1999).

Researchers use social influence theory to explain consumer behavior on social media. Lin and Lu (2014) studied two factors of social influence (social norms and number of peers) to understand the role social influence played in acceptance and use of social media on mobile devices. After conducting extensive literature research and quantitative analysis on data from 318 user interviews, Lin and Lu found that social media marketers should include social influence along with other external factors to influence mobile social media use. Chen, Lin, and Chang (2015) conducted similar quantitative research, including social influence theory in a study regarding user intentions to play online games. Chen et al. found that social influence, including generating communication between game enthusiasts and players on social media, could cause individuals to take an action. Finally, adaptation effects emerge when social influence causes individuals to mimic or adapt to the behavior of other individuals

(Alshamsi, Pianesi, Lepri, Pentland, & Rahwan, 2015). Social influence was important to this study, as precedence existed for its use in understanding social media behavior.

Alternate theories considered. Although initially considered for this study, attitude toward the ad (Aad) is too restrictive to explore social media strategies that increase professional membership association dues income because of the specific focus Aad provides on advertising. However, Aad requires investigation because of inclusion in social media research and its connection with social exchange theory. Researchers use Aad in both qualitative and quantitative studies, and while Aad predates social media, using Aad, Liu, Min, Zhai and Smith (2016) observed that product advertising on social media results in similar effects as advertising on other media.

A further aspect of Aad that warranted consideration was research into celebrity endorsements and nonprofit advertising. Celebrity endorsements and celebrity affiliation with nonprofit associations are potential nonprofit advertising strategies, because of increasing income from donations and lower fundraising expenses (Harris & Ruth, 2015). Many factors control the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement in nonprofit social media advertising. Felix and Borges (2014) explored peripheral motivations from celebrity endorsements and Aad by researching the value of fame or celebrity, attractiveness, and the amount of time consumers spend viewing advertisements. Garcia de los Salmones, Dominguez, and Herrero (2013) also stated that celebrity or luminary credibility led to positive Aad in nonprofit associations. Robideaux (2013) expanded luminary focused Aad research into political campaign ads and concluded that negative advertising is not popular among the public. Conversely, although consumers possess an unfavorable attitude toward negative advertising, regardless of perceived credibility, Aad toward televised political ads can be high (Robideaux, 2013). Accordingly, the work of Robideaux indicated that other factors also influenced consumer responses to advertisements, supporting the need to use other theories in the conceptual framework of this study.

Nonprofit associations use social media to increase public engagement and generate electronic advocacy of social issues (Guo & Saxton, 2014). Stebbins and Hartman (2013) argued that small, local nonprofit associations that do not have substantial brand cognition use the concepts found in Aad to increase income. However, as of 2016, a lack of overall research remains surrounding whether or not cognitive brand recognition leads to favorable attitudes toward brands and consumer purchases (DeGaris, Kwak, & McDaniel, 2016). The lack of research supports both the need for this study and need for a review of additional theories in the conceptual framework used in this study. Finally, Lee and Hong (2016) observed that emotional appeal, relationship management, and creativity could increase positive online consumer activity in response to social media advertising, supporting the use of social exchange theory and social influence theory in this study instead of Aad.

Case Study Research

Case study research provides a unique perspective for researchers seeking to explore a complex situation (Houghton et al., 2015), and understanding the context of a case is an important consideration in case study research (Poulis, Poulis, & Plakoyiannaki, 2013). Researchers use case study designs to gain a deeper and context-based understanding of a phenomenon by investigating it in its native environment (Yin, 2013). Further, according to Yin (2013), a case study also allows researchers to investigate modern events and produce reliable and verifiable results. Finally, case studies help to study unique business cases by directly investigating the perceptions of individuals within organizations (Singh, 2014).

The Antecedents of Social Media

Social media technology is a common part of modern life for consumers, for-profit businesses, and nonprofit organizations alike. Social media provide technology for interaction and information sharing among individuals and between people and organizations (Arnaboldi & Coget, 2016; Bacile et al., 2014), and are a group of technologies that facilitate online engagement (Lucas & Ward, 2016). The popularity of the Internet and social media required successful organizations to develop an understanding of what makes marketing campaigns successful in both traditional and social media settings (Shiau & Luo, 2012). The antecedents of modern social media remain relevant to this study because social media is a relatively new phenomenon. The precursors to the motivation behind social interaction are also important to understand because they provide insight into potential future trends and developments (Karahanna, Xu, & Zhang, 2015; Zhang et al., 2016).

Early social media began with BBS or computer grids allowing individual users to connect and communicate with each other using telephone modems (Huang, 2010). These sites fostered the first online interaction by allowing users to share thoughts and ideas in a public forum (Cheung & Lee, 2010; Guo & Zhou, 2016), which is a fundamental component of a social exchange (Blau, 1964). Despite BBS gains in popularity throughout the 1980s, shortcomings in underlying technology and the development of cultural exclusivity, as opposed to inclusivity, ultimately limited their mass adoption (Huang, 2010). Moreover, the shortcomings of BBS are important to this study, because of the potential to provide insight into how or why social media strategies that increase professional membership association dues income may be successful.

Although geographic distances between population centers did not limit their growth and use, technological limitations surrounding the volume of connections on BBS at any one time led to more provincial, less diverse exchanges (Huang, 2010). Recognizing the potential consumer and business benefits of expanding BBS with additional features and without connection limitations, developers began to work on new feature-rich online communication software (Vinerean, Cetina, & Dumitrescu, 2014). Feature-rich technology continued to improve user experiences and engagement across technology as a whole (Zolkepli & Kamarulzaman, 2015), highlighting the potential value of feature use in social media strategies. By 1990, the first World Wide Web (WWW) protocols brought uniformity and formed the basis of the modern Internet by providing a universally accepted structure for programming web pages (McMullen, 2012).

In contrast to the confines of BBS, the Internet's virtually unlimited potential fostered an environment for both companies and individuals to develop programs using the same technology. Consequently, developers created entirely new online discussion sites allowing users to interact, create basic profiles, and converse on issues without restriction (Vinerean et al., 2014). These new online discussion sites focused on users with a shared interest and provided a means to confer on a related collection of topics (Bolton et al., 2013). As online technology began to provide free tools for instant communication and facilitated online commerce, public Internet use increased (Ezumah, 2013). This expansion in interest, use, and technology formed an effective setting for the first modern social media experience to emerge (Ezumah, 2013). Accordingly, based on the theory that six interpersonal relationships connect everyone, SixDegrees.com launched in 1997 as the world's first social media website (Weber, Fulk, & Monge, 2016).

SixDegrees.com featured a groundbreaking online community, where individuals could meet, share ideas, and collaborate (Weber, Fulk, & Monge, 2016). Combining the most popular elements of email and the BBS discussion board format, SixDegrees.com became a popular destination for individuals seeking to share information and debate topics of their choosing on virtual discussion boards (Ezumah, 2013). Ultimately, SixDegrees.com's popularity declined as competing companies developed new and innovative social media models. These newer, more agile companies provided a continuous stream of enhancements and new features focusing on user engagement, which eventually gave way to the modern social media environment (Weber et al., 2016). Moreover, the motivation behind user acceptance and attrition provide insight into the consumer mindset on social media and group membership, making the rise and fall of SixDegrees.com relevant to this study.

The Rise of Modern Social Media

Social media's growth occurred because new technology replaced old technology by providing increased value to users, whereas technologies that did not provide new benefits failed (Hall, Bachor, & Matos, 2014). As new forms of social media emerged, their rate of adoption and popularity correlated to factors such as ease of use and practicality (Sago, 2013). Consequently, nonprofit associations may profit from exploring and identifying effective strategies to maximize results (Hatzfeld, 2014).

In response to consumer demand, social media provide consumers with a steadily expanding variety of communications tools. Social media tools include the ability to connect with like-minded individuals, find areas of interest, follow nonprofit and corporate brands and celebrities, and subscribe to specific news and information (Stephen & Galak, 2012). As opposed to traditional communication tools such as telephones or print correspondence, social media tools focus less on geographic proximity and instead attract users based on interests and their model of community-based collaboration (Hajli, 2014; Rullani, 2013). Modern social media tools use this functionality to help nonprofit associations accomplish their advocacy objectives by providing an electronic means to promote causes and engage with the public (Guo & Saxton, 2014).

Social media effectively combines modern Internet technology and wide-scale public availability and access. As of 2014, social media ranks among the most popular communication platforms in the world, providing value to a wide range of users (Al-Harrasi & Al-Badi, 2014). Facebook, which started in 2004 as an invitation-only community for Harvard University students, is open to the public and one of the world's most visited websites (Rauniar, Rawski, Yang, & Johnson, 2014). Access to social media creates opportunities for individuals, regardless of socioeconomic status, to connect with other individuals and businesses at any time from virtually any location (Al-Harrasi & Al-Badi, 2014; Moreno, Navarro, Tench, & Zerfass, 2015).

Social media expanded in use from its initial population of hobbyists and brand enthusiasts into a platform diverse enough to promote broad social and political causes (Paulin, Ferguson, Jost, & Fallu, 2014). For example, in 2014, Twitter served as an effective platform to distribute information regarding the controversial deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner and promoted a campaign called #BlackLivesMatter (Wilson, 2016). According to Wilson (2016), social media provided people across the United States with a previously unavailable platform to reach an international audience, and effectively raised the profile of their campaign to dominate media headlines around the world. Many nonprofit associations use social media in conjunction with traditional forms of communication to help advocate their positions on a variety of issues and capture social media inertia (Guo & Saxton, 2014). The ability to reach a global audience rapidly by accessing free technology is of particular interest to this study because of the implications for social change provided by social media advocacy.

The Social Media Environment

As of 2014, approximately 73% of adult Internet users actively participated in social media activity (Fan & Gordon, 2014). According to Auger (2013) and Obar (2012), advocacy groups use social media on a regular basis to connect with adult Internet users and generate engagement and action. Nonprofit associations engage in social media advocacy activities to advance the interest of their members or change public policy (Guo & Saxton, 2014). However, Saxton and Wang (2013) argued little research exists on the specific use of social media in nonprofit associations. Among the research that does exist regarding social media and nonprofit associations, Chapman et al. (2015) determined that organizational strategies, capacities, governance features, and external pressure affect social media use in nonprofit associations. This study builds on the work of Chapman et al. to address the lack of available research, including an exploration of social media strategies that increase professional membership association dues income.

Social media use is a common part of daily life, and as of 2016, Facebook users from around the world spend an average of 50 minutes each day on the social media site (Stewart, 2016). Social media developers continue to innovate and create new technologies designed to increase group communication and help users form even better interpersonal connections and information exchanges (Albelwi & Almgren, 2014; Zolkepli & Kamarulzaman, 2015). As suggested by Blau (1964), social exchange theory indicated that better connections provide increased value for both parties in an exchange. The connection between social exchanges and social media is of importance to this study to provide contextual support for the primary research question.

Marketing professionals in nonprofit associations may find unique opportunities to target consumers in social media. Social media connections or links, in contact more frequently than once each year are strong ties, whereas those in contact less than once each year are weak ties (Hsu et al., 2014). Although businesses target strong tie groups, weak tie groups may be more responsive to marketing messages. The potential responsiveness of weak tie groups may be because weak groups contain a more diverse range of individuals than homogeneous strong tie groups (Kozan & Akdeniz, 2014). This type of counterintuitive targeting underscores that businesses may need to foster a new executive mindset to take advantage of social media (Lee, Hutton, & Shu, 2015). Weak and strong tie groups may be important considerations for nonprofit associations seeking effective social media strategies, as their needs are different from for-profit organizations.

Following the development of social media, advancements in Internet technology provided developers the opportunity to offer new features to users. Online discussion sites evolved into social media communities that encouraged discussion on brands and products, shifting some consumer traffic away from corporate websites and allowing corporations to market to consumers (Kumar, Bezawada, Rishika, Janakiraman, & Kannan, 2016). Even though most consumer discussions in online communities transpire without affecting businesses, some have unintended consequences for brands. Businesses face potentially unintended consequences from C2C brand discussion, including false claims regarding products and services (Adjei, Nowlin, & Ang, 2016; Horn et al., 2015). Consequently, regardless of social media engagement levels, both nonprofit and for-profit organizations must understand that online discussions regarding brands and products take place.

Businesses and Social Media

Businesses wasted little time attempting to make use of the new technology and media that emerged during the rise of social media. From 2002 to 2012, businesses drastically reprioritized which forms of communication they used, with social media and blogs frequently replacing other, more traditional forms of media (Bruhn, Schoenmueller, & Schaefer, 2012). To capitalize on consumer social media engagement, 49% of businesses use either Facebook or Twitter in corporate promotion, and 30% use both platforms (Mi et al., 2015). Moreover, as customers increasingly turn to online product review sites for research before purchases, for-profit businesses and nonprofits must utilize social media programs to follow and attempt to sway public opinion as necessary (Aichner & Jacob, 2015).

The effects of social media are widespread. Most notably, many corporate executives believed that social media permanently changed the practice of marketing (Lee et al., 2015). This phenomenon occurred because social media platforms became a globally prominent form of interpersonal communication (Bacile et al., 2014). In addition to adapting to social media, marketers must also extend their focus and consider the importance of social media marketing in forming new and uniquely beneficial interpersonal relationships with both current and potential customers (Ananda, Hernández-García, & Lamberti, 2016; Turri, Smith, & Kemp, 2013). Although these changes brought opportunities for businesses, barriers to acceptance and use may still exist (Dijkmans et al., 2015). Challenges regarding social media acceptance and use may make engaging in income generating social media strategies in nonprofit associations difficult.

Business Acceptance and Use

A wide range of beliefs regarding social media use, risk, and value may exist in businesses. Social media users spend an average of 61 minutes every day interacting with individuals and organizations on social media (Sidani, Shensa, Hoffman, Hanmer, & Primack, 2016). However, conflicting beliefs among scholars may leave marketers with significant questions regarding the appropriate social media strategies to use (Hall et al., 2014), and little information exists regarding social media strategies to build brand equity with customers (Pham & Gammoh, 2015). As a result, research providing insight into social media strategies that increase professional membership association dues income may promote acceptance and use, supporting the need for this study.

Communication styles on social media vary. Many businesses choose not to engage in direct conversations with consumers and restrict interaction to those who actively respond to other forms of media (Jimenez, Hadjimarcou, Barua, & Mochie, 2013). However, the social interaction aspect of social media, which occurs when assimilating into and participating in a community, may be essential in successfully executing corporate social media campaigns (Dijkmans et al., 2015). Similarly, to preserve a successful social media presence, businesses should maintain an ongoing understanding of the interpersonal dynamics of online conversation (Hudson, Roth, Madden, & Hudson, 2015). Social media campaigns implemented by businesses who fail to consider these factors may not prove effective in increasing income, brand equity, and organizational reach.

Communication style in social media engagement is equally important. For example, businesses and salespeople should understand how to maintain two-way communication with consumers instead of broadcasting non-interactive information on social media (Agnihotri, Dingus, Hu, & Krush, 2016; Oh, Roumani, Nwankpa, & Hu, 2016). Adopting this approach may produce a positive response as consumers often look for purchasing advice from like-minded individuals with whom they interact (Di Pietro & Pantano, 2013). Engaging in social media interaction helps consumers to understand the depth, character, or history that a brand possesses beyond brand equity and the brand name itself (Hsu et al., 2014). In summary, engagement, as opposed to broadcasting information, may lead to effective nonprofit-specific social media strategies that increase membership dues income, brand equity, and relevance for nonprofit professional membership organizations.

Social media users participate in online discussions with communities of other like-minded individuals. Interaction on social media occurs when individuals congregate, create profiles, and interact with other similarly inclined individuals in online virtual communities (Bolton et al., 2013). Based on their discussions and interests, members of online communities form potential groups for marketers to target (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). These groups also provide a venue to monitor brand sentiment and preference as social media presents an inexpensive and unique platform to study both positive and negative shifts as they occur (Hsu et al., 2014). Identification and correction of negative shifts in brand perception may increase professional membership association dues income, aligning with the business problem for this study.

The quality of interactivity and its perceived effectiveness makes people develop stronger attitudes toward brands and enhances their purchase intention (Fan et al., 2013). Consumers trust and rely heavily on information provided by other consumers because that information originates from personal experience (Fan et al., 2013). Although adapting to consumer expectations and preferences regarding communication content and style on social media is essential, businesses must also maintain a consistent message and voice across all forms of media. All communication channels require independent consideration and consistent messaging when creating and evaluating social media effectiveness to prevent brand fragmentation, which potentially proves detrimental to income-generating social media strategies (Bruhn et al., 2012).

Engagement and Relationships

Business social media promotion increased by 56.2% ($11.36 billion to $17.74 billion) from 2013 to 2014 (eMarketer, 2015). Businesses of all kinds use social media to market products and communicate with consumers (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Dijkmans et al. (2015) identified a positive relationship between the time businesses spend engaging with consumers and the resulting level of social media use by consumers. Exploration of the time organizations spend on social media engagement aligns well with social exchange theory because of the focus on a reciprocal exchange of information. Specifically, Shiau and Luo (2012) argued that social exchange and trust, which take time to develop, both play a significant role in customer satisfaction and increased interaction.

Although businesses worked to establish a deeper understanding of social media's potential and best practices to connect with consumers, rapid adoption led to a wide array of implementation strategies (Kane et al., 2014). Notably, brand marketers use their traditional media channels to promote and foster interaction on popular social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter (Parveen et al., 2015). This form of direct engagement may prove beneficial to businesses that avoid broadcasting generic marketing messages and focus on directly engaging consumers to deepen relationships and build loyalty (Hooper, 2011). Social media may also facilitate new relationships with prospective customers, preparing organizations to reach larger audiences and respond to consumer needs (Lam, Yeung, & Cheng, 2016).

Social media's intrinsic sense of community created new opportunities for organizations to increase income (Hsu et al., 2014). These opportunities come from new consumer behaviors. As opposed to asking peers for recommendations or visiting corporate websites for information, many modern consumers turn to online communities for discussion about products or services before making a purchase (Bruhn et al., 2012). Increased interest in brands on social media occurs because of a rise in communication via social media by brand marketers themselves, who use the media to develop deeper relationships with current and prospective buyers (Kumar et al., 2016).

The focus businesses place on relationships with consumers, and the type of consumer engagement chosen by a business may play a role in the success of social media programs. For example, focusing on distributing quality information and two-way discussion, as opposed to the volume of posts, potentially proves more effective for corporate marketers (Edwards, Edwards, Spence, & Shelton, 2014). Leveraging industry and relationship knowledge, businesses that successfully engage with consumers may also be able to promote their products more effectively. Notably, monitoring social media relationships and discussion leads to increased consumer engagement and an improved understanding of the market (Grégoire, Salle, & Tripp, 2015). This knowledge helps businesses to package marketing content with relationship-driven social media conversations, as opposed to broadcasting impersonal marketing content to their connections (Hudson et al., 2015).

Social media increased in popularity with businesses seeking to distribute news rapidly, and because of the ease of use and a content limit of 140 characters, Twitter is a popular choice for organizations trying to send and receive breaking news (Wasike, 2013). Businesses that use Twitter possess the ability to spread relevant information rapidly, such as new product announcements, innovative developments, and endorsements (Serrano & Iglesias, 2016). In industries where rapid communication is essential, such as food safety, social media also provides a reliable way to reach a large number of people quickly and without significant expense (Lozano & Lores, 2013). Similarly, social media may be instrumental in helping consumers to understand a business's position on important issues (Bronner & de Hoog, 2014). However, some companies still question how, when, and why to engage in social media (Dijkmans et al., 2015). In the case of this study, professional membership associations may seek to define how effectively their social media strategies increased engagement and strengthened relationships, making these fundamental areas of focus.

Paid Advertising

The range of options for businesses seeking to engage in social media creates many challenges for marketers. New social media platforms are legitimate and stable when nonprofit associations or other influential organizations promote them or when consumer participation reaches levels that make them self-supporting (Weber et al., 2016). However, advertisers face many choices regarding where to spend their limited resources on social media. Some businesses invest heavily in paid social media advertising campaigns and software geared toward specific social media (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). This choice may lead organizations to ignore new and emerging technologies as they emerge, because, according to Ngai, Moon, Lam, Chin, and Tao (2015), organizations often integrate heavily with and rely on specific social media platforms as opposed to utilizing all available technology, limiting their ability to adapt to market fluctuations. Consequently, social media platform selection remained relevant to this study because platform selection may play an important role in social media strategy success.

Many businesses engage with social media companies by implementing acute advertising programs. In response to corporate needs, social media sites provide advertising programs to attempt to establish a meaningful connection between consumers and brands or products (Lee & Hong, 2016). However, marketing professionals considering advertising on social media must first understand if social media is an accepted and popular means of communication among their target audience (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Determining social media use was of interest to this study, as social media strategies designed to increase professional membership association dues income would only apply if target audiences used social media to communicate.

Social media sites allow users to self-categorize into communities based on interests. Some businesses target these specific communities with custom online advertisements designed to increase corporate credibility by demonstrating an understanding of a community's unique concerns (Jimenez et al., 2013). This ability to target micro and macro populations of people based on specific interests may give paid advertisers using social media an advantage in reaching more precise audiences over those using traditional media (Lee & Hong, 2016). Creating a reciprocal exchange of information in a social exchange remains consistent with social exchange theory. Harrigan et al. (2017) observed that successful social exchanges positively influence individual attitudes and behavior. Furthermore, advertisements on social media can be interactive, as opposed to traditional print advertisements (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Understanding interaction on social media was of importance to this study, as such understanding provided insight into motivation and relationship building, and their combined influence on membership dues income generation through the use of social media strategies.

Business Intelligence and Consumer Sentiment

Businesses should consider consumer sentiments regarding their brands when deciding whether to use social media, as uniting dissatisfied consumers might foster unintended negative discourse that could damage their brands (Lee et al., 2015). If consumer sentiments are positive and interpersonal information exchange is an organizational priority, social media may prove beneficial because of its ability to influence perception (Chen et al., 2015). Social media also provides value because of its capacity to disseminate information and to make communications viral (Brooks, Heffner, & Henderson, 2014). However, to achieve impactful or viral communications, businesses must focus on the quality of their online relationships and the communication between marketers and their connections (Kaur, 2016). Furthermore, nonprofit organizations that do not implement effective social media strategies risk their long-term sustainability (Fields, 2014), highlighting the importance of effective social media strategies and quality online relationships.

Businesses actively listening to social media discussions to increase business intelligence may also be able to use the platform to increase income. Notably, social media listening is valuable to businesses when attempting to minimize damage from a negative experience or to improve existing relationships (Lee et al., 2015). Listening begins with the initiation of a direct line of communication between organizations and key members of online communities. This effort potentially forges a relationship with the public and creates an open environment for consumers to provide direct feedback to organizations (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). In addition to existing relationships, consumers can also contribute directly in an advisory capacity using social media, which may build brand equity and increase loyalty (Yoo, Lee, & Choi, 2013). Consumer contributions lead to the addition of supplemental content or social media posts, by a consumer's social media connections (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Controlled discussions and interaction regarding products and sales may lead to increased consumer brand awareness, product awareness, or even increased income (Kohli, Suri, & Kapoor, 2015). Controlled discussions were of interest to this study as a potential strategy that professional membership associations could use to increase income from dues.

As opposed to using social media to replace traditional marketing, retailers may be able to combine strong messages in traditional marketing and advertising with social media. Leveraging the power of both of forms of media may generate far higher levels of consumer engagement than using either social media or traditional marketing independently (Srinivasan, Rutz, & Pauwels, 2015). Social media is also a practical way to investigate and understand public opinion (Anstead, & O'Loughlin, 2015). For that reason, one of the most efficient ways marketers increase business intelligence and collect contextual product data is by investigating collaborative discussions regarding products and services on social media (He et al., 2015). Although this level of data collection may benefit businesses, the total volume of data produced is vast and presents challenges for researchers with limited research resources (Chen et al., 2015), supporting the need for further study.

Potential Risks

Businesses engaging in social media face a variety of risks. To foster successful corporate social media engagement, sustained results, and a clear, consistent brand message, marketers must create and maintain focused two-way relationships with individuals (Hudson et al., 2015). Failure to manage these relationships may lead to less effective social media outreach and may expose businesses to risk. Factors such as the level of technical sophistication of consumers potentially generate misleading statistics, creating challenges for organizations attempting to gain an understanding of the true level of engagement they achieve on social media (Kane et al., 2014). Consequently, failing to understand the results of a social media campaign is a potential risk factor for organizations seeking effective social media strategies (Aichner & Jacob, 2015).

Social media response and exchanges are central concepts in this study. According to social exchange theory, social exchanges function as long as both parties in the exchange receive value (Tyrie & Ferguson, 2013). Because of the lack of available research data specifically for nonprofits, many organizations face difficulty selecting social media strategies and platforms (Kane et al., 2014). Once engaged in social media activities, organizations also face potentially unintended consequences from C2C brand discussion, including false claims regarding products and services (Adjei et al., 2016). These unintended messages could spread quickly on social media, potentially adding additional risk. The risk from negative social media messaging could prove detrimental to social media strategies designed to increase membership dues income for nonprofits specifically.

Social media provides consumers and businesses with the ability to mobilize brand advocates within specific communities. However, maintaining brand-advertising standards may be challenging for businesses when consumers, seeking to advocate products or services they like, make claims about them (Adjei et al., 2016). Accordingly, when using social media, businesses need to be prepared for a loss of control because of the unpredictability of the public (Jalonen, 2015). Once engaged, some businesses generate interaction and facilitate both positive and negative discussion by providing consumers with many different online communication tools (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). In some cases, organizations extend social media communities into their online commerce environments. These social shopping systems present customers with unfiltered reviews of products and services at key moments in the online buying process, fostering consumer discussion and providing increased transparency (Yoo, Kim, & Sanders, 2015).

Some businesses also hire social media officers to provide guidance regarding social media exposure and protect against the unintended consequences of social media (Cain, 2012). According to Cain (2012), social media officers frequently produce formal social media plans, which provide standard operating procedures (SOP) for many of the scenarios that can occur when disseminating information on social media. Conversely, Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch (2016) found, as opposed to having one dedicated social media officer, organizations should spread social media responsibility across many different departments in an organization. Although Cain and Felix et al. presented different models for social media responsibility, both contend that organizations must focus on posting information that leaves little room for interpretation. Businesses engaging in social media should focus on maintaining clear, consistent messaging (Mount & Garcia Martinez, 2014), providing further insight into the type of social media messaging content nonprofits should use when designing strategies for increasing dues income.

Corporate Innovation and Social Media

Social media provide a variety of innovative ways for businesses to interact with consumers. Specifically, social media form an effective link between a business and customers seeking to identify issues they encounter with that business (Grégoire et al., 2015). Social media-based innovation discussions are effective at exploring this link as part of the corporate research and design process (Dong & Wu, 2015). In this capacity, businesses show similar interest in the formation of B2B social media connections. Similar to B2C connections, B2B connections may create stronger relationships with potential customers, to increase brand equity, generate new leads, resulting in discussion regarding innovation (Katona & Sarvary, 2014), supporting the need for additional research in this area.

Social media helps nonprofit professionals to innovate by rethinking their approach to challenges. For example, reading online discussions about consumer experiences may help businesses with social media savvy to resolve common problems (Roberts & Candi, 2014). Some businesses also integrate social media into their customer relationship management cycle instead of relying solely on call centers and old technology, resulting in increased efficiency and a better understanding of user challenges (Harrigan, Soutar, Choudhury, & Lowe, 2015). This increased level of understanding and innovation may help nonprofits to develop better products and services for their constituents as well. Businesses using and monitoring social media throughout their production supply chain may further enhance institutional knowledge about their market. Organizations create a more informed and efficient workforce by monitoring social media discussions regarding their business's activities (Lam et al., 2016).

Negative electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM) may affect brand and product perception if not properly contained and potentially spreads faster than traditional information (Fan et al., 2013; Kim & Johnson, 2016). In one example, European Telecom discovered consumers discussing internal corporate issues on their social media sites and creating negative EWOM regarding the company (Vandelanotte, Kirwan, Rebar, Alley, & Short, 2014). Because European Telecom actively monitored their social media presence, they communicated with consumers to address the EWOM and restore consumer confidence before detrimental effects occurred (Vandelanotte et al., 2014). Moreover, businesses of all kinds benefit from monitoring consumer sentiments and discussions (Arman, 2014; Canhoto et al., 2015). European Telecom's listening experience also provides an alternative possibility for organizational use of social media to increase membership dues income outside of traditional sales channels.

Social Media in Nonprofit Associations

In 2013, 61,980 nonprofit organizations existed in the United States (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2013). Nonprofit associations, most commonly professional membership associations, impact social change in the United States by endorsing and advocating social and political issues (Nank & Alexander, 2012). Unlike for-profit businesses, which measure their success regarding profit and loss, nonprofit associations often measure their success by the amount of progress made advocating for their stated social goals (Guo & Saxton, 2014). Finally, advocacy groups, including some associations, use the internet to advance their missions and increase the effectiveness of their communications and advocacy efforts (Obar et al., 2012).

The difference between for-profits and nonprofits also extends to consumer communication styles and preferences, supporting the need for this study. Notably, nonprofits possess different needs than for-profit organizations when using technologies such as social media for promotion, and have an easier time connecting with constituents online (Bernritter, Verlegh, & Smit, 2016). Before using social media to increase income, marketing professionals must first understand if social media is an accepted and popular means of communication among their target audience (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). For example, youth-based nonprofit associations targeting social issues use social media because of its flexibility and popularity among younger audiences (Meyer & Bray, 2013), and social media remains effective in industries where rapid communication is essential (Lozano & Lores, 2013).

Small organizations often contend with a lack of resources when attempting to remain current with technology (Zorn et al., 2013). Conversely, many larger organizations frequently struggle with ingrained culture and practices (Berkman, 2013). Despite this outcome, social media use in nonprofit associations continues to increase, driven by a need for innovative strategies to reach constituents (Schweitzer, Buchinger, Gassmann, & Obrist, 2012). Using the concepts outlined in social exchange theory and social influence theory, including the value of the reciprocity of actions or exchange between businesses and consumers, this study may provide insight into social media strategies that access these constituents and increase professional membership association dues income.

Nonprofits use social media technology to share information with the public and their members or constituents (Brown, 2015). In using social media, nonprofits must adapt to the new concept of community that social media provides to remain viable (Fields, 2014). However, little research exists regarding social media use in nonprofit organizations (Chapman et al., 2015; Saxton & Wang, 2013). The lack of available data regarding social media strategies in nonprofit associations underscores the need for research in this study regarding nonprofit-specific social media strategies to generate income.

Benefits and Challenges

Social media may help professional membership associations to foster engagement with their constituents and remain vibrant and relevant. Additionally, social media provides opportunities for nonprofit organizations to deepen relationships and communicate with constituents (Bernritter et al., 2016; Guo & Saxton, 2014). These interactions between nonprofit associations and consumers build trust and influence a consumer's intentions to support or donate to the organization's cause (Hajli, 2014). Oparaocha (2016) argued that trust is a fundamental component of social exchanges. Consequently, sharing organizational information with consumers who trust a nonprofit leads to increased awareness of a nonprofit's mission and may generate interest in an organization's activities (Albelwi & Almgren, 2014). Similarly, Rathore, Ilavarasan, and Dwivedi (2016) stated that organizations obtain product feedback and enhancement ideas more easily and expeditiously using social media feedback, as opposed to traditional tools to receive product feedback from consumers.

Businesses considering launching a social media campaign need to review their internal structures carefully before making such a move. Specifically, nonprofit associations implementing new social media strategies need to allocate dedicated resources to social media (Zorn et al., 2013). Social media provides an equal voice to all users, making this strategy valuable in social issue advocacy (Guo & Saxton, 2014; Saxton, Niyirora, Guo, & Waters, 2015). Once started, social media strategies unfold rapidly and are cost effective. Social media’s ease of use fosters engagement and increased awareness by providing organizations with an effective platform to rapidly communicate with the public (Briones, Madden, & Janoske, 2013). This cost-effective increase in engagement and awareness may be particularly important for nonprofits, as social media may play an essential role in maintaining an organization’s overall message.

The ability to send free messages to large groups of like-minded consumers provides value to nonprofit associations seeking to expand their reach (Briones et al., 2013). If nonprofits and for-profit businesses require access to consumer lists beyond their current social media followers, they can engage directly with social media providers and other media organizations to gain direct access to groups of consumers (Martin, 2013). Moreover, social media platforms such as Twitter provide companies with the ability to send engagement-generating messages to groups for a fee (Sivek, 2013). Using social media engagement-generating messages may provide nonprofit associations with a way to expand membership dues generating marketing to a wider group of targeted prospects than possible using other forms of media.

In the future, social media may also help to connect nonprofits with consumers seeking to support similar issues. These connections occur because social media helps consumers understand an organization's overall relevance and position on important issues (Bronner & Hoog, 2014). Social media is also an effective way to distribute critical information rapidly to groups of consumers (Oh, Agrawal, & Rao, 2013). Notably, in environments where safety issues may arise, social media provides reliable platforms to reach large groups of people quickly (Lozano & Lores, 2013).

Some nonprofits do not use all available technologies to build and maintain relationships with current and prospective members (Berkman, 2013). Reluctance to use social media may be, in part, because of concerns surrounding regulations by the IRS and other governing bodies regarding how organizations solicit donations and support (Berkman, 2013). Nonprofits also face specific challenges when archiving their outbound communications, as social media providers have unique rules regarding content ownership and the ability to store, record, or archive their media. From personal Facebook and LinkedIn pages to organizational news feeds, nonprofits need to create a policy to govern archiving and data preservation procedures (Aguirre, Mahr, Grewal, Ruyter, & Wetzels, 2015).

Because of social media user unpredictability, many organizations also assume social media presents an unnecessary risk (Jalonen, 2015; Sarigianni, Thalmann, & Manhart, 2016). Risk occurs because organizations face public relation challenges regarding the accuracy, quality, and motivation of information disseminated by users of social media (Oh et al., 2013). These concerns may abate when nonprofits conduct training in crisis communications and response and have an established protocol to handle potentially damaging social media posts (Adjei et al., 2016). Creating an effective protocol may be challenging because little practical data exists to support the value of this training in nonprofit associations. Although public relations agencies provide social media monitoring services to identify and contain potentially detrimental posts, the volume of both users and sites makes the process difficult (Weiguo & Gordon, 2014).

An additional challenge for professional membership associations in increasing income and accessing customers is attrition. Attrition is the regular gain and loss of members in a nonprofit membership organization (Fumagalli et al., 2013), which may lead to a lack of a sense of community. Although McGinley, Zhang, Hanks, and O’Neill (2015) stated that acute targeting using Facebook overcame some attrition in organizations, Brengarth and Mujkic (2016) argued nonprofit associations engaging in social media outreach of any kind must be careful to select the forms of social media used by their audience. As with traditional media outreach programs, Brengarth and Mujkic suggested knowledge of the audience is a core component of success.

Finally, an opportunity cost may exist when companies fail to implement social media. Because social media provides a mechanism for nonprofit associations to establish trust and awareness with their audiences and to gather support for time-sensitive issues, nonprofits may be spending more time and resources doing these things in other ways (Hajli, 2014). This opportunity cost may also affect professional membership associations because, as shown in social exchange theory, consumers prefer to interact with organizations with which they have existing relationships (Dijkmans et al., 2015). A peripheral opportunity cost associated with failing to plan for the lifespan of a social media strategy may exist, as nonprofit associations must account for lack of control over the time and date users receive and read their messages (Vernuccio, 2014).

Engagement and Nonprofit Membership

Businesses can use social media to augment their overall marketing mix. Nonprofits that do not engage in social media marketing may possess fewer opportunities than those using social media (Jalonen, 2015). For example, in time-sensitive or crisis situations, social media may add a level of transparency into the inner workings of a nonprofit association. Businesses also use social media in conjunction with viral marketing to change public perception of a given public issue (Guo & Saxton, 2015). The technology may serve as a quick and effective platform to disseminate advocacy actions, increasing trust in the organization and its mission (Freeman, Potente, Rock, & McIver, 2015). Furthermore, social media highlights the value of a nonprofit organization's position as an industry advocate or for advocacy, while simultaneously encouraging constituent dialog regarding organizational actions (Guo & Saxton, 2014).

Social media sites continue to expand by providing new ways to target and deliver information. Capabilities introduced after launch include blogs and file sharing, which are effective channels for content marketing (Fuchs, 2014). Although conclusive metrics surrounding return on investment (ROI) of social media marketing are nonexistent, acute targeting may lead to traditionally quantifiable gains such as increasing engagement and reducing attrition using Facebook (McGinley et al., 2015). Notably, in the tourism industry, Hudson et al. (2015) observed that social media outreach has a positive impact on music festival engagement and brand equity. Travel and festival engagement and brand equity may relate to events held by nonprofit associations.

Organizations use a wide variety of social media strategies. Some organizations use a hybrid communication strategy, incorporating a variety of methods to reach their audiences. However, a targeted mix of traditional marketing and social media works best in organizations focused on reaching acute groups of individuals based on interests or demographics with non-personal content (Hudson et al., 2015). For personalized marketing strategies, many ways exist to target specific users, including the application of strategic hashtags on sites that include Twitter, Facebook, and Flickr (Saxton et al., 2015). Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites also remain useful for marketers, as they are part of the day-to-day lives of Internet users (Saxena & Khanna, 2013).

Nonprofit membership engagement strategies may partially depend on generational tendencies. Increasingly distrustful of traditional media, Millennials or individuals born between 1981 and 1997 (Payton, 2015), use social media extensively (Pate & Adams, 2013). As a result, some organizations attempt to use social media to deepen their relationship with Millennials. Some nonprofits also identify other specific consumer groups who may utilize social media and directly use the platform to affect industry perceptions of their brands within these sub-groupings (Hooper, 2011). Similarly, just as nonprofit membership associations must be conscious of the generation of their target audience, nonprofit associations must also consider social and regional differences before launching an engagement campaign because the effectiveness of social media outside of developed countries remains largely unstudied (Van-Tien Dao, Nhat, Ming-Sung Cheng, & Der, 2014).

Other, more innovative, ways exist for professional membership associations to engage both current and potential constituents through traditionally consumer-focused social media. One such method involves allowing both current constituents and members of the public to crowdsource solutions to a specific problem. Although crowdsourcing may gather ideas and foster communication, social problem solving may be less effective in conveying ideas on its own. Still, social problem solving may benefit nonprofits by generating a discussion and engaging individuals in dialog around a common cause (Schweitzer et al., 2012). Social media platforms also provide a medium for accessing deeper levels of information about individuals or groups of individuals in chains than previously existed, allowing for better engagement with clients and members (Bernritter et al., 2016). Specifically, social media provides new opportunities for nonprofit associations to engage individuals in supply chains in conversation, increasing brand awareness and expanding their membership bases (Lam et al., 2016).

Transition and Summary

This study is of value to the practice of business because of the potential to provide insight(s) into social media strategies that increase professional membership association dues income. In Section 1, I introduced the business problem that some nonprofit marketing professionals lack knowledge of effective social media strategies to increase professional membership association dues income. Section 1 also included a comprehensive investigation of literature, as well as a conceptual framework for exploration, which includes social exchange theory and social influence theory.

In Section 2, I focused on the research project and provided detailed information on the functional aspects of the study including (a) the restatement of the purpose statement, (b) the role of the researcher, (c) research participants, (d) research method and design, (e) population and sampling, (f) ethical research considerations, (g) data collection instruments, (h) data collection techniques, (i) data organization techniques, (j) data analysis, (k) reliability and validity of the study, and (l) this transition and summary. Section 3 addresses the completed research study, and includes (a) presentation of the findings, (b) application of the findings to professional practice, (c) implications for social change, (d) recommendations for action and further research, and (e) reflections and conclusions.

Section 2: The Project

This study was an exploration of social media strategies that increase professional membership association dues income. Insufficient research exists regarding social media strategies for increasing income in the nonprofit space (Saxton & Wang, 2013), and nonprofits that do not implement effective social media strategies risk their long-term sustainability (Fields, 2014). In addition, social media strategies can play an important and specific role in nonprofits by increasing membership dues income (Unnikrishnan et al., 2016). Section 2 of this study includes (a) the restatement of the purpose statement, (b) the role of the researcher, (c) research participants, (d) research method and design, (e) population and sampling, (f) ethical research, (g) data collection instruments, (h) data collection techniques, (i) data organization techniques, and (j) reliability and validity of the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore social media strategies that nonprofit marketing professionals use to increase professional membership association dues income. The sample included seven nonprofit marketing professionals in one New Jersey-based professional membership association who excel in executing social media strategies to increase income from membership dues. The implications for social change of this study include the potential to help nonprofits to advance their social advocacy missions, which can include the advancement of social goals (Shier & Handy, 2016), as well as, according to Grønbjerg and Prakash (2016), the reduction of social inequalities, and promotion of community service activities.

Role of the Researcher

When conducting qualitative research, the role of the researcher is to collect, study, and find context-based meaning in data, including data provided by study participants in interviews, field observations, and other sources of data (Houghton et al., 2015; Pettigrew, 2013). Furthermore, when conducting research interviews, researchers must communicate their role in a qualitative study because interview participants may provide unanticipated responses according to their perception of the role of the researcher (Mckee, Guimaraes, & Pinto-Correia, 2015). As the researcher, I collected, studied, analyzed, and uncovered context-based meaning in the data.

My background includes 18 years of experience in nonprofit association marketing and 16 years of nonprofit social media marketing. This experience also includes familiarity with the target population, as I am a member of the professional membership association community, but I had no existing business relationship with participants in the nonprofit professional membership association selected as the case study for this study. When a researcher has familiarity with a community, the researcher should introduce tactics to avoid bias (Halvarsson, Ståhle, Halén, & Roaldsen, 2016). Using a formal review process assists in mitigating interviewer bias (Morse, 2015; Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). Wahyuni (2012) observed that reviewing collected data, such as interview transcripts with peers, also increases reliability and data accuracy to eliminate bias. As a result, this study included open-ended questions, member checking, and the use of triangulation to mitigate bias and avoid viewing data from a personal perspective.

An interview protocol provides a uniform approach to all interviews and aids in establishing reliability and credibility (Hunter, 2012; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Mitchell, 2015). Appendix B contains the interview protocol for this study and incorporates a chronological procedure governing all participant interviews. The objective of the interview protocol in this study was to mitigate bias, make the interview process consistent, maintain the comfort and confidentiality of participants, and provide an overview of the entire interview process.

This study incorporated the basic ethical principles outlined in the Belmont Report (1979) that underlie the conduct of behavioral research involving human subjects. The Belmont Report provided researchers with a foundation for ethical human research and established a means to handle issues ethically by providing participants with a foundation to understand their rights and contact appropriate individuals if issues arise (U.S. National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). Accordingly, all interviews in this study complied with ethical standards published in the Belmont Report (U.S. National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). The Belmont Report standards include that participants receive an informed consent form to complete before participating in the study (see Appendix A).

Participants

According to Yin (2013), qualitative case studies effectively aid in the investigation of a single case by providing an in-depth understanding of an issue that goes beyond what can emerge from quantitative data, and potentially include multiple participants from within that case. This study included seven New Jersey-based nonprofit marketing professionals in a professional membership association who executed social media marketing strategies designed to increase membership dues income. Eligibility criteria for participation in this study included: (a) being age 18 years or older; (b) job responsibilities that included oversight of social media strategies that sought to increase membership dues income in a nonprofit professional membership organization; (c) active use of common social media tools including Facebook, Twitter, and other well-known platforms; and (d) experience in conducting social media campaigns designed to increase membership dues income.

As the researcher, I gained access to the participants after discussing this study with the Executive Director and receiving a letter of consent from a New Jersey-based professional membership association (see Appendix C). Once accessed, I established a working relationship based on trust with participants. It is important for case-study researchers to create and maintain a trust-based relationship with study participants (Johnson, 2014). In addition, according to Jacob and Furgerson (2012) and Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, and McKibbon, (2015), the importance exists to furnish study participants with a way to engage in a respectful dialogue with researchers regarding thoughts or questions they may have about a study to build a working relationship, mitigate bias, and increase accuracy. Consequently, the study included a method for two-way collaboration between the researcher and participants, and a preinterview consultation that reviewed the study purpose statement, problem statement, and interview protocol, to build a working relationship with participants (see Appendix B).

Research Method and Design

Extensive research on qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods methodologies led to the selection of a qualitative single case study for this study. Qualitative methodology's open-ended questioning model allows researchers to achieve a depth of understanding not available using other research methods (Sauerland et al., 2014). Qualitative case studies provide a deep, context-based understanding of a phenomenon (Yin, 2013), to help researchers explore and describe unique occurrences directly from the perspectives of individuals living through those occurrences (Singh, 2014).

Research Method

The three research methods considered for this study of social media strategies that increased membership dues income in professional membership associations included (a) qualitative, (b) quantitative, and (c) mixed methods. The method for this study was qualitative. Sauerland et al. (2014) specified that the qualitative methodology provides a deep understanding of a phenomenon. Obtaining participant points of view and gaining a context-based perspective through qualitative research allows for a better understanding of the overall research problem (Anyan, 2013; Gibson, Benson, & Brand, 2013; Thamhain, 2014). Subsequently, qualitative methodology deepens the value of the data by providing a context-based view of the problem included for study (De Leeuw et al., 2015). Finally, the primary objective of qualitative methodology is to help researchers start a dialog and advance a scholarly discussion on a given topic (Lewis, 2015). These objectives supported the aim of this study to explore social media strategies that nonprofit marketing professionals use to increase dues income because according to Fields (2014), nonprofit organizations that do not implement effective social media strategies risk their long-term sustainability.

Qualitative research frequently requires more information in support of research questions than similar quantitative studies (Lewis, 2015). In addition, qualitative research includes participant perceptions, as opposed to exclusively focusing on measurable data (Lawrence & Tar, 2013). Because of the inclusion of contextual data, Sauerland et al. (2014) argued that qualitative research achieves a deeper understanding of the resulting data than other research methods. As related to this study, an investigation of dues income generating professional membership association focused social media strategies required context. Accordingly, this study included the exploration of data that originated from open-ended questions and other qualitative techniques.

Researchers may regard qualitative methodology as less effective than quantitative methodology when attempting to produce precise and replicable results (Hooper, 2011). Because of this perception, researchers using a qualitative methodology may encounter more challenges while promoting and defending their work than those using quantitative methodology (Lewis, 2015). These challenges occur because researchers have an easier time replicating and verifying exact variables than contextually driven data in direct comparisons (Hooper, 2011). However, quantitative methodology did not apply to this study, because a specific focus on measurable data provided no means to explore context or any unpredictable factors that contributed to social media effectiveness. Moreover, while qualitative methodology does not offer the empiric data analysis of quantitative research, the open-ended questioning style provides the opportunity to uncover unexpected findings when conducting a study (Lewis, 2015), supporting the choice to include this strategy as the research method for this study.

Researchers find that qualitative methodology is effective when used as the single methodology of a study (Yin, 2013). Qualitative methodology provides a benefit when researching a topic in its given context or environment (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013; Lewis, 2015), as in this study. However, some researchers may not find qualitative methodology suitable, because of the focus on contextual data. For example, Knight (2012) stated that qualitative researchers must possess competent interview skills to achieve the best possible result. Nevertheless, this same open-ended questioning style allows qualitative researchers to achieve a depth of understanding not available using other research methods (Sauerland et al., 2014).

Similarly, quantitative research may not be appropriate for every research project. Notably, quantitative researchers regard reliability and validity as essential factors in research (Groeneveld, Tummers, Bronkhorst, Ashikali, & Van Thiel, 2015; Wahyuni, 2012). This belief leads quantitative researchers to question the reliability of non-quantitative studies (Wahyuni, 2012). Researchers find these questions stem from a lack of an identical set of measurable criteria in qualitative studies and data that is not easily replicable (Hooper, 2011). However, Anyan (2013) stated that qualitative research maximizes the depth of research conducted, as opposed to quantitative research that focuses on the quantity of research conducted. Because of the depth provided by qualitative research, this study incorporated the qualitative methodology to establish a contextual understanding of effective professional membership association-specific social media strategies.

Although quantitative research provides researchers with the ability to investigate and understand specific circumstances, such as the success and failure of social media in membership associations, success and failure are open-ended terms and foster a broad range of interpretation (Venkatesh et al., 2013). Quantitative research works best in situations requiring the measurement of specific variables (Lewis, 2015); thus, some researchers choose to view qualitative research as less effective than quantitative when working with exact comparisons (Hooper, 2011). However, the study of social media strategies that increase professional membership association dues income required context and qualitative methodology.

A mixed-methods approach is advantageous when using more than one methodology to increase the value of the study, outweighing any additional resulting challenges (Burt, 2015). For example, quantitative research alone might provide insight into specific empiric data, but would not provide an exploration into the context of that data (Gibson et al., 2013; Thamhain, 2014). This study did not include a mixed-methods approach because a contextual study of social media strategies to increase membership dues income in a professional membership association is qualitative, and mixed-methods research is only helpful when researchers require the use of more than one method to understand a topic.

Research Design

The five main types of qualitative designs are (a) narrative, (b) grounded theory, (c) phenomenology, (d) ethnography, and (e) case study research (Lewis, 2015). I selected a single case study design for this study to investigate social media strategies that increase professional membership association dues income. Case studies help researchers to explore and describe unique occurrences directly from the perspectives of the individuals living through those occurrences (Singh, 2014; Yin, 2013). Further, the role of a researcher in a case study design is to conduct analysis and accurately create a narrative regarding the case (Harland, 2014).

Of the five main areas of qualitative research design, both narrative and grounded theory warranted evaluation as potential designs for this study. Narrative research frequently contains a story format and requires researchers to record an individual sharing their personal experiences (Lewis, 2015; Paschen & Ison, 2014). A narrative design did not suit the needs of this study because narrative research provides a focus on individual storytelling by one or two individuals, although this study includes qualitative interviews with seven nonprofit marketing professionals to investigate social media strategies that increased membership dues income in professional membership associations. In addition, grounded theory analysis begins with questions and data collection and works toward a theory or central concept (Flint & Woodruff, 2015; Kahlke, 2014). Instead of using a preexisting theory, grounded theory allows researchers to develop a custom theory after collecting and analyzing data (Tossy, Brown, & Lowe, 2016). This study does not include grounded theory because the Walden University DBA program excludes grounded theory from the list of qualitative research designs available to students.

Research design selection consideration in this study also included phenomenology and ethnography. Phenomenological analysis is a well-established approach to qualitative research, making a phenomenological design a viable option for this study. Similar to case studies, phenomenology includes the investigation of individual experiences with a complete phenomenon (Berterö, 2015; Flint & Woodruff, 2015). However, phenomenology is the investigation of people experiencing a phenomenon, whereas case studies provide a deeper focus on the experiences of a single case or a few cases (Yin, 2013). Additional research also revealed the inappropriateness of phenomenology for this study, because the phenomenon of social media remains ongoing. By contrast, ethnography focuses on the investigation of a culture or group that share a commonality (Lewis, 2015; Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton Nicholls, & Ormston, 2014). Ethnography did not suit the needs of this study because of the focus on relationships and characteristics shared between groups of people.

Participants are a key component of case studies (Guetterman, 2015). Marshall and Rossman (2016) stated that while using four to 12 participants was typical, between seven and 10 participants are ideal for qualitative case studies. As opposed to including an arbitrary number of participants, case study research should include enough participants to reach saturation and gather sufficient data (Guetterman, 2015; Yin, 2013). Because this study included a single case study design with a purpose to examine the perceptions of the employees within one organization, this study included seven nonprofit marketing professionals.

According to Walker (2012) and Yin (2013), data sources in qualitative research include interviews, observations, and supporting documents and records. As a result, this study incorporated more than one data collection method and included methodological triangulation to increase confidence and achieve saturation. Data saturation only occurs in qualitative research when no new information emerges from the data and findings become repetitive, as saturation has no fixed formula to calculate (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I recorded consistent themes and analyzed data consistently throughout the study until the project reached saturation.

Population and Sampling

The population of this study included a purposeful sample of seven nonprofit marketing professionals from a New Jersey-based professional membership association because they were among the key people using social media strategies to increase dues income in the case. Marshall and Rossman (2016) stated that although using four to 12 participants was average, between seven and 10 is best in qualitative case studies. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) recommended using at least six participants and Atran, Medin, and Ross (2005) argued that in some studies, 10 participants help to reach data saturation. Walker (2012), Guetterman (2015), and Yin (2013) all observed that sample sizes in a case study depend on the number of participants required to achieve saturation. As a result, this study included seven nonprofit marketing professionals. Criteria for participant selection included (a) being age 18 years or older; (b) job responsibilities that included oversight of social media strategies that increase membership dues income in a nonprofit professional membership organization; (c) active use of common social media tools including Facebook, Twitter, and other well-known platforms; and (d) experience in conducting social media campaigns designed to increase membership dues income.

The study included data from participant interviews for analysis to identify key themes and reach saturation. To ensure data saturation, this study incorporated additional sources of data, including non-private social media campaign data collected from publically available company documents, the Facebook and Twitter pages of the association, and field notes taken while directly observing a social media planning meeting focusing on strategies to increase membership dues in the case. If saturation did not occur, then additional participant interviews were scheduled for inclusion. Furthermore, according to Michna (2013) and Harper and Cole (2012), member checking interviews increases the validity of a study and contributes to methodological triangulation by providing participants with an opportunity to review data, add omitted information, and revise data summary errors. All participant interviews in this study included a round of member checking, which occurred through subsequent skype oral interviews.

The strategy for assembly of the participant list for this study included purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling allows researchers to use specific evaluation criteria when recruiting participants (Gentles et al., 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Palinkas et al., 2015), as well as adding credibility to the results of a study (Anyan, 2013). Interviews provide researchers with the ability to record verbal and nonverbal data while exploring the observations of participants (Gioia et al., 2013; McIntosh & Morse, 2015; Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). Furthermore, according to Koesler, Achtnicht, and Köhler (2015), in-person interviews form part of a data collection strategy when addressing research questions in case studies. In the case of this study, in-person interviews took place in a private meeting room in a public space within the business where the population work. The quiet interview rooms included in this study were appropriate for a lengthy interview and conducive to data collection.

Ethical Research

Researchers must place the highest importance on treating human participants equally and adhering to ethical standards when conducting research (Haahr, Norlyk, & Hall, 2013; Harriss & Atkinson, 2015; U.S. National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). Consequently, as the researcher, a top priority is to treat participants in this study equally, respectfully, ethically, and with personal comfort in mind. To maintain the highest ethical standards, I completed the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Web-based training course, Protecting Human Research Participants, and received certification number 2385921 (see Appendix D). The IRB approval number for this study is 05-11-17-0176087.

All interviews in this study complied with ethics standards published in the Belmont Report (U.S. National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979), and required every participant to submit a signed informed consent form before answering interview questions and providing study data (see Appendix A). As the primary instrument of the study, researchers must ensure participants understand their involvement by distributing and reviewing informed consent forms, which include potential risks and participant rights (Regmi et al., 2016; Rodrigues, Antony, Krishnamurthy, Shet, & De Costa, 2013). Moreover, important factors in maintaining participant privacy include ethical research and informed consent (Gaeeni, Farahani, Seyedfatemi, & Mohammadi, 2014). Finally, formalizing and providing informed consent documentation strengthens the relationship between the interviewer and participants by ensuring clarity of purpose and objective (Salim, Mandal, & Parija, 2014).

This study's informed consent form included full definitions of the terms of participation, key ethical considerations, and a timeframe for participant response destruction (see Appendix A). To maintain confidentiality, I replaced participant names with ID numbers (starting at 40 and incrementing by seven for each subsequent participant) upon informed consent statement submission. Participants could withdraw from the study at any time. Study participants did not receive financial incentives; however, each participant will receive a copy of the final published version of this study in the hope that the findings may prove helpful in their execution of social media strategies. In accordance with Walden University guidelines, all data provided by participants will remain in a safe place for 5 years after the publication of this study. I will destroy all data 5 years after the publication date.

Data Collection Instruments

The researcher is the primary data collection instrument in a qualitative study (Turner & Norwood, 2013). I was the primary data collection instrument in this study. Mansfield (2013) established that in addition to interview data, qualitative researchers collect observational data regarding participant environments. In conducting qualitative research, Shen-Miller, Forrest, and Burt (2012) also stated that a formal interview protocol ensures uniformity and maintains established ethical standards and comfort of the participants. To maintain uniformity, an interview protocol outlining distinct steps and interview questions provided the structure for each interview (see Appendix B). Each interview included (a) recording of the date, participant ID, and location; (b) researcher introduction; (c) review of the purpose of the study; (d) review of the interview process; (e) an example of potential interview questions; (f) an example of the depth of answers expected; (g) review of participant confidentiality; (h) review of participant rights / signing of the informed consent form; (i) the participant interview; and (j) a review of next steps and member checking. The interview protocol of this study also included all interview questions (see Appendix B).

This study included an audio recording device to capture participant interviews. The use of an audio recording device aids the researcher in capturing interview data, while a round of member checking confirms the researcher's summary and understanding of the data providing substantial benefits, including reliability and validity to, qualitative research (Harper & Cole, 2012). Audio recording devices also benefit research because these tools increase reliability and validity (Harper & Cole, 2012; Neal, Neal, VanDyke, & Kornbluh, 2015). In addition, audio recordings aid in analyzing and identifying key themes in data (Snyder, 2012). As the researcher, I analyzed each audio recording to identify codes, key themes, and ideas that emerged from the data.

After I recorded interviews, reviewed the subsequent recordings, and summarized themes, a round of member checking commenced. Providing interviewees with the opportunity to review their data, also known as member checking, increases the reliability of the data in a qualitative study (Morse, 2015; Wahyuni, 2012; Yin, 2013). Furthermore, according to Walker (2012) and Yin (2013), data sources in qualitative research include interviews, observations, and supporting documents and records. As a result, this study incorporated more than one data collection method and included publically available social media campaign data collected from a company report, including association annual reports. A further source of data included field notes taken while directly observing a social media planning meeting focusing on strategies to increase membership dues.

Data Collection Techniques

The research question for this qualitative case study was: What social media strategies do nonprofit marketing professionals use to increase professional membership association dues income? Qualitative data collection occurs in many ways, including interviews, focus groups, corporate documents, and observations (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). This study included semistructured interviews as the primary technique for data collection. Additional information from a publicly available company report, including membership growth data from 2005 to 2016, social media audience growth data from 2013 to 2017, and meeting attendance data from 2001 to 2016, formed a secondary source of data. Field notes from observation of a planning and implementation meeting for social media campaigns, including review and discussion of several specific social media campaigns on Facebook and Twitter designed to increase membership dues, formed a third source of data. The Facebook and Twitter social media sites for the organization served as a fourth source of data, as I reviewed specific campaigns in the context of the strategies that emerged. These data-points provided a means to achieve methodological triangulation.

Interviews are a popular data collection technique among case study researchers (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013), providing many advantages, including the ability to explore new lines of questioning as new concepts emerge during an interview (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In the case of this study, participant interviews provided better information while being easier to facilitate than other forms of data collection. As a result, this study included open-ended semistructured interview questions and 1-hour interview sessions to elicit thoughts regarding social media strategies that effectively increase professional membership association dues income.

According to Englander (2012), qualitative researchers should provide participants with relevant information about the study and the interview protocol before interviews take place (see Appendix B). Therefore, each interview began with introductions, provided participants with interview questions and the informed consent form, and reviewed the following: (a) the purpose of the study, (b) the informed consent form, (c) the interview process, (d) participant confidentiality, and (e) ethical considerations. Interview schedules include time to (a) address participant questions and (b) collect signed informed consent forms (see Appendix A). Upon consent to participate in the study (see Appendix A) and participant review of the interview protocol (see

Appendix B), each participant implicitly agreed to allow the capture of an audio recording of the interview process; a handheld digital audio recording device recorded each session. Additionally, each participant received an individual identification (ID) number to maintain his or her confidentiality. Unique participant ID numbers started at 40 and increased in increments of seven, making the first two participants 40 and 47 respectively, and preserved participant confidentiality.

One disadvantage of qualitative research interviews is that researchers must establish and maintain a rapport with interviewees, as well as a sophisticated understanding of the research topic, to gather the best data (Rossetto, 2014). As a result, this study included a method to foster an ongoing relationship between the researcher and study participants. Also, as a result of my past and present academic and professional history, I possessed the relevant experience and sophisticated knowledge necessary to conduct interviews related to social media use to increase professional membership association dues income. A final disadvantage is that researchers face potential ethical challenges regarding participant privacy and interviewer bias when conducting qualitative interviews with individuals with whom they share existing relationships, regardless of their level of knowledge or experience with a research topic (Haahr et al., 2013). To maintain the highest ethical standards and overcome ethical challenges, I completed the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Web-based training course *Protecting Human Research Participants* and received certification number 339338 (see Appendix D).

According to Marshall and Rossman (2016) and Englander (2012), recording the audio from qualitative interviews leads to increased accuracy in a study by providing researchers with reliable data to transcribe and summarize (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Audio recordings were used in this study to increase accuracy. At the conclusion of each interview, the audio recording stopped, and I reviewed the next steps with the participant. Throughout the study, participants had an opportunity to offer additional information for analysis and consideration.

After semistructured interviews and initial analysis concluded, a round of member checking served as a means to verify data. According to Michna (2013) and Harper and Cole (2012), member checking interviews increases the validity of a study and contributes to methodological triangulation by providing participants with an opportunity to review data, add omitted information, and revise data summary errors. As a result, participants engaged in member checking upon finalization of the initial data analysis, including reviewing the written summary of themes arising from interviews.

Data Organization Techniques

This study included a comprehensive data organization model to organize data, maintain themes and increase accuracy, as according to Anyan (2013), the importance exists to maintain consistent data organization techniques when working with research data. To increase accuracy using data organization, St. Pierre and Jackson (2014) recommended organizing and storing study data in a catalog. Additionally, maintaining a catalog of data helps with data organization, eliminating redundant data and mitigating researcher bias (Michna, 2013; St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014). Based on the findings of

Michna (2013) and St. Pierre and Jackson, this study contained a Microsoft Excel® study catalog spreadsheet with four distinct workbooks as a system to track data, including (a) participant interviews and member checking, (b) non-private social media campaign data, (c) field notes taken while directly observing a social media planning meeting focusing on strategies to increase membership dues, (d) a review of professional literature from business journals, (e) the study database, (f) and the research journal. A separate Microsoft Word document which contained observations in the form of field notes taken while directly observing a social media planning meeting focusing on strategies to increase membership dues included organization into the key themes that emerged from the interview sessions.

The participant workbook details included (a) the name of the participant; (b) status of receipt of the consent form; (c) a unique ID number for the individual; (d) job title; and (e) the date and location of the interview. A second workbook in the study spreadsheet contained data regarding the participant interview including the (a) unique participant ID, (b) length of the initial interview, (c) status of interview analysis, (d) date member checking occurred, and (e) key themes identified in the process. The third study workbook contained a catalog to organize non-private social media campaign data and field observation data into several tabs, and included (a) dues increasing social media strategy used; (b) results of the strategy; (c) strategy performance; and (d) strategy launch date. The fourth workbook in the study spreadsheet contained a catalog of emerging themes from participant interviews and field observations and included (a) themes and (b) data sources.

In addition to monitoring emerging themes, a reflective journal helps researchers to identify and understand key concepts emerging from the data (Houghton et al., 2015). This study included a reflective journal to organize notes regarding the research as a whole and included themes emerging from the data. The reflective journal stored the date and time of each interview or the date of the field observation, the participant ID if applicable, and key themes or new ideas identified during the interview or observation session.

At the completion of the study, all digital data collected included storage in a password protected master storage folder on a portable USB drive. The portable USB drive containing all digital study data and any physical papers from the study, including consent forms and social media data documents, was included for storage in a locked file container for 5 years after the publication date. I am the only person able to access the locked container. In accordance with Walden University guidelines, I will destroy all data will after 5 years.

Data Analysis

According to Silverman (2013), data analysis uncovers and tracks themes and ideas emerging from the data. Also, according to Yin (2013), researchers conduct analysis by reviewing data in search of themes and patterns. In the case of this study, I began a preliminary analysis of the data immediately following each participant interview by replaying interview recordings to analyze and code new data thematically. After completing interviews and member checking, and the observation of a planning and implementation meeting for social media campaigns designed to increase membership dues occurred, analysis, organization, coding, and generation of a summary of themes and findings commenced.

In a qualitative study, researchers analyze and extract meaning and themes from data provided by participants (Lawrence & Tar, 2013). This study incorporated the five steps for qualitative data analysis outlined by Yin (2016) as a logical and sequential process for data analysis and included a mechanism to identify themes as they emerged, a system to code themes, and a process to connect themes to the conceptual framework and the literature. Specifically, Yin’s steps are (a) compiling, (b) disassembling, (c) reassembling, (d) interpreting, and (e) concluding. Data for this qualitative study included (a) participant interviews and member checking, (b) non-private social media campaign data, (c) field notes taken while directly observing a social media planning meeting focusing on strategies to increase membership dues, (d) the Facebook and Twitter pages of the association, (e) a review of professional literature from business journals, (f) the study database, and (g) the research journal.

The data analysis process of this study included sessions for the researcher to review and record common of themes in the study spreadsheet and reflective journal. Recording data in the reflective journal and study spreadsheet provided the ability to add or adjust research questions, if necessary, throughout the study. After initial participant interviews concluded, a round of member checking validated data before preparing the data for import into NVivo 11 for Windows for analysis. Member checking confirmed the accuracy of the interview summaries and confirmed the researcher accurately derived the intended meaning participants conveyed (Harper & Cole, 2012). Following member checking and data analysis, I researched and analyzed additional peer-reviewed literature published after approval of this study to add any recently released data.

Data analysis included initial organization of all coded data into one of three primary categories: (a) effective social media strategies for increasing membership dues income, (b) ineffective social media strategies for increasing membership dues income, and (c) inconclusive social media strategies. The conceptual framework of this study included social exchange theory and social influence theory in alignment with the literature review and the research question. Based on the data collected, the overarching theme, actionable strategies to increase dues income in professional membership associations, emerged and included five themes: (a) focus on generating interaction and engagement with social media connections, (b) have a comprehensive, coordinated strategy to align resources toward achieving the same goal, (c) establish trust with social media connections, (d) increase the overall social media audience, and (e) measure success and results.

In research, new data categories emerge when the data does not fit into an existing category (Palinkas et al., 2015). As a result, new categories developed as new ideas emerged from the data that did not fit into existing categories. The study included key findings from the data analysis for correlation with the conceptual framework, in addition to other research surrounding nonprofits, dues income, and social media. The study database included color-coded data categories to highlight information and prominent trends as well as themes that directly paralleled the conceptual framework. According to

Deschamps et al. (2015), color-coded data categories aid in the identification of trends when conducting research.

NVivo 11 for Windows is a software program that provides researchers with the ability to store, code, evaluate, and interpret data from a variety of sources (Franzosi, Doyle, McClelland, Rankin, & Vicari, 2013; Gläser & Laudel, 2013; Woods, Paulus, Atkins, & Macklin, 2015). This study included NVivo 11 for Windows software to identify themes from publically available social media data, participant interviews, field observations, and data provided through member checking. The semistructured nature of the interview questions and interview protocol (see Appendix B), combined with the thematic analysis capabilities of NVivo 11 for Windows provided a reliable and replicable model, as well as transparency throughout the procedure. I processed the data, including participant interview data, new data (if any) arising from member checking, field notes, structured field observation notes, and non-private social media campaign data collected from publically available company data, using NVivo 11 for Windows software. NVivo software aids researchers in alleviating concerns regarding a lack of uniform and measurable criteria, as the program creates uniformity by organizing data (Franzosi et al., 2013).

This study also included thematic analysis for data coding and analysis. Thematic analysis is a method of data coding and analysis that focuses on themes and ideas as opposed to solely focusing on specific words, and aids researchers in maintaining a basic organizational structure and coding system for the identification and analysis of themes (Braun, Clarke, & Weate, 2016). Moreover, according to Braun, Clarke, and Rance

(2015), thematic analysis includes the identification of themes and patterns across an entire set of data, as opposed to rigid methods that focus on the identification of themes in single items of data., This study used thematic analysis to organize and code data, identify emerging themes, and identify parallels with the literature and conceptual framework. As themes emerged in the data, including the literature and conceptual framework, unique codes identified the frequency and circumstances surrounding the emergence of those codes.

The study included methodological triangulation in the data analysis process, which was achieved using participant interview data, non-private social media campaign data collected from a publically available company report, the Facebook and Twitter pages of the association, and observations in the form of field notes taken while directly observing a social media planning meeting focusing on strategies to increase membership dues. Triangulation is a tool researchers use to increase confidence in research by investigating data from several distinct sources (Michna, 2013), and according to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), methodological triangulation uses two or more sources of data to establish consistency in the findings and adds to research validity. In addition, triangulation helps researchers to gain a better understanding of a topic because the introduction of additional sources of data creates an opportunity for deeper analysis and understanding (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

According to Street and Ward (2012), reliability and validity occur when the researcher takes appropriate steps to eliminate bias from a study. The application of the qualitative methodology draws potential criticism or questions regarding reliability (Lewis, 2015). These questions stem from a lack of an unvarying set of measurable criteria in qualitative studies that may increase the difficulty to replicate results and verify reliability (Hooper, 2011). However, providing interviewees with the opportunity to review the data they supply, also known as member checking, increases the reliability and dependability of the data in a qualitative study (Morse, 2015; Wahyuni, 2012; Yin, 2013).

Yin (2013) also stated that member checking helps to provide additional data for methodological triangulation by offering participants the opportunity to provide additional information following the initial interview. This study incorporated member checking, methodological triangulation, and a chain of evidence which increased dependability and credibility. Finally, researchers establish reliability in a study by adhering to a strict set of research procedures and by documenting those procedures in a journal throughout the research process (Grossoehme, 2014). This study included a reflective journal which recorded the research process, as well as a formal interview protocol, and semistructured interview questions (see Appendix B).

Validity

Loh (2013) stated that researchers commonly scrutinized the reliability and validity of research studies. The resulting data provides future researchers and nonprofit professionals with a starting point to apply successful strategies, as well as to conduct future research. In case study research, triangulation increases research dependability as well as reliability and validity by incorporating data from several distinct sources to investigate the primary research question (Baskarada, 2014). The study used open-ended questions, member checking, and methodological triangulation to overcome researcher bias and enhance credibility. Methodological triangulation increases the validity of a study and involves evaluating data from several distinct sources such as interviews and peripheral raw data (Michna, 2013; Yin, 2013).

Reaching saturation confirms that the results of a study may transfer to future research (Morse & Field, 1995; Onwuegbuze & Byers, 2014). However, specific determination of transferability on a case-by-case basis by future researchers remains necessary (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In qualitative research, transferability relates to the ability to transfer research results to other contexts (Stewart, Slater, & Maruszczak, 2015; Tong & Dew, 2016). However, according to Marshall and Rossman (2016), transferability must ultimately be determined by any future researchers seeking to apply the findings of a study to another context, as opposed to the researcher publishing the original research. Consequently, to aid in transferability, this study included an interview protocol, which according to Hunter (2012) and Jacob and Furgerson (2012), provides a uniform approach to all interviews and provides a means for other researchers to attempt to replicate the findings. Appendix B contains the interview protocol for this study and incorporates a chronological procedure governing all participant interviews.

Confirmability occurs when a researcher verifies study findings, and the results are unbiased (Hays, Wood, Dahl, & Kirk-Jenkins, 2016; Yilmaz, 2013). In addition, Rapport, Clement, Doel, and Hutchings (2015) stated that confirmability occurs when study findings link directly to data originating from participant interviews and other sources, as opposed to the assumptions of the researcher. Confirmability of this study included clear and replicable procedures for data collection and analysis, as well as member checking.

Information surrounding saturation in qualitative research suggests, much like qualitative research, saturation remains contextual. According to Fusch and Ness (2015), data saturation only occurs in qualitative research when no new information emerges from the data, as saturation has no fixed formula to calculate. To monitor saturation, throughout the data analysis process, I recorded consistent themes and contradictory information in the study spreadsheet. All data included consistent review and analysis throughout the study until reaching saturation.

Some researchers proposed a specific minimum number of interview participants needed to reach saturation in a case study. For example, to achieve saturation, Morse and Field (1995) suggested six participants, Atran et al. (2005) suggested 10 participants, and Marshall and Rossman (2016) argued that while using four to 12 participants was typical; consequently, between seven and 10 participants are ideal. This single case study included a purposive sample of seven nonprofit association professionals to explore the perceptions of the employees of a professional membership association in New Jersey, and study data included participant interview data, data from field observations, publically available social media campaign data collected from a company report to achieve saturation.

Transition and Summary

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to study social media strategies that seven nonprofit marketing professionals use to increase membership dues income in a professional membership association. In Section 2, I reviewed the project portion of this study and identified specific details regarding the selection of a qualitative case study, data and data analysis, mitigation of bias, saturation, and the targeted population. Section 2 includes (a) the restatement of the purpose statement; (b) the role of the researcher; (c) research participants; (d) research method and design; (e) population and sampling; (f) ethical research considerations; (g) data collection instruments; (h) data collection techniques; (i) data organization techniques; (j) data analysis; (k) reliability and validity of the study; and (l) this transition and summary. Section 3 includes (a) data analysis and presentation of the findings; (b) application of the findings to professional practice; (c) implications for social change; (d) recommendations for action and further research; (e) reflections and conclusions; and (f) appendices.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

This section includes a review of the purpose statement and research methodology, and a summary of the study findings. Also included is a summation of actionable strategies to increase dues income in professional membership associations and various applications to professional practice, as well as implications for social change. Section 3 concludes with a discussion of the findings and recommendations for further action and research.

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore social media strategies that nonprofit marketing professionals used to increase professional membership association dues income, and the primary research question was: What social media strategies do nonprofit marketing professionals use to increase professional membership association dues income? The case for this study was a New Jersey-based professional membership association, and the sample included seven nonprofit marketing professionals who specifically excelled in the execution of social media strategies to increase income from membership dues.

The site for this study was the headquarters of the professional membership association serving as the case, located within an office park in southern New Jersey. The association occupies the entire first floor of the office building, and participant interviews and the social media planning meeting I observed took place in a team meeting room named the dugout, which P40 indicated is the primary location for strategy meetings and private meetings within the association's headquarters. The room had glass windows facing a grassy lawn and included a long oval table and comfortable leather chairs. An easel with drawing paper and writing tools was placed next to one wall and had several unrelated diagrams drawn on it.

This study included semistructured interviews as the primary technique for data collection. Additional information from a publicly available company report, including membership growth data from 2005 to 2016, social media audience growth data from 2013 to 2017, and meeting attendance data from 2001 to 2016, formed a secondary source of data. Field notes from observation of a planning and implementation meeting for social media campaigns, including review and discussion of several specific social media campaigns on Facebook and Twitter designed to increase membership dues, formed a third source of data. The Facebook and Twitter social media sites for the organization served as a fourth source of data, and I reviewed specific campaigns in the context of the strategies that emerged. These data-points provided a means to achieve methodological triangulation.

Presentation of the Findings

Initial research into social media and professional membership associations confirmed the existence of a business problem, and Fields (2014) observed that nonprofit organizations that do not implement effective social media strategies risk their long-term sustainability. To address this issue and affect change, I sought to answer the overarching research question: What social media strategies do nonprofit marketing professionals use to increase professional membership association dues income? The primary data collection technique used in this study was semistructured interviews, and additional data included non-private social media campaign data, field notes from the social media planning meeting observed, the literature reviewed and the Facebook and Twitter pages of the association.

To preserve confidentiality, each participant received a unique ID number (starting at 40 and increasing in increments of seven, where the first participant was P40) for identification. Five major themes appeared in the data:

1. Focusing on generating interaction and engagement with social media connections.
2. Having a comprehensive, coordinated strategy to align resources toward achieving the same goal.
3. Establishing trust with social media connections.
4. Increasing the overall social media audience.
5. Measuring success and results.

A derivative theme, being aware of a loss of control of a social media campaign message, also emerged. Analysis of the data from participant interviews, field notes from the observation of a meeting to discuss social media strategies used to increase income from dues, and non-private social media campaign data resulted in 21 codes (see Table 1). These codes yielded one overarching theme, five themes, and a derivative theme.

Table 1

Thematic Hierarchy

Overarching theme or derivative theme	Themes	Codes
Be aware of loss of control (*derivative*)	N/A	(a) Have an emergency plan, (b) make sure hashtags are unique and monitor them, (c) understand how the message could change, and (d) use volunteers to help.
Actionable strategies (*overarching*)	Establish trust	(a) Leverage trust in the brand, value, association, age, and reputation; (b) incorporate social influencers and photos of members; and (c) maintain clarity, honesty, and accuracy.
	Focus on engagement	(a) Generate two-way engagement and participation, (b) drive engagement with social influencers, (c) leverage the power of events, (d) learn which platforms people prefer, and (e) try mobile apps.
	Have a comprehensive, coordinated strategy focusing staff on the same goal	(a) Have a complete social media strategy; (b) strategically focus on business objectives; (c) strategically focus on value provided; (d) focus on which platform or hashtags people use; and (e) maintain a clear, focused, high-quality message.
	Increase audience	(a) Increase market awareness by sharing information, and (b) use social media as a cost-effective tool to reach a wide area.
	Measure success	Have a tracking strategy and maintain a goal-oriented culture.

Each interview followed a protocol outlining distinct steps and pre-determined interview questions to maintain uniformity (see Appendix B). All interviews included (a) recording of the date, participant ID, and location, (b) a researcher introduction, (c) review of the purpose of the study, (d) review of the interview process, (e) an example of potential interview questions, (f) an example of the depth of answers expected, (g) review of participant confidentiality, (h) review of participant rights and signing of the informed consent form, (i) the participant interview, and (j) review of next steps and member checking. The interview protocol of this study also included all interview questions (see Appendix B.)

Throughout the research process, I kept a reflective journal to maintain notes and impressions. The reflective journal for this study helped to track the emergence of codes, themes, and trends related to the conceptual framework. Social influence theory, which forms part of the conceptual framework for this study, frequently emerged in the reflective journal and helps researchers to explain some of the effects of social influence on the strategies identified. Kelman (1958) observed that social influence theory explained attitudes when individuals adopt beliefs or ideas from people or organizations in three main ways: (a) compliance, (b) identification, and (c) internalization. Of particular interest to this study is how the attitudinal and behavioral changes associated with identification could lead to increased dues income in a professional membership association, and how identification can help to explain the strategies of (a) driving engagement on social media using social influencers and (b) establishing trust on social media with social influencers. Specifically, Albert et al. (2017) and Kelman (1961) observed that the process of identification helps researchers to explain how celebrities influence the attitudes and behavior of individuals when they align with a brand.

I discovered the process of identification in several participant interviews, and P40 included an attitude change that can be explained with social influence theory when asked about the value of engaging in two-way communication with social media to increase membership dues income, specifying the following:

> We have some influential people starting to comment or focus on social media in one way or another, and it helps to drive further engagement because industry celebrities, industry VIPs, whatever they may be, are creating a sense of social influence, so when we get them speaking on our social media sites it helps to drive further engagement.

Further demonstrating Kelman's (1958) process of identification, when asked about harnessing the influence of existing members to attract new members using social media, P82 indicated the following:

> Identifying influencers is a key part of having all of this work because once you have identified those member influencers, and whether they're a blogger in the space that you're working in, or whether they're just a recognized person within the industry, their stamp of approval, their share, is worth more than just the associations share.

These responses confirmed that participants P40 and P82 were, whether strategically or instinctively, using social influence theory. Moreover, P40 and P82 were actively engaging in the social influence theory process of identification.

I also included social exchange theory as the primary business theory in the conceptual framework of this study. According to Blau (1964), social exchange theory is central to explaining the relationship between individuals and groups. Social exchange theory frequently emerged in the data collected from participant interviews and observation, and in a specific example of information shared on social media providing value in a social exchange, P54 shared that “the whole point of our organization is informative, and people are supposed to come to this association to get information, so I feel like it definitely is both ways communicating and giving them what they're looking for.”

An initial hand analysis and coding of the data using Yin’s (2016) five-step model led to the development of five themes and one derivative theme, and a secondary analysis using NVivo 11 for Windows by QSR confirmed the results while providing additional insight into the data. Both the initial hand analysis and coding and NVivo 11 analysis process confirmed saturation and methodological triangulation using data from participant interviews, organizational growth data collected from a non-private publicly available company report, the Facebook and Twitter pages of the association, and observation of a social media planning meeting. The analysis also yielded the overarching theme of actionable social media strategies to increase dues income in nonprofit membership associations (see Table 1). Themes under the overarching theme include:

1. Focusing on generating interaction and engagement with social media connections.
2. Having a comprehensive, coordinated strategy to align resources toward achieving the same goal.

3. Establishing trust with social media connections.

4. Increasing the overall social media audience.

5. Measuring success and results.

Finally, the derivative theme, being aware of a loss of control of a social media campaign message, emerged in five of seven participant interviews as well as the social media planning meeting.

Although this study focused on social media strategies as opposed to isolated social media campaigns, several social media campaigns were discussed and later reviewed as part of the data analysis process. Notably, two social media campaigns arose the most frequently in the social media planning meeting and participant interviews. First, I observed data focused on both driving engagement using social influencers and establishing trust using social influencers in a Facebook campaign where association staff posted a photo of their president and several of the association's prominent members with a member of Congress in the United States Capitol building. The posted photo contained a handwritten thank you note from the congressman, and participants in the social media planning meeting observed discussed how posting similar content can rapidly expand audiences when prominent individuals like the congressman share them with their social media followers.

In addition, in the social media planning meeting, participants discussed the social media campaign the association conducted surrounding a disease outbreak in 2016. Using social media, the association shared important information with the public regarding the spread of a potentially deadly disease. Connecting this campaign to an increase in dues income, when asked, “What, if any, social media strategies have you used that led to increased membership dues income in this professional membership association?”, P82 pointed a finger at a laptop displaying the 2016 disease outbreak social media campaign and stated: “Share relevant information with an eye toward bringing them back to the association’s website.” Although not immediately intuitive, this strategy is consistent with other strategies discussed in Emergent Theme 3: Increase Audience.

Overarching Theme

Analysis of the data from participant interviews, field notes from the social media planning meeting I observed, and non-private social media campaign data (including membership growth data from 2005 to 2016, social media audience growth data from 2013 to 2017, and meeting attendance data from 2001 to 2016) resulted in 21 codes (see Table 1). These codes yielded one overarching theme, five themes, and an additional derivative theme. The overarching theme, actionable social media strategies to increase professional membership association dues income (see Figure 1), is defined by five themes: (a) focus on generating interaction and engagement with social media connections, (b) have a comprehensive, coordinated strategy to align resources toward achieving the same goal, (c) establish trust with social media connections, (d) increase the overall social media audience, and (e) measure success and results. These themes answer the primary research question: What social media strategies do nonprofit marketing professionals use to increase professional membership association dues income? A derivative theme, being aware of a loss of control of a social media campaign message, emerged through the coding process.

Figure 1. Illustration of overarching theme connection to themes.

Emergent Theme 1: Focus on Generating Interaction and Engagement With Social Media Connections

As shown in Table 2, seven of seven participants referenced the strategy of focusing on generating interaction and engagement with social media connections, and a total of 92 distinct references to this strategy exist across the data collected. Through the act of engagement, individuals interact with and potentially grow alignment with a brand or idea, increasing the possibility that the individual might trust the organization or increase their commitment to the organization (Dijkmans et al., 2015). Participants of this study referred to effective engagement as a two-way conversation between the professional membership association and individuals on social media, with P68 stating: “It’s an exchange of ideas, or thoughts, or that kind of information. And if you’re not getting that return, that dialogue, then you know, I'm not really sure that's effective." After I reviewed and organized data from member checked interview transcripts, I organized and coded several sets of data surrounding focusing on generating interaction and engagement with social media connections, including strategies to:

- Generate two-way engagement and participation.
- Drive engagement with social influencers.
- Leverage the power of events.
- Learn which platforms people prefer.
- Try mobile apps.

Table 2

Focus on Generating Interaction and Engagement With Social Media Connections (Theme Frequency)

Participant	Interview questions	References
P40	2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10	20
P47	3, 7, 11	7
P54	1, 5, 6, 7	6
P61	2, 5, 7, 10	11
P68	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7	18
P75	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9	10
P82	2, 2, 4, 7, 8, 10	20

References to focusing on generating interaction and engagement with social media connections surfaced in all participant interviews and all 11 interview questions. The volume of distinct references to focusing on generating interaction and engagement with social media connections made it the most prevalent theme in this research. Moreover, in addition to participant interviews, all sources of data, including non-private social media campaign data and the social media planning meeting observed, included at least some focus on generating interaction and engagement with social media connections. Finally, the presence of this theme as a means to generate income is consistent with research from the literature regarding engagement and social media.

Generate two-way engagement and participation. The need to generate two-way engagement and participation emerged in the literature reviewed, non-private social media campaign data, the social media planning meeting observed, and the social media campaigns themselves observed. Ashley and Tuten (2015) argued that companies use engagement on social media for marketing and communications in their exploratory study of branded social content and consumer engagement. Further supporting the significance of generating engagement on social media, Ananda et al. (2016) and Turri et al. (2013) stated marketers must extend their focus and consider the importance of social media marketing in forming new and uniquely beneficial interpersonal relationships with both current and potential customers. However, not all engagement strategies emerging from the literature were related to marketing activities. Grégoire et al. (2015) observed that monitoring social media relationships and discussion leads to increased consumer engagement and an improved understanding of the market. Although participants in this study raised monitoring in both participant interviews and the social media planning meeting observed as an important strategy, the derivative theme of being aware of a loss of control of a social media campaign message included monitoring as opposed to focusing on engagement to generate income from dues.

The literature surrounding social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) can be used to explain engagement and social media. According to Harrigana et al. (2016), successful social exchanges provide a high return in value to participating individuals by increasing loyalty and engagement. Harrigana et al. also applied quantitative methodology to survey 195 United States-based consumers spanning 42 of 50 states, and determined that, no matter what industry studied, social exchange theory is a suitable conceptual framework for customer engagement research. Moreover, Harrigana et al. stated successful social exchanges are essential for marketers to help consumers to identify with and interact with brands. The engagement strategies identified through participant interviews and the social media planning meeting observed directly apply to the suppositions put forth through social exchange theory proposed by Harrigana.

In addition to the literature reviewed, data collected from participant interviews, the social media planning meeting observed, and non-private social media campaign data supports the value of generating two-way engagement and participation when seeking to increase professional membership association dues income. First, in participant interviews, several responses indicated that two-way engagement and participation on social media is important in increasing membership dues income. When asked, “What value, if any, do you place on engaging in two-way social media communication with individuals by sharing information that provides a benefit or value?,” P68 said, “Because the more that they engage back with you the more that you can engage with them again, moving forward and starting to build that relationship to help drive those membership dues and that income from membership dues.” Similarly, when asked, “What value, if any, do you place on establishing a sense of trust or a shared mindset with connections when using social media strategies to increase membership dues income in this professional membership association?" P82 shared,

> I want new members, but I wanna keep those members long-term. And that all starts with engagement and participation, and you have to be long game thinking that from the beginning, so your renewal starts before they've even joined, and you have to keep that in mind. So, my goal is always new members, but also engaging and having the trust, and having the conversation, and the participation with the old member - with the existing members and having them continue to feel like they're a part of the group.

In addition to supporting the finding of the need to generate two-way engagement and participation, this response also serves as support for Emergent Theme 4: Establish trust with social media connections, and shows the potential importance of participation in social media engagement.

In some data, targeting specific times or audience groups using social media engagement campaigns emerged as factors under the strategy of generating two-way engagement and participation. In the social media planning meeting observed, P54 indicated that targeting groups for two-way engagement on social media includes posting information in a familiar way, or posting target-specific information that is relatable to the individuals consuming it. In addition, the concept of generating maximum engagement by focusing on the timing of social media activity arose in the social media planning meeting observed, where P54 noted a potential trend requiring investigation was many of the association’s Twitter followers were most active between 6:00 PM and 10:00 PM, and posting targeted marketing using photos of influential people at that time generated the most engagement.

Data arising from participant interviews also provided insight into the relationship between generating two-way engagement and participation using social media and increasing dues income. Focusing on the importance of using information to create engagement with specific individuals on social media, P54 indicated, “The whole point of our organization is informative, and people are supposed to come to this association to get information, so I feel like it definitely is both ways communicating and giving them what they're looking for.” Further, P82 said, “I find it's much more valuable and you get significantly better return on investment in engagement if it's two-way.” When talking about why prospective members join and pay dues, P82 also stated: “typically the strongest and the best reason that they join associations is because they're having a conversation.” This response references a positive connection between engagement and increased revenue. Published literature supports this assertion. According to Dijkmans et al. (2015), using engagement, individuals interact with and potentially grow alignment with a brand or idea, increasing the possibility that the individual might trust the organization or increase their commitment to the organization.

In the social media planning meeting observed, P82 shared their strategy of requesting key groups of members to repost information posted by the association on their social media pages, with the end goal of generating engagement, gaining new members, and increasing dues. P82 similarly shared that strategic engagement occurs by posting articles that feature a call to action to drive users back to the association's website. Finally, in the social media planning meeting observed, one of three social media strategies P40 credited with helping the association to achieve 23% growth since 2013 was "engaging members with social media to increase renewals using comments and direct messages." Data supporting this growth further emerged in the non-private social media campaign data, which contained membership growth information showing a gain from 1,342 members in 2013 to 1,632 members in 2016, and social media engagement data showing a gain from 20,349 connections in 2013 to 34,355 connections in 2016. Finally, the non-private social media campaign data contained information specifically cites social media engagement as extremely successful in "increase[ing] membership by over 23% since the 2013 drop."

Drive engagement with social influencers. Leveraging the notoriety or social influence of key individuals on social media to promote membership in the association emerged as another aspect of the strategy of generating engagement. Data regarding social influence came from several sources. Specifically, using social influence to increase engagement was raised in three participant interviews a total of seven distinct times, directly observed on the association's Facebook page, and emerged during observation of a regularly scheduled social media planning meeting which focused one of its centralized goals on discussing strategies to create engagement with social media across the organization's marketing team. At the social media planning meeting observed, P40 highlighted how one of the three main factors in the association's turnaround from decline to experiencing 23% growth since 2013 was using "social influence of VIPs in the industry to recruit new members on social media." Further supporting the use of social influence to generate engagement, in one specific social media campaign association staff used Facebook to post a signed photo the association's president and several prominent members with a member of Congress in the United States Capitol building. In support of this, during the interview process, P75 shared

> It's exciting. You get to see all of these people that you look up to in your own profession. See what they're doing, see that they're there. It gets you interested in what you can do to further your own career and get involved.

Following the interview with P75, I reviewed the social media post featuring a member of Congress and noted that association staff posted both the photo described, a text description mentioning all individuals by name, and the name of the professional membership association in my research journal.

The strategy of generating two-way engagement using images of politicians and revered professionals to demonstrate the value of membership and help people to change their attitude toward or join a professional membership association is supported by the identification aspect of Kelman's (1958) social influence theory because it insinuates that joining the professional membership association would make an individual part of an esteemed group. Importantly, identification differs from compliance and internalization in that individuals attempt to mimic the attitudes and behavior of others to look like those individuals (Albert et al., 2017). P75's statement and the social media post reviewed included two items that support this aspect of Kelman's (1958) social influence theory, and can be explained with the process of identification. First, P75 specifically acknowledged that the desired outcome of the social media campaign was to make individuals believe that the professional membership organization could help to forward their careers by including them in the same social group as celebrities. Secondly, P75 indicated that the use of photos allows individuals to see that industry celebrities are active within the professional membership association, and to indicate that individuals should participate in the organization because the celebrities do.

Leverage the power of events. Data from interviews, non-private social media campaign data, and the social media planning meeting observed suggested that live events held by the association serve as tools to help drive engagement on social media, consequently resulting in increased dues income. Notably, in the non-private social media campaign data reviewed, information included that the association used social media engagement to increase event attendance by 7% in 2017 over 2016 and that 5% of the new event attendees joined the association, increasing dues income. Data from participant interviews further supported this, and P75 suggested that leveraging the power of events held by the professional membership association and providing personal, relatable content by engaging with social media users leads to increased dues income, stating "you're posting on Facebook and people can join in, and maybe they're not at the actual meeting, but they're still making those connections and seeing the value of the association."

While most of the data on generating engagement by leveraging the power of events centered around the strategies already discussed, some participant interview data provided insight into specific social media campaigns behind this strategy. P61 highlighted the need for events to be sources of data for social media information and posts, stating “Posting from the events – people see that and want to get more involved. They see different members enjoying - they want to be a member as well, or with different committees as well.” Adding to this, P68 shared “We take a component of something that might have happened at the event, and whatever the messaging is, say do you want more information? Those are really the points in time when we have the most engagement.”

Also, peripheral leveraging of events using incentives to help generate two-way engagement and participation on social media emerged in three of seven participant interviews and the social media planning meeting observed, and covered both providing fiscal incentives such as coupons to register for an event or discounts to join the professional membership association. Specifically, when discussing the value of leveraging the power of events when generating engagement in the participant interview, P40 shared “they also see that there’s value in membership because that’s where we’re driving them.” Moreover, in the social media planning meeting observed, P40, P54, P68, P75, and P82 discussed generating social media engagement with incentivized pricing for events by promoting options to join the professional membership association while registering for events.

Learn which platform people prefer. Learning which platform people prefer emerged in four of seven participant interviews and in the social media planning meeting observed, and while only one participant interview raised using mobile apps as a strategy to increase engagement and dues income, it also emerged in the planning meeting observed. Specifically, in the social media planning meeting observed, all participants felt that picking the correct platform is among the most important factors to consider when planning a social media campaign to increase dues income, and indicated that young professionals respond better on Facebook, whereas older professionals respond better on Twitter. Furthermore, P75 indicated that a recent campaign that did not adhere to member social media platform preferences performed poorly. Data supporting the need to learn which platform individuals prefer emerged in participant interviews as well. In further support of these platform choices, while discussing which social media platforms work best for which groups of association members, P82 shared “it's vital to knowing your people, and knowing your industry, and knowing where your people are, and what's gonna work with them, or not.”

Finally, data from participant interviews included support for mobile apps as an effective platform when increasing engagement designed to increase membership dues income using social media. Specifically, P61 suggested that mobile apps were a bridge between the social media platform and leveraging events, stating “Some fundraising events and other events that we’ve done, we post the pictures and we get likes and people are on the mobile app.” The case for mobile apps as a tool to increase dues income included further support by the social media planning meeting observed, where using the mobile app for events to allow people to attend remotely and engage with attendees was highlighted by P40 as one of the company’s most successful new endeavors. However, introducing a diverse social media platform into an industry may present challenges for organizations. For example, according to Ladipo et al. (2013), social media platform diversity and the volume of advertising on social media make developing and implementing social media strategies that increase income in businesses challenging.

Emergent Theme 2: Have a Comprehensive, Coordinated Strategy Focusing Staff on the Same Goal

As shown in Table 3, six of seven interview participants referred to the importance of having a comprehensive, coordinated strategy to align resources toward achieving the same goal. Participants classified the importance of having a comprehensive, coordinated strategy focusing staff on the same goal as the need for a formal plan and specific strategies to use social media to increase income from dues in this organization. In support of this, P82 shared that when determining which social media strategies should be used to increase membership dues income, organizations should consider "having a plan, being organized, having everything from beginning to end, and knowing where you're going. You have to know the results you want and kind of back into everything else." There were a total of 57 distinct references to this concept across all of the data collected, and responses related to focusing on having a comprehensive, coordinated strategy related to all 11 questions, except for Question 3. After I reviewed and organized data from member checked interview transcripts, I coded several sets of data defining the strategy of having a comprehensive, coordinated strategy for focusing staff on the same goal. Coded strategies included:

- Have a complete social media strategy.
- Strategically focus on business objectives.
- Strategically focus on value provided.

- Focus on which platform or hashtags people use.
- Maintain a clear, focused, high-quality message.

Finally, according to social exchange theory, social exchanges function as long as both parties in the exchange receive value (Tyrie & Ferguson, 2013). Some participants in this study identified that focusing on the value provided by the professional membership association was a key aspect of having a comprehensive, coordinate strategy focusing staff on the same goal of increasing dues income using social media.

Table 3

Have a Comprehensive, Coordinated Strategy Focusing Staff on the Same Goal (Theme Frequency)

Participant	Interview questions	References
P40	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11	26
P47	2, 6, 10	4
P54	2, 6	5
P61	1, 6	2
P75	1, 10	2
P82	1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11	18

Have a complete social media strategy. Data supporting the need to have a complete social media strategy emerged in three participant interviews a total of seven distinct times. This need emerged again while observing a social media planning meeting focused on the centralized goal of increasing income from dues. Notably, these social media planning meetings take place weekly, and while they broadly focus on social media engagement, once each month they specifically focus on the advanced planning of social media strategies to increase dues income. The very existence of planning meetings like the one observed indicate the existence of a comprehensive, coordinated strategy focusing staff on the same goal.

Data from participant interviews also indicated the need for a complete social media strategy. P61 indicated that strategies were important for using social media to increase dues income in professional membership associations, and shared, “at a staff meeting, we’ll discuss it, we’ll strategize, and then we’ll all put our input in” when planning a comprehensive strategy. I witnessed this activity firsthand when conducting an observation of a strategy session focused on increasing dues income. Data from participant interviews indicating the need for a complete social media strategy also arose out of discussions surrounding mitigating factors that could be detrimental to the success of a professional membership association. Speaking to the need for advanced planning and specific timing of key strategies when conducting a membership renewal campaign designed to increase membership dues, P54 indicated “we didn’t specifically post it on social media first - we actually send it out in renewal emails first before we posted anything online.” P82 confirmed the need for advanced planning, sharing “a lot of people are like ‘oh, we’re just going to wing this thing’, and you’re not going to get the results that you want.”

Also, advanced planning emerged as an important topic because of the need to measure success, which formed another theme discussed later in this study. Finally, an important implication to emerge from the literature reviewed is that leveraging the combined power of traditional marketing and social media may generate far higher levels of consumer engagement than using either social media or traditional marketing independently (Srinivasan, Rutz, & Pauwels, 2015). As traditional marketing includes print mail, display advertisements, and other channels that require scheduling, coordination between social media and traditional media can only occur with advanced planning.

Strategically focus on business objectives. Data supporting the need to have a strategic focus on business objectives emerged in non-private social media campaign data, the social media planning meeting observed, and participant interviews. In particular, I observed the need to focus on business throughout the entire social media planning meeting, in which participants maintained a focus on the organization's business objective of increasing membership dues income, increasing the number of members, and increasing event attendance using social media. Of note, I observed that strategically advancing the business objectives of the professional membership association seemed to be the universally understood outcome of the social media planning meeting. However, only P40 referenced the actual results of the association's progress toward reaching business goals, including membership growth data from 2005 to 2016, social media audience growth data from 2013 to 2017, and meeting attendance data from 2001 to 2016. The growth data discussed within the social media planning meeting observed was confirmed in the non-private social media campaign data reviewed, showing an increase from 1,342 members in 2013 to 1,632 members in 2016, and social media engagement data showing a gain from 20,349 connections in 2013 to 34,355 connections in 2016.

Echoing this position in participant interviews, P40 specifically raised the importance of business objectives stating, "The goal I would tell everyone to focus on is what's your objective to get on social media?" and, "I think overall it's as long as you're using social media as a true tool, and not something that you feel you have to be on." The implications highlighted by this interview become nuanced through context; P40 was the leader of the social media team in the association and in both interviews and the social media planning meeting observed, took a more holistic and strategic view of social media than other participants. Conversely, other individuals were micro-focused on specific individual business goals, with P82 sharing "Whenever I make a social media post my goal is to increase membership, which ends up increasing dues revenue."

Strategically focus on value provided. Strategically focusing on value provided arose in three of seven interviews, the literature, and the social media planning meeting observed. Unlike strictly focusing on engagement, data indicated that focusing on value requires advanced planning and must be part of the overall comprehensive, coordinated strategy. Notably, according to Guo and Saxton (2014), social media highlights the value of a nonprofit organization's position as an industry advocate or for advocacy, while simultaneously encouraging constituent dialog regarding organizational actions. However, while participants in the social media planning meeting observed discussed strategically focusing on value when conducting social media campaigns, I only observed the concept of value in relation to what P54 called the "value of membership."

Further supporting the connection between having a coordinated strategy focusing on value and social media, in the participant interview process P40 shared "we're trying to tie the message back to the value of the organization, which ultimately ties back to the value of membership." Adding to this, P47 shared, "You need to be communicating the value of membership. You need to know what your value proposition is, and you need to make people aware of that." In the context of this study, the concept of value is both tangible and intangible, and data support both financial and non-financial forms of value. Non-financial value centered primarily on communication, with P82 sharing, "Typically it's that social human connection; that conversation. Those are the things that people can't get typically from other places."

Notably, engaging in strategically targeted value-focused communications resulted as a strategy in five of seven participant interview responses, while only loosely discussed in the planning meeting observed. When asked, "If you have used effective social media strategies that led to increased membership dues income in this professional membership association, what makes each of the strategies you have used effective?," P40 responded

> We target young professionals, and we have a special membership category for them, so we have special targeted young professional memberships that we reach out to. But again, driving back [to] the organization that they're part of is the real value.

P54 agreed with targeting, stating, "I feel like that is when you get the most responses." This finding indicated advanced planning to target a specific group of people, yet discussion in the social media planning meeting observed indicated a different strategy. P40 specifically stated that even when targeting subgroups, value arises when focusing on the organization as opposed to strictly focusing on the target. Interview data supported this model, and P82 echoed this strategy when discussing a 2016 disease outbreak social media campaign, stating “share relevant information with an eye toward bringing them back to the association’s website.” This statement further confirmed the need to maintain an advanced strategic plan, where social media may generate the beginning of a series of events.

Finally, I observed Blau’s (1964) social exchange theory process of reciprocal value in the participant interview data and the social media planning meeting. In the participant interview data, P47 stated “You need to be communicating the value of membership. You need to know what your value proposition is, and you need to make people aware of that.” I also identified the reciprocal influence of this strategy in the social media planning meeting observed, where communicating the value of membership using social media, including providing ways for individuals to interact with influential people, was highlighted as a contributing factor in the growth in membership dues since 2013 experienced by the organization. The importance of value in a social exchange is further supported by Tyrie and Ferguson (2013), who observed that social exchanges function as long as both parties in the exchange receive value. Finally, according to Harrigan et al. (2017), successful social exchanges provide a high return in value to participating individuals by increasing loyalty and engagement. The connection between engagement and value connects social exchange theory and social influence theory in this study, and provides insight into how the two processes may work together when using social media to increase dues income in professional membership associations.

Focus on which platform or hashtags people use. Having a comprehensive, coordinated strategy to focus on social media platform and hashtag selection also emerged as important in the literature reviewed, participant interviews, and social media planning meeting observed. In the social media planning meeting observed, the team discussed successful strategies and noted that when posting photos of well-known individuals on social media, using hashtags that are popular with other organizations and individuals within their industry was an effective way to leverage social media to increase new member recruitment and engagement. However, in the participant interviews, this strategy unexpectedly arose from a defensive organizational posture and the need to be protective of the use of scarce resources, which is a concern not initially anticipated. Data from participant interviews indicated that surveying members of professional membership associations yields important data regarding which platforms to invest time in, with P47 stating “We do a member survey, and it says, ‘Yeah, I’m on Facebook, but that’s just for cat pictures, and I don’t look at science stuff on Facebook. I go to LinkedIn for that.” P40 also stated,

> We don’t want to be ineffective. Obviously, there are hundreds of social media tools out there, and we don’t have the resources or the time to necessarily use all of those, so we’re trying to focus on the two or three that we really know people are at, and that can move the needle the most for us.

To best identify which platforms and hashtags to focus on, P54 shared “you don’t know what you’re going to get out of each group until you try different ways to get their attention,” suggesting experimenting with various hashtags and platforms to identify which work the best. This spirit of experimentation and adaptation is consistent with data in the professional literature surrounding social media marketing, which indicated that in addition to adapting to social media, marketers must also extend their focus and consider the importance of social media marketing in forming new and uniquely beneficial interpersonal relationships with both current and potential customers (Ananda, Hernández-García, & Lamberti, 2016; Turri, Smith, & Kemp, 2013).

Maintain a clear, focused, high-quality message. Maintaining a clear, focused, high-quality message arose as a code in one participant interview, the social media planning meeting observed, and the literature reviewed. In the social media planning meeting observed, P68 felt it was important to maintain clarity, focus and quality when posting on social media because individuals that are new to an organization may not have an understanding of their purpose, and having a clear understanding is important for engagement. In participant interviews, the need for a focused message emerged within the context of reviewing and maintaining unified messaging across all forms of media, with P40 stating, “Your conversation on social media shouldn’t be different than your messaging on your normal site.” Finally, social media focus also emerged in the literature reviewed. Notably, Edwards et al. (2014) observed that focusing on distributing quality information and two-way discussion, as opposed to the volume of posts, potentially proves more effective for corporate marketers. Hudson et al. (2015) also observed that knowledge helps businesses to package marketing content with relationship-driven social media conversations, as opposed to broadcasting impersonal marketing content to their connections.

Emergent Theme 3: Increase Audience

As Table 4 indicates, three of seven participants referred to the strategy of working to increase the overall social media audience when generating dues income with social media. Participants of this study referred to increasing social media audience as increasing the overall number of individuals the organization is connected with on social media and positioned it as a strategy to use before focusing on engagement. Moreover, significant differences exist between audience increase and engagement, including that the strategies identified in this theme solely focus on increasing the overall number of individuals the professional membership organization reaches as opposed to having interaction with those individuals. A total of 21 distinct references to this strategy occurred in the data collected. Moreover, I observed a connection between the strategy of increasing market awareness by sharing information to increase dues income in professional membership associations and social exchange theory, and Blau (1964) recognized that social exchange theory explained the interaction between two parties that control and consume information. In reviewing and organizing data from member checked interview transcripts, I coded several sets of data and further defined the theme of working to increase the overall social media audience, including:

- Increase market awareness by sharing information.
- Use social media as a cost-effective tool to reach a wide area.

Table 4

Increase Audience (Theme Frequency)

Participant	Interview questions	References
P40	2, 7, 8, 9	7
P47	1, 2, 8	13
P75	7	1

Increase market awareness by sharing information. Data supporting the need to increase market awareness by sharing information emerged in the social media planning meeting observed, the literature reviewed, and participant interviews. Notably, data originating from participant interviews produced unexpected results. Specifically, organizations may not have to spend time and money generating information to achieve the benefit of sharing it. In support of this, while discussing the value of sharing information on social media, P68 shared “We republish a lot of research and findings and studies and information that they have already released, and then we hone in on our specific industry.” In addition to these key points, P40 expanded the value of sharing information written by other organizations or authors on social media, stating “This expands our footprint significantly, expands our awareness among what we call allied professionals, allied organizations.” Moreover, P47 stated, “Social media is great for extending your reach beyond your known contacts.” In support of this, in the social media planning meeting observed, P68 specifically noted the importance of sharing high-quality information, but cautioned that information only works as a means to increase audience when it is high-quality.

The strategy of generating market awareness with the general public to increase audience arose in the social media planning meeting observed, and participants discussed the success of a campaign where the association shared important information with the public regarding the spread of a potentially deadly disease. I also observed this specific campaign in participant interviews, with P82 pointing a finger at a laptop displaying the 2016 disease outbreak social media campaign and stating “share relevant information with an eye toward bringing them back to the association’s website.” P40 further confirmed the strategy of generating market awareness with the general public to increase audience, sharing “getting those kind of messages out there - it's a great vehicle for reaching the general public.”

There is a connection between the strategy of increasing market awareness by sharing information to increase dues income in professional membership associations and social exchange theory. First, Blau (1964) recognized that social exchange theory explained the interaction between two parties that control and consume information. In the case of this study, the professional membership association controls information, and current and prospective members consume information. Further, a key aspect of using social exchange theory to explain online buying intentions includes reciprocally beneficial social exchange interaction between organizations and their customers or constituents (Shiau & Luo, 2012). I observed the professional membership association sharing valuable data with current and potential members on social media, and P68 shared “We republish a lot of research and findings and studies and information that they have already released, and then we hone in on our specific industry.” Finally, in support of sharing valuable information using social media and the value component of social exchange theory, Tyrie and Ferguson (2013) confirmed that, in addition to building relationships with trust, individuals create relationships with organizations and individuals when they expect to benefit in some way. In the case of this study, sharing valuable information using social media may provide sufficient benefit to create new relationships as explained in social exchange theory, supporting the strategy of increasing market awareness by sharing information.

Use social media as a cost-effective tool to reach a wide area. Using social media as a cost-effective tool to reach a wide area emerged in one participant interview, a review of the association's social media profile on Facebook, and the social media planning meeting observed. In a participant interview, P47 provided insight into the association's decision to use social media over other forms of media, stating "advertising to the general public is a very expensive proposition." When discussing the value that social media provides, P47 also shared "it's good for reaching specific targets outside of our known universe and for reaching the general public."

Members of the social media planning meeting observed also discussed their success using social media to increase audience as well as their budgets and plans for several minutes, with the central theme being how the association can leverage social media even more than traditional media because it is a cost-effective way to reach large groups of people. The publicly available data provided by the association supports the effectiveness of the social media strategy used by the association to increase audience, as it showed a progressive annual audience increase of at least 12% more social media users across all of their platforms year-on-year from 2013 to 2017. Finally, literature surrounding social media also supports its use as a cost-effective tool to increase audience. According to Hsu et al. (2014), social media presents an inexpensive and unique platform to study both positive and negative shifts as they occur. Finally, according to Lozano and Lores, (2013) in industries where rapid communication is essential, such as food safety, social media also provides a reliable way to reach a large number of people quickly and without significant expense. A review of the Facebook profile of the association showed several examples of their use of social media to spread important information to the public regarding the outbreak of a potentially deadly disease.

Emergent Theme 4: Establish Trust With Social Media Connections

As Table 5 indicates, six of seven participants referred to the strategy of establishing trust within the interviews, and there were a total of 25 distinct references across all of the data collected. Participants in this study referred to trust as the literal trustworthiness or reputation of the organization and noted its importance in interacting with individuals on social media. The literature surrounding trust and organizations supports this concept, with Tyrie and Ferguson (2013) finding that trust, confidence, and relationship building resulting from motivational exchange content reinforces beneficial relationships. P47 confirmed this belief, stating “Trust in the brand is the most important thing we have.” Moreover, P68 shared

> I think trust is huge. If they don’t trust the information that you’re putting out, or the posts, the information that’s going out, I don’t know how you can expect them

to become a member of your organization because they don't have that established trust.

The need to establish trust arose in the social media planning meeting observed, where participants agreed that the founding date of the professional membership association should appear on all social media sites used to build trust with those who are not already familiar with the organization's brand and reputation. Two of seven interview participants also provided responses supporting leveraging the age and reputation of the association to establish trust, and when asked about how a professional membership association would establish trust, P68 stated "This specific organization has a technical advisor, and they have an ask the expert column. So, I would position that to restate the organization's mission – or the longevity of the organization." After reviewing and organizing data from member checked interview transcripts, I coded several sets of data defining the strategy of establishing trust, including:

- Leverage trust in the brand, value, association age, and reputation.
- Incorporate social influencers and photos of members.
- Maintain clarity, honesty, and accuracy.

Table 5

Establish Trust With Social Media Connections (Theme Frequency)

Participant	Interview questions	References
P40	7	3
P47	8	1
P54	2, 6, 9	4
P61	2, 8	3
P68	2, 8, 9, 11	13
P82	2	1

Leverage trust in the brand, value, association age, and reputation. Focusing on leveraging trust in the brand, value, association age, and reputation arose in non-private social media campaign data, the literature reviewed, the association's social media profile on Facebook, and the social media planning meeting observed. Two of seven interview participants indicated that combining trust with value was effective, and in the social media planning meeting observed, the team discussed the need to make sure that people trusted in the basic *membership pitch* of the brand, and noted that people had to trust in the association to accept that membership dues were a good deal and provided value. All social media planning meeting attendees confirmed that without trust, the pitch would not work, and that social media was important in establishing that trust.

The identification of trust as a theme connects the relationship development aspects of both social exchange theory and social influence theory. Oparaocha (2016) argued that one of the three primary ways social exchanges use social capital is with rational elements originating from relationships such as trust. Moreover, Blau (1964) introduced the concept of trust into social exchange theory, postulating that trust increases among participants in a social exchange over time as relationships develop, deepening the ability of the participants to influence actions. The understanding the importance of the depth of the relationship between parties in social exchanges proposed by Blau connects with the potential for deeper influence in social influence theory. Notably, in his work on social influence theory, Kelman (1958) hypothesized that while the potentially temporary state of compliance occurs when individuals appear to adopt beliefs or ideas from an influencer they value or respect, compliance can lead to deeper states of influence like identification and internalization as relationships between parties deepen.

Leveraging trust in the brand, association age, and reputation emerged in four out of seven participant interviews. While displaying the age of the association on social media, P68 shared "I also think that's a way to build trust too." I directly observed the association leveraging its age on Facebook, Twitter, and the association's website, as they display it prominently in both graphic and text formats on all of their digital properties. Strategies surrounding trust and reputation also emerged outside of the age of the association, with P47 sharing "If our organization's brand isn't trusted, who's going to want the message?" Notably, this concept of trust directly relates to one of Oparaocha's (2016) three elements of social capital in social exchanges: rational elements originating from relationships such as trust.

Maintain clarity, honesty, and accuracy. Similarly, the need to maintain clarity, honesty, and accuracy emerged in one participant interview, the social media planning meeting observed, and the literature reviewed. In a discussion regarding establishing trust and maintaining accuracy on social media, P54 shared "what we have to be most careful of is just making sure we're getting the right information out there." When asked how accuracy occurred, P54 shared "we have technical advisors and our board members that we go to for approval for everything before it goes out." P61 further stated, "of course, everything has to be approved before it could be posted."

The literature surrounding social media also supports the risk of posting inaccurate data. According to Oh et al. (2013), risk occurs because organizations face public relation challenges regarding the accuracy, quality, and motivation of information disseminated by users of social media. Consequently, building review and approval time into the social media content development process emerged as an unexpected need in the social media planning meeting observed. Further, in the social media planning meeting observed, P68 indicated when the association had to change its position on a scientific matter or was wrong about an organizational position, honestly admitting to that change on social media and engaging in dialogue regarding it unpredictably increased followers and likes. In addition to highlighting the need for honesty, this outcome also indicates a potential social media mistake recovery strategy for other professional membership associations seeking to mitigate damage from an inaccurate social media post and achieve greater transparency, while fully admitting to any mistakes made.

Incorporate social influencers and photos of members. Finally, the need to incorporate social influencers and photos of members emerged in participant interviews, the social media planning meeting observed, the Facebook page of the association, and the literature reviewed. In the data from participant interviews, three of seven participants specifically described using a wide range of social influencers to established trust, with P82 indicating that the association directs members to repost the association's social media posts, stating they ask influencers to "make sure that you are sharing this with other professional organizations that you're involved in, and your friends, and any place where it might get us traction for the organization." Moreover, P40 and P68 highlighted the need to promote influential members interacting with the organization to increase trust further. I observed this strategy when association staff discussed posting a photo on Facebook of prominent members visiting a United States Congressman along with a handwritten thank you note from the Congressman.

Notably, in addition to connecting the strategy of incorporating social influencers and photos of members with the process of identification, P82 also included at least one aspect of the social influence theory process of compliance identified by Kelman (1958). According to Hsiao and Chiou (2017), compliance occurs temporarily when an individual accepts the influence of others and exhibits an attitude or behavioral change. Cheung and Lee (2010) observed although it is only temporary, when an individual is searching for a group technology like social media, compliance plays an important role in the selection process because the individual has had no previous experience and may make selections based on the influence of others. In the context of this study, whether intentional or unintentional, the strategy P82 identified directing current members to share the association's social media posts and introduce new audiences to the professional membership association using social media indicates the association is attempting to engage the process of compliance as defined by Cheung and Lee, because it provides a way for nonmembers to publically interact with those sharing the content and to, at least outwardly, demonstrate their initial alignment with the association.

The potential fluidity of movement between Kelman's (1958) processes of compliance, identification, and internalization as relationships between parties deepen demonstrates the potential for new social media connections gained through compliance to increase their relationship with the professional membership association into identification or internalization. Notably, the identification process of social influence theory may help to explain the success of the use of a photo of a Congressman and prominent association members on social media in increasing dues income. Albert et al. (2017) and Kelman (1961) observed that the process of identification helps researchers to explain how celebrities influence the attitudes and behavior of individuals when they align with a brand. In relation to this study, the use of celebrities to influence people emerged in the participant interview data, and P68 specifically acknowledged using photos of the professional membership association's Board of Directors and other industry celebrities to make individuals believe that the professional membership organization could place them in the same setting with these important people.

Emergent Theme 5: Measure Success and Results

As Table 6 indicates, five of seven participants indicated the strategy of measuring success and results was important. Participants of this study considered measuring success and results as having a way to determine the direct effects of the social media strategies and campaigns they conducted, and how those effects compared to goals established by the organization. These effects include any increase in dues income, the number of attendees at events, and the size of the social media audience of the association. Data collected from the social media planning meeting observed, which included discussion on tracking results, supports this concept. Notably, at the professional membership association serving as the case for this study, only one person, P40, tracks the complete results of all social media activity. Some members of the team indicated that they could not track results, or did not know how to track results, yet felt the ability to do so was important. In the social media planning meeting observed, P40 suggested a future training session on the topic, and that everyone could track results with time and experience. There were a total of 34 distinct references to measuring success and results across the data collected. After reviewing and organizing data from member checked interview transcripts, I created the code of having a tracking strategy and maintain a goal-oriented culture to organize related data.

Table 6

Measure Success and Results (Theme Frequency)

Participant	Interview questions	References
P40	5, 9, 10, 11	9
P47	5, 6	5
P54	5	2
P68	5, 11	4
P82	3, 5, 8	14

Have a tracking strategy and maintain a goal-oriented culture. The need to have a tracking strategy and maintain a goal-oriented culture emerged in participant interviews, non-private social media campaign data, and the social media planning meeting observed. In participant interviews, several participants referred to the need to have a tracking strategy and maintain a goal-oriented culture. P40 shared “I think the other potential threat is, if an organization doesn’t have any clear measurement tool – it’s not necessarily a threat, but a chance not to understand the full impact of your efforts” P82 similarly shared “I make sure that I’m tracking where all those new members are coming from.” Study participants’ belief in the need for a goal-oriented culture is further supported by the existence of the weekly pre-scheduled social media planning meeting to focus the social media team on achieving a preset series of goals.

In the social media planning meeting, I observed participants actively fostering a goal-oriented culture by focusing on several of the strategies uncovered in this study, including the use of events to incentivize social media engagement and increase membership dues income, the use of photos of well-known individuals to foster social influence and increase membership dues income, and the goal of increasing the association's social media audience. In addition, at the social media planning meeting observed, P40 highlighted how one of the three main factors in the association's turnaround from decline to experiencing 23% growth since 2013 was using "social influence of VIPs in the industry to recruit new members on social media." Finally, I observed a report on the success of these goals in the non-private social media campaign data reviewed, including a progressive annual audience increase of at least 12% more social media users across all of the social media platforms used by the association year-on-year from 2013 to 2017.

The participant interviews and social media planning meeting observed produced two specific and different measurement strategies. Using built-in tools to measure social media arose in three of seven participant responses while using audience-facing codes and questions to measure success appeared in five of seven participant responses. Although both function as tracking mechanisms, these strategies are very different in technique. For example, P68 and P82 discussed the use of built-in social media tracking systems to monitor social media, with P68 stating "when we monitor, we're looking at likes and follows and shares," and P82 stating "Facebook's analytics are actually very, very robust now, and will let you really dig into the audience and the demographics depending on how well you set it up." Using built-in tracking mechanisms in a separate, more marketing-focused way, P68 shared, "You can see what information is trending more than others, and you can use that from a strategic perspective to tie into your membership campaigns, and to help, you know, drive membership growth." However, built-in tracking tools may not yield sufficient information for some purposes, and in the social media planning meeting observed, P75 indicated that tracking results beyond simple user shares, views, and social media engagement was difficult.

Conversely, participants discussing the use of codes and questions to measure success focused on using promotion codes and asking questions like "how did you hear about us?" when members join. In the participant interview process, P82 shared "I like to create specific links for different social media hits that can then be tracked." P47 shared a different strategy, stating "One of the questions we ask when they sign up is how did you hear about us?" Unexpectedly, using codes also connected with incentivization and leveraging the power of events with social media. For example, when discussing tracking how young professionals join the association, P40 shared "we're using codes to make sure we know that they came from the young professional Facebook group to get the discount." The theme of offering discounts with membership, or incentivization, occurred in the social media planning meeting observed, and participants discussed generating and promoting cost-effective pricing for events whenever possible to join the professional membership association while registering for events.

Derivative Theme: Be Aware of a Loss of Control of a Social Media Campaign Message

As Table 7 indicates, five of seven participants referred to the need to be aware of a loss of control of a social media campaign message with a total of 25 distinct references across the data collected. Participants categorized a loss of control of a social media campaign message as the literal loss of control of messages shared on social media and the organization's social media accounts themselves due to a wide range of circumstances, including the potential for another organization or individual to use any of the organization's hashtags for unforeseen purposes. Supporting this, after reviewing and organizing data from member checked interview transcripts, I coded several sets of data defining the strategy of being aware of a loss of control of your social media campaign message, including:

- Have an emergency plan.
- Make sure hashtags are unique and monitor them.
- Understand how the message could change.
- Use volunteers to help.

Finally, literature surrounding social media use further supports the need to be aware of a potential loss of control, with Jalonen (2015) finding that when using social media, businesses need to prepare for a loss of control because of the unpredictability of the public.

While not a specific strategy to increase membership dues income, the need to be aware of a loss of control of a social media campaign message also emerged as a derivative theme while reviewing professional literature related to social media. As previously noted, Jalonen (2015) argued that, when using social media, the unpredictability of the public can lead to a loss of control. Further, during observation of a planning and implementation meeting for social media campaigns, P68 said the association should be wary of a loss of control over social media when engaging with an increasing number of members online because of having a small staff to coordinate any response needed. All of the participants of the social media planning meeting observed agreed. Similarly, P82 raised this issue, stating

> We tend to think of LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, whatever, and we don't always recognize the fact that it's good to have your own internal social media home where you've got threads where you can you have non-members, where you have more control over everything, because something can get hijacked and accidentally go viral on Twitter that you weren't expecting.

Table 7

Be Aware of a Loss of Control of a Social Media Campaign's Message (Theme Frequency)

Participant	Interview questions	References
P40	9	3
P47	9, 11	6
P61	8, 9	2
P68	9	3
P82	9, 10, 11	11

Have an emergency plan. The need to have an emergency plan emerged in participant interviews, the literature reviewed, and the social media planning meeting observed. Some data included strategies to overcome this potential loss of control and three of seven participants provided data regarding the need to have an emergency plan in place. In the participant interview process, P82 stated: "You have to be prepared, because it's going to happen no matter how careful you have things orchestrated, and you've gotta have a plan to react to it." The literature surrounding social media provides further insight into strategies to mitigate a loss of control on social media with an emergency plan, with Cain (2012) finding that some businesses hire social media officers to produce formal social media plans, provide guidance regarding social media exposure, and protect against the unintended consequences of social media. According to Cain (2012), social media plans provide standard operating procedures (SOP) for many of the scenarios that can occur when disseminating information on social media. Conversely, Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch (2016) found, as opposed to having one dedicated social media officer, organizations should spread social media responsibility across many different departments in an organization. The association serving as the case in this study uses the model proposed by Felix et al., as responsibility falls on a wide variety of individuals.

In the social media planning meeting observed, P40 indicated the importance to maintain the brand, as well as the founding date of the association, on social media activity in the context of building trust and overcoming a potential loss of control. The team agreed. This strategy connects to theme two, which is to establish trust with social media connections, suggesting a potential ability exists for professional membership associations to mitigate their risk by deriving peripheral or tertiary benefits from specific strategies designed to increase dues income in professional membership associations from the start. Finally, I observed a discussion on emergency planning at the social media planning meeting, and team members added the strategy of using text-only posts instead of photos when handling an emergency to the association's emergency plan.

Make sure hashtags are unique and monitor them. The need to make sure hashtags are unique and monitor them emerged in participant interviews and the social media planning meeting observed. Unexpectedly, interview participants voiced their concerns that social media provides all users with the ability to contribute equally to a conversation or post. Discussing the threat of a social media campaign unintentionally changing meaning, P82 shared "it only takes one disgruntled person, whether they're a former member, or just one of those people on social media," and P40 shared "you've seen that with different brands and organizations – lose a message." Consequently, the data points to loss of message as a potential vulnerability when conducting social media campaigns.

In the participant interview, P47 cautioned against failing to research hashtags properly, sharing that an accidental hashtag could lead to lost followers, indicating "now we have people following the wrong organization because we piggybacked on somebody else's hashtag or somebody else piggybacked on ours." Hashtag hijacking can take many forms. Notably, P68 shared that individuals regularly post information on social media and use the same hashtags the association uses to distribute information, confusing the origin of that data. When talking about individuals using the same hashtags to share information as the association, P68 stated: "they're going to put out these findings that are not endorsed by the organization, so I think hijacking is huge." However, in the social media planning meeting observed, P68 also recommended monitoring hashtags and using the same hashtags that other prominent individuals and organizations within their industry use because they do not have enough time to sufficiently research their own.

Use volunteers to help. The need to use volunteers to help overcome a loss of control on social media emerged in participant interviews and the social media planning meeting observed. In the participant interview process, P82 identified one of the main challenges with social media that can lead to a loss of control of the message is "when you are inviting everyone to a conversation, you can't always control who decides to jump in." Further, in participant interviews, when discussing the use of volunteers to help control the message on social media, P40 shared "that's just something you have to be prepared for." Building on this finding, P82 shared "you almost have to have an army of, ok, here are my volunteer leaders." P54 proposed the strategy of using volunteers to overcome a loss of control and shared that volunteers from the association's Board of Directors and Executive Committee should react whenever they see a potential issue on social media.

Saturation and Methodological Triangulation

This study incorporated more than one data collection method and included methodological triangulation to increase confidence and achieve saturation. The study included semistructured interviews as the primary data collection technique, and to preserve confidentiality, assigned each participant a unique ID number (starting at 40 and increasing in increments of seven). Additional information from a publicly available company report, including membership growth data from 2005 to 2016, social media audience growth data from 2013 to 2017, and meeting attendance data from 2001 to 2016, formed a secondary source of data. Field notes from observation of a planning and implementation meeting for social media campaigns, including review and discussion of several specific social media campaigns on Facebook and Twitter designed to increase membership dues, formed a third source of data. The Facebook and Twitter social media sites for the organization served as a fourth source of data, and I reviewed specific campaigns in the context of the strategies that emerged. Data saturation only occurs in qualitative research when no new information emerges from the data and findings become repetitive, as saturation has no fixed formula to calculate (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I recorded consistent themes and analyzed data using set criteria and processes throughout the study until the project reached saturation.

A minimum of two sources of data confirmed the existence of all of the strategies and themes in this study. While non-private social media campaign data from a company report supported the effectiveness of the strategies I discovered in data from participant interviews, field notes taken from a social media planning meeting I observed supported every theme and strategy, confirming the achievement of methodological triangulation. Moreover, according to Michna (2013) and Harper and Cole (2012), member checking interviews increases the validity of a study and contributes to methodological triangulation by providing participants with an opportunity to review data, add omitted information, and revise data summary errors. All participant interviews in this study included member checking, which occurred through subsequent skype oral interviews.

Applications to Professional Practice

A wide variety of professionals share information using social media (Hopkins et al., 2016). Businesses also increasingly depend on social media to meet their objectives (Parveen et al., 2015). Social media strategies can play an important and specific role in nonprofits by increasing membership dues income (Unnikrishnan et al., 2016). Specifically, many nonprofit organizations use social media to support or replace traditional marketing and communications activities (Griffiths & McLean, 2015), and nonprofits that do not implement effective social media strategies risk their long-term sustainability (Fields, 2014). The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the social media strategies that nonprofit marketing professionals used to increase professional membership association dues income. Each of the themes in this study under the overarching theme are actionable strategies that organizations can use to increase dues income using social media in professional membership associations, and the second theme, be aware of a loss of control of a social media campaign message, is a consideration that accompanies each of the actionable items.

As a result of the rapid pace of technological evolution and the relatively new development of social media, little research exists regarding social media use in nonprofit associations (Chapman et al., 2015; Saxton & Wang, 2013). Because of this lack of research, marketers face challenges when determining the effectiveness of the social media strategies they develop and use (Lee & Hong, 2016). The goal of this study was to provide insight into social media strategies for nonprofit organizations to bridge the gap between the lack of available research and the needs of nonprofit organizations. Most notably, the conceptual framework of this study can be used to help explain the relationship between dues-paying individuals and professional membership associations.

Business leaders may be able to increase efficiency and produce better results by focusing on engagement and trust. According to Harrigana et al. (2016), successful social exchanges provide a high return in value to participating individuals by increasing loyalty and engagement. Moreover, in their quantitative study of 556 survey respondents in Australia, So et al. (2014) found that customer engagement leads to increased customer loyalty, trust (also a theme in this study) and overall brand perception.

Although not identified by every participant, five of seven participants identified the importance for organizations to be aware of a loss of control of a social media campaign message originating from a wide variety of factors. More specifically, Jalonen (2015) identified the unpredictability of the public as a key contributor to a loss of control when businesses use social media. As a result, leaders might consider nonprofit professional membership associations to maintain a watchful eye over their social media activities to maintain their positions in their industries.

Finally, the primary application to professional practice originating from this study is a set of actionable social media strategies for increasing dues income in professional membership associations. Those strategies are: (a) focus on generating interaction and engagement with social media connections, (b) have a comprehensive, coordinated strategy to align resources toward achieving the same goal, (c) establish trust with social media connections, (d) increase the overall social media audience, and (e) measure success and results. Managers in professional membership associations may benefit from using these strategies when seeking to increase dues income in their organizations. Similarly, a derivative theme, being aware of a loss of control of your social media campaign message, was also identified, and provides insight into a key concern when using social media in professional membership associations.

Implications for Social Change

The implications for social change in this study included the potential to increase professional membership association dues income, consequently augmenting their ability to fulfill their social missions, which according to Shier and Handy (2016) can include the advancement of social goals. Nonprofit organization social goals may include the reduction of social inequalities and promotion of community service activities (Grønbjerg & Prakash, 2016). Also, the results of this study may help managers in nonprofit organizations save money by making more educated decisions regarding how best to spend potentially limited resources and to use social media to engage with prospective members. For example, increased professional membership dues income comes as a direct result of increasing the number of members joining an organization or renewing their membership in an organization. Increased membership size and increased income directly expand the reach of nonprofit organizations, and nonprofit managers can potentially expand the social media strategies uncovered within this study to leverage social influence, social exchange, and engagement to increase their ability to promote social change initiatives.

While not the primary focus of this study, managers in nonprofits can also use social media to reach a larger audience or potentially people geographically out of reach with advocacy and information campaigns. The association serving as the case for this study uses social media to provide information on specific diseases that spread rapidly. Before social media, no way existed to disseminate important information rapidly. However, social media offers the organization a free tool to do so. Moreover, the association determined that disseminating this information leads to increased engagement on social media, subsequently leading to increased member dues income. Accordingly, another implication for social change is the ability for professional membership associations to utilize social media better to rapidly share critical information with the public, which may ultimately lead to a similar result of increased positive social change.

Finally, because relatively few studies exist on nonprofit social media use, and limited research exists supporting the overall effectiveness of social media in nonprofit organizations (Kane et al., 2014), this study may serve as a starting point for other studies on the use of social media in professional membership associations, which would ultimately provide nonprofit leaders with increased information and better implementation strategies, expanding their ability to accomplish social change. Also, while the overarching theme emerging from this study contained specific social media strategies and actionable items that can be leveraged by professional membership associations to increase dues income, a derivative theme emerged on the topic of being aware of a loss of control of your social media campaign message. The information composing this theme may guide professional membership associations using social media, helping them to avoid costly problems while increasing their ability to perform their social change missions.

Recommendations for Action

Through the use of structured social media programs, managers in professional membership associations may achieve many tangible benefits (see Table 7). Accordingly, recommendations include that managers in professional membership associations study social influence theory (Kelman, 1958) and social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), and consider implementing social media programs that focus on the actionable social media strategies contained within the findings uncovered by this research to increase dues income in professional membership associations. These actionable strategies include

1. Focusing on generating interaction and engagement with social media connections.
2. Having a comprehensive, coordinated strategy to align resources toward achieving the same goal.
3. Establishing trust with social media connections.
4. Increasing the overall social media audience.
5. Measuring success and results.

Table 8

Primary Recommendations for Action

Number	Recommendation
1	Managers in professional membership associations should study social influence theory (Kelman, 1958) and social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), and consider implementing social media programs that focus on the actionable social media strategies contained within the findings uncovered by this research to increase dues income in professional membership associations. These actionable strategies include (a) focusing on generating interaction and engagement with social media connections, (b) having a strategy to align resources toward achieving the same goal, (c) establishing trust with social media connections, (d) increasing the overall social media audience, and (e) measuring success and results.
2	Use the social influence of celebrities, influential members, or individuals by posting their photos in conjunction with events and important professional membership association communications activities to entice prospects to join and members to renew.
3	Consider (a) incorporating a wide variety of influential members and industry celebrities, (b) leveraging the age, reputation, and trust in the brand, (c) maintaining clarity and honesty in their communications, and (d) combining all of these things with value to increase dues income using social media.
4	Recommendations include that managers in professional membership associations have an emergency plan to deal with unexpected events arising from social media use, as well as retain a group of volunteer leaders on standby to help control issue that may arise.

Social influence theory plays prominently in the recommendations of this study. Kelman (1958) observed that social influence theory explains behavior when individuals adopt beliefs or ideas from people or organizations, people self-identify as part of a group, or when a person understands and accepts that they incorporate the beliefs and ideas of others into their personal belief structure. Notably, of the three main types of social influence defined by Kelman (1958), using celebrities to take advantage of the social influence process of identification emerged the most frequently in the data and the successful social media strategies I identified. The process of compliance also emerged once under the theme of establishing trust with social media connections and similarly included leveraging celebrities. As a result, one recommendation of this study is to use the social influence of celebrities, influential members, or individuals by posting their photos in conjunction with events and important professional membership association communications activities to leverage the process of identification and influence attitudes and behaviors toward joining the professional membership association.

Social exchange theory is also prominent in the recommendations of this study. Because of the lack of available research data regarding social media strategies specifically for nonprofits, many organizations face difficulty selecting social media strategies and platforms (Kane et al., 2014) to facilitate social engagement. Social exchanges use social capital, and are based on: (a) structural elements such as connections through social interaction, (b) rational elements originating from relationships such as trust, and (c) cognitive elements such as shared mindsets (Oparaocha, 2016). According to social exchange theory, social exchanges function as long as both parties in the exchange receive value (Tyrie & Ferguson, 2013). To overcome these difficulties, recommendations include that when using social interaction on social media, managers in professional membership associations (a) incorporate a wide variety of influential members and industry celebrities, (b) leverage the age, reputation, and trust in the brand, (c) maintain clarity and honesty in their communications, and (d) combine all of these things with value to increase dues income using social media.

Managers in professional membership associations should review barriers to social media acceptance and control. Additional recommendations include that managers in professional membership associations avoid a loss of control as a result of hashtag hijacking, messages changing, or other factors. Recommendations include that managers in professional membership associations have an emergency plan to deal with unexpected events arising from social media use, as well as retain a group of volunteer leaders on standby to help control issue that may arise. To foster successful corporate social media engagement, sustained results, and a clear, consistent brand message, marketers must create and maintain focused two-way relationships with individuals (Hudson et al., 2015). Failure to manage these relationships may lead to less effective social media outreach and may expose businesses to risk. Factors such as the level of technical sophistication of consumers potentially generate misleading statistics, creating challenges for organizations attempting to gain an understanding of the true level of engagement they achieve on social media (Kane et al., 2014). Consequently, failing to understand the results of a social media campaign is a potential risk factor for organizations seeking effective social media strategies (Aichner & Jacob, 2015).

Finally, disseminating the findings of this study within the nonprofit industry will further extend its value. As a result, I will include findings in presentations to the New York Society of Association Executives and the American Society of Association Executives. I will also include data from this study in articles I write for trade journals and other publications that are sent directly to managers in professional membership associations, and will include a focus on conducting social media marketing training and social media triage training within the professional membership associations I work with.

Recommendations for Further Research

Because of the lack of available research surrounding nonprofit social media use (Kane et al., 2014), I recommend conducting additional studies on all aspects of social media use in nonprofit organizations, including professional membership associations. As related to the study of increasing dues income in professional membership associations, further recommendations include a qualitative study encompassing social media use in professional membership associations spanning the entire United States to better understand the overall state of this type of social media marketing in the country and to identify regional trends that may present further opportunities or barriers for nonprofit marketers. Conversely, some nonprofit associations remain reluctant to use social media because of concerns surrounding regulations by the IRS and other governing bodies regarding how organizations solicit donations and support (Berkman, 2013). Therefore, another recommendation for future research is the ability to use social media while fundraising and to use research tools to offer some recommendations and guidance to organizations currently attempting to identify a way to utilize the media.

Many organizations fear a loss of control, and the interview data for this study proposed existing concerns included (a) the need for an emergency plan, (b) the need to make sure hashtags are unique, (c) issues arising from misinterpretation or a changed message, and (d) the need to have volunteers to help control messaging on social media.

Research surrounding the validity of this fear, as well as ways to mitigate it, is also recommended. Similarly, additional value exists in a future study on ineffective strategies for increasing dues income in professional membership associations. A final recommendation for future research is to exclusively study social media strategies negatively impacting nonprofit organizations despite high expectations, as well as why the detrimental effects have occurred.

Reflections

Over the past 18 years, I have worked in a variety of professional membership associations and witnessed changes brought about as a result of the rise of the internet, email, and social media. While the arrival of each of these new technologies presented leaders in professional membership associations with new challenges, email and website-based promotion and marketing more closely resembled traditional marketing because they do not inherently provide a mechanism for two-way dialogue like social media. Conversely, social media presented many new challenges for professional membership organizations looking for best practices in using these communication tools.

Because of my experience in professional membership associations, I came to the study with some preconceived ideas regarding the value of social media in increasing dues income. However, the data analysis process for this study included methodological triangulation to overcome bias. Triangulation is a tool researchers use to increase confidence in research by investigating data from several distinct sources (Michna, 2013), and according to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), methodological triangulation uses two or more sources of data to establish consistency in the findings and adds to research validity. I achieved methodological triangulation using participant interview data, non-private social media campaign data collected from a publicly available company report, the Facebook and Twitter pages of the association, and observations in the form of field notes taken while directly observing a social media planning meeting focusing on strategies to increase membership dues. Finally, the objective of the interview protocol in this study was to mitigate the effect of my personal bias on participants, make the interview process consistent, maintain the comfort and confidentiality of participants, and provide an overview of the entire interview process.

Before completing the study, the thought was that one knowledgeable individual was all that was necessary to plan and implement highly successful social media campaigns in most professional membership associations. However, the study findings indicated that social media is most successful as a team activity and incorporating staff from a wide variety of areas to increase dues income, and may not be successful with only one person allocated to an organization’s social media program. I witnessed this approach firsthand in the social media planning meeting, where team members came together to strategize how the organization could best leverage their program areas using social media to increase income from dues. Supporting this, when discussing effective social media strategies designed to increase membership dues income, P40 shared

> You make sure everybody in our different departments is doing something. So, if you have events, they’re generating on the events side of things. If we have membership publications, they’re generating pieces on that. Our legislative side, our advocacy side, is generating messages. So it’s really across the board.

Furthermore, Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch (2016) found, as opposed to having one dedicated social media officer, organizations should spread social media responsibility across many different departments in an organization.

Finally, I began the study with the impression that hashtags were only important when identifying ways to reach additional users. However, I did not consider that hashtags can also drive traffic away from the organization, or could inadvertently connect a campaign or organization with an unintended cause, person or organization. Consequently, as shown in the research, the importance exists to research hashtags before using them.

Conclusion

Through this study, the goal was to understand the specific business problem that some nonprofit marketing professionals lack social media strategies to increase professional membership association dues income. The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to address the question: What social media strategies do nonprofit marketing professionals use to increase professional membership association dues income? The sample included seven nonprofit marketing professionals in one New Jersey-based professional membership association, and social exchange theory and social influence theory formed the conceptual framework. Data collection occurred using semistructured interviews, a review of social media campaign data, and field notes taken while directly observing a social media planning meeting. Yin's (2016) five steps for qualitative data analysis formed a logical and sequential process for data analysis.

Analysis of the data from participant interviews, field notes from the observation of a meeting to discuss social media strategies used to increase income from dues, and publically available data resulted in 21 codes (see Appendix E). These codes yielded one overarching theme, themes, and an additional derivative theme. The overarching theme, actionable social media strategies to increase professional membership association dues income, included five themes:

1. Focus on generating interaction and engagement with social media connections,
2. have a comprehensive, coordinated strategy to align resources toward achieving the same goal,
3. establish trust with social media connections,
4. increase the overall social media audience, and
5. measure success and results.

Accordingly, leaders in professional membership associations should carefully review their social media strategies for increasing dues income and consider the actionable strategies resulting from this study. Also, a derivative theme, being aware of a loss of control of a social media campaign message, emerged through the coding process. While being aware of a loss of control of a social media campaign message is not a direct strategy, the need exists to provide insight into this potential challenge as it may result from implementing the actionable strategies identified in the overarching theme. Finally, a common finding across all of the data was that specific strategies remain necessary to increase dues income using social media in professional membership associations.

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Appendix A: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study about social media strategies that increase professional membership association dues income, which are specific nonprofit organizations classified by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as business leagues or associations of individuals with common business interests. Examples of professional membership associations include the National Kitchen and Bath Association, the American Bar Association, and the National Association of Realtors. The researcher is inviting nonprofit marketing professionals who excel in executing social media strategies to increase income from membership dues to be in the study. I obtained your name/contact info via XXXXXXXXXXXXXX. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Robert Spangler, who is a Doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to explore social media strategies that nonprofit marketing professionals use to increase professional membership association dues income.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in an approximately 3 – 5-minute-long introductory pre-interview telephone call with the researcher to familiarize participants with the study and provide an opportunity to ask questions.
- Participate in an in-person interview, approximately 1 hour long, with the researcher**.**
- Agree to allow the researcher to record all interviews with a portable audio recording device.
- Participate in a round of member checking, or proofing, the data. Providing interviewees with the opportunity to review their data and provide any necessary clarification and edits, also known as member checking, increases the reliability of the data in a qualitative study.
- Participate in a subsequent interview if necessary. While it is unlikely that subsequent interview will be requested, the purpose is to review and member check additional data collected from the first or second interview for accuracy, and to provide additional information that may have been inadvertently omitted.

Subsequent interviews will follow the same protocol as second interviews.

Here are some sample questions:

- What social media strategies have you used to increase membership dues income in 501(c)(6) professional membership associations?
- What makes each of the social media strategies you mentioned in the previous question effective?

- What social media strategies have you used that have not been effective in increasing membership dues income in 501(c)(6) professional membership associations?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. You are free to accept or turn down the invitation. No one at XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to be in the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as fatigue or stress. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

If you participate in the study, and find you need immediate counseling or psychological assistance, the following online counselors and psychologists may be of help. Please note that this is not a recommendation, and the researcher makes no claims as to the quality or costs associated with these organizations. Similarly, the researcher recommends participants investigate and evaluate all online services before engaging with them.

Resource	**Link**
Breakthrough	https://www.breakthrough.com/
Doctor on Demand	https://www.doctorondemand.com
Live Health Online	https://www.livehealthonline.com
Counselling Resource	http://counsellingresource.com
Mental Health.GOV	https://www.mentalhealth.gov/get-help/immediate-help/

Participants will benefit from their participation by both contributing to the available knowledge surrounding dues-raising nonprofit social media strategies and by receiving and reviewing the summarized research results of study before conducting new social media campaigns.

Payment:

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this proposed study. Upon approval and publication of the final study, all participants and the organization that served as the case will receive a 1 – 2 page summary of the research results.

Privacy:

Reports coming out of this study will not share the identities of individual participants. Details that might identify participants, such as the location of the study, also will not be shared. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purpose outside of this research project. Data will be kept secure by omitting personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will also be kept secure by following data security measures, including password protection, data encryption, use of codes in place of names, storing names (when necessary) separately from the data, discarding names when the study is complete, and storage in a locked container. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher by telephone at +1.718.909.6193 or by email at robertspangler@mac.com. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call the Research Participant Advocate at my university at 1-800-925-3368 ext. 312-1210 from within the USA, 001-612-312-1210 from outside the USA, or email address irb@waldenu.edu. Walden University's approval number for this study is **05-11-17-0176087** and it expires on **May 10th, 2018**. The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep. Please retain a copy for your records.

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision about it, please indicate your consent by signing below.

Printed Name of Participant ______________________________

Date of consent ______________________________

Participant's Signature ______________________________

Researcher's Signature ______________________________

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Each interview includes (a) recording of the date, participant ID, and location; (b) researcher introduction; (c) review of the purpose of the study; (d) review of the interview process; (e) an example of what types of questions you will be asked; (f) an example of the depth of answers expected; (g) review of participant confidentiality; (h) review of participant rights/signing of the informed consent form; (i) the participant interview; and (j) a review of next steps and member checking.

Pre-Interview Telephone Call

Date: ________________

Participant ID: _______

Location:____________

Script: My name is Robert Spangler, and I am a student in Walden University's Doctoral Business Administration (DBA) program.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study on social media strategies that nonprofit marketing professionals use to increase professional membership association dues income. Your personal information will not appear in the study, and the information you share will not be attributed to you. To maintain confidentiality, I will replace your name as a participant with an ID number. In accordance with Walden University guidelines, all data provided by participants will remain in a safe place for 5 years after the publication of this study. I will destroy all data 5 years after the publication date. You can withdraw at any time, and further information regarding your privacy can be found on the informed consent form we just reviewed and you signed.

The primary research question for this proposed study is: What social media strategies do nonprofit marketing professionals use to increase professional membership association dues income? In this interview, you will be asked to provide honest answers regarding your perceptions. That interview will take approximately 1 hour, and throughout the interview, I will ask you 11 open ended questions. I may ask additional questions as necessary. Please use descriptive language when answering the questions. For example, if I were to ask you what, if any, materials you have used to build a building that lead to increased heat efficiency, you might describe heat efficient materials you used, including some of the properties of those materials and why you selected them over other materials (what made them special.). Of course, this is only an example, and the questions in this study relate to social media strategies that increase membership dues income. Do you have any questions for me at this time?

As per our email conversation, I our interview is scheduled for [DATE], at [LOCATION].

I look forward to meeting you in person at that time.

Thank you.

First Interview

Date: ________________

Participant ID: _______

Location:_____________

Script: Hello. My name is Robert Spangler, and I am a Doctoral student at Walden University. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study on social media strategies that nonprofit marketing professionals use to increase professional membership association dues income. Your personal information will not appear in the study, and the information you share will not be attributed to you. The general business problem is that some nonprofit marketing professionals do not use social media strategies, which results in lost income. The specific business problem included in this study is that some nonprofit marketing professionals lack knowledge of effective social media strategies to increase professional membership association dues income.

If you have any questions, or additional feedback beyond the included questions, please do not hesitate to share your thoughts. The primary research question for this proposed study is: What social media strategies do nonprofit marketing professionals use to increase professional membership association dues income? Throughout the interview, I will ask you 11 open ended questions, and may ask additional questions as necessary.

Interview Questions

1. What (if any) social media strategies have you used that led to increased membership dues income in this 501(c)(6) professional membership association?
2. If you have used effective social media strategies that led to increased membership dues income in this 501(c)(6) professional membership association, what makes each of the strategies you have used effective?
3. What social media strategies have you used that have not been effective in increasing dues income in this professional membership organization?
4. What makes each of the strategies you mentioned in the previous question ineffective?
5. How do you measure whether a social media strategy has increased dues income in this professional membership organization?
6. How do you determine which social media strategy to use when seeking to increase membership dues income in this 501(c)(6) professional membership association?
7. What value, if any, do you place on engaging in two-way social media communication with individuals by sharing information that provides a benefit or value?
8. What value, if any, do you place on establishing a sense trust or a shared mindset with connections when using social media strategies to increase membership dues income in this 501(c)(6) professional membership association?

9. What factors present the biggest threats when using social media strategies to increase membership dues income in this 501(c)(6) professional membership association?
10. What would you recommend to 501(c)(6) professional membership associations seeking to develop and implement effective social media strategies designed to increase membership dues income?
11. What additional experiences have you had regarding the use of social media to increase membership dues income in 501(c)(6) professional membership associations that pertain to this study?

Script: Thank you for participating in this interview. As discussed, your personal information will not appear in the study, and the information you provided will not be attributed to you. To guarantee that I have accurately captured and summarized your thoughts, as well as key themes arising from the information you shared, I would like to schedule a follow-up member checking interview. Are you available two weeks from today, at the same time? Thank you again for your participation.

Second Interview

Date: ________________

Participant ID: _______

Location:____________

Note: Synthesized data included to be provided to participants by email prior to the member checking interview.

Script: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study on social media strategies that nonprofit marketing professionals use to increase professional membership association dues income. The purpose of this secondary interview is to review and member check the data collected from the first interview for accuracy, and to provide additional information that may have been inadvertently omitted during the first interview session. I will review my understanding of the answers you provided, and will provide you with the opportunity to share your thoughts.

Interview Questions

1. (After reading each synthesized result aloud) Is the synthesis I generated from the answer you provided correct?
2. Is there additional information that should be included in the synthesis?

Script: Thank you for participating in this study on social media strategies that nonprofit marketing professionals use to increase professional membership association dues income. I truly appreciate your time and efforts. If you have any additional feedback or ideas to share, or any questions regarding the study, please contact me.

Appendix C: Letter of Cooperation

Letter of Cooperation with a Research Partner:

Permission to Access Staff & Information

Community Research Partner Name: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Contact Information: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Date: 5/12/17

Dear Robert Spangler,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled *Social Media Strategies to Increase Professional Mmembership Association Dues Income* within XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. As part of this study, I authorize you to conduct interviews, collect data, conduct member checking (review your themes, ideas, and findings as needed with the individuals you interview), and observe a social media strategy session designed to increase our dues income. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization will assist with your research by:

- Providing you with a list of names of key staff members that meet the criteria established in your study. You may recruit individuals on that list directly, and their participation in your study is voluntary.
- Providing you with access to conduct approximately hour-long interviews with seven key staff members that agree to participate in your study.
- Following the initial interviews, providing you with additional access to participating staff members to review and check the accuracy of interview summaries, conclusions and findings related to the data they supplied. This review may take an additional hour or more.
- Providing you with access to a social media strategy planning session designed to increase dues income for the association.

We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I understand that the student will not be naming our organization in the doctoral project report that is published in Proquest. In addition, I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies. Finally, I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Name: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Title: Executive Director

Organization: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Date: 5/12/2017

Walden University policy on electronic signatures: An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically. Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Electronic signatures are only valid when the signer is either (a) the sender of the email, or (b) copied on the email containing the signed document. Legally an “electronic signature” can be the person’s typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. Walden University staff verify any electronic signatures that do not originate from a password-protected source (i.e., an email address officially on file with Walden).

Appendix D: National Institutes of Health Certification Form

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Robert Spangler** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 04/28/2017.

Certification Number: 2385921.

Date of Completion: 4/28/2017

Certification Number: 2385921