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Digital Fundraising Strategies for Nonprofit Marketing Leaders in International Markets

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Abstract

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MS, Capella University, 2004

BS, Columbia College, 1998

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Leaders of North American nonprofit healthcare organizations require funding from international markets but lack the resources to reach these markets through traditional marketing or the skills to reach them through digital marketing, a cost-effective alternative. The purpose of this multiple case study was to document digital fundraising strategies successfully used to reach international markets by the marketing leaders of 5 North American nonprofit healthcare organizations. Participants in the study were involved in implementing digital fundraising strategies. Marketing systems theory was the framework for the study. Data were collected through semistructured interviews and analysis of documents that illustrated the digital marketing techniques of each organization. Interview transcripts and documents were examined to identify key ideas, and then analyzed using cross-case analysis to identify common themes. Included in the findings were themes such as the importance of cultural understanding, the value of message translation, the power of partnership with local organizations, and the effectiveness of e-mail marketing. The findings from this study may result in social change by increasing revenue and growth for nonprofit healthcare organizations, making them better able to provide services to all members.

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Dedication

For James, who will never, ever, call me Doctor.

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I wish to thank the people who participated in this study for taking time from their busy lives to help me with my research. I also thank my family, who were so supportive over the several years it took to complete my doctoral study. Finally, thanks to Bulleit Bourbon, which has been there for me through the lowest lows and highest heights of this process.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

From 2010 to 2015, the number of grants and other financial awards given to nonprofit organizations by the United States government dropped by 28.5% (United States Department of the Treasury, 2016). Nonprofit organizations are faced with funding challenges and must implement strategic marketing plans to generate donations (Hu, Kapucu, & O'Byrne, 2014; Sokolowski, 2013). Digital marketing strategies offer a cost-effective alternative (Bennett, 2014) to traditional marketing. Unfortunately, many nonprofit organizations lack the skills to implement a digital marketing campaign effectively (Bennett, 2014; Management Team, 2013).

Background of the Problem

As the world becomes more digitally connected, digital marketing increases. Digital marketing strategies create cost-effective connections with specific audiences (Barbu, 2013). Instead of investing resources in messaging a broad audience, digital marketers target the exact demographics most likely to respond (Stone & Woodcock, 2014). Digital marketers analyze the online behavior of users to contextualize the marketing message for each recipient (Stone & Woodcock, 2014). Digital marketing influences social behavior through audience engagement (Kabadayi & Price, 2014). Digital marketing is often less expensive and more effective than traditional marketing.

Small organizations seldom possess the resources necessary for large, traditional marketing campaigns (McGovern, 2012). Nonprofit organizations require marketing to generate donations but frequently struggle to generate enough income for any marketing strategy (Bennett, 2014). Nonprofit organizations can benefit from digital marketing strategies, but often lack the skills to execute them (Bennett, 2014; Management Team, 2013). Research exists on digital marketing strategies, but very little focuses on the use of digital marketing by nonprofit organizations to increase donations.

Problem Statement

As funding decreases in the nonprofit marketplace, organizations must seek new funding sources, including international donors (Management Team, 2013). In 2010, the United States government awarded 110,063 grants and other financial awards to nonprofit organizations (United States Department of the Treasury, 2016); in 2015, the government awarded only 78,683 grants (United States Department of the Treasury, 2016). The general business problem is that while leaders of North American nonprofit healthcare organizations wish to seek international funding, their marketing leaders have little understanding of how to reach such donors via digital media. The specific business problem is that some marketing leaders of nonprofit healthcare organizations lack the digital marketing strategies to generate funds from international donors.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multicase study was to determine the digital fundraising strategies that nonprofit healthcare marketing leaders use for international donors. The population consisted of marketing leaders from five nonprofit healthcare organizations from North America that successfully employed international digital fundraising strategies. The findings from this study may effect social change by helping nonprofit healthcare organizations generate funding from international donors. By increasing donations, North American nonprofit healthcare organizations will have more resources to fund education, research, and science in the medical field.

Nature of the Study

The study was a qualitative exploration of the digital fundraising strategies successfully employed by nonprofit healthcare organizations. The focus of a qualitative study may be the experiences of others and the underlying themes of those experiences. Through direct interaction with subjects, researchers gain insight into their subject's experiences (Anderson, Leahy, DelValle, Sherman, & Tansey, 2014). Researchers use the qualitative method to gain a deeper understanding of behavioral choices and motivations as compared to quantitative research methods (Anyan, 2013). Researchers use the quantitative method to test hypotheses (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). However, qualitative methods are more effective than quantitative methods for discovering knowledge (Anyan, 2013; McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). The purpose of this study was to identify effective digital marketing strategies, not to prove the effectiveness of already documented strategies, making qualitative research a better choice than quantitative research. In this study, the subjects were marketing managers for nonprofit healthcare organizations. A challenge when using mixed method research is establishing real and meaningful connections across different types (Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013). One difference between qualitative research and quantitative research is the type of questions asked in interviews and questionnaires. Questions in qualitative research are usually open-ended, while questions in quantitative research are closed-ended (Zohrabi, 2013). This research consisted of interviews, a qualitative data type. Mixed method research contains both qualitative and quantitative data (Venkatesh et al., 2013), making it unsuitable for this study. When conducting mixed method research, researchers often find it difficult to establish meaningful connections between the results of open-ended and closed-ended questions (Venkatesh et al., 2013). Additionally, because mixed-method research contains separate qualitative and quantitative components, researchers must decide if their study is primarily one or the other. The primary method is the foundation of the research and the secondary method supports the primary (Morse & Cheek, 2014). I identified strategies employed by marketing leaders by analyzing their experiences. A quantitative component would exceed the intended scope of the research.

The research was a multicase study of five North American medical organizations that have achieved success in international digital marketing. The focus of this multicase study was the digital marketing practices each organization followed. In interviewing study participants, I explored their international digital marketing successes and the reasons behind those successes. Researchers use case studies to explore the experiences of a limited number of important figures or organizations in a given field (Lewis, 2015). Unlike other research designs, the case study is effective for presenting scenarios in which the researcher has no control over events, but must analyze details behind real-life situations (Ardhendu, 2014).

I chose the multicase study over several other potential models, including phenomenology and ethnography research designs. In phenomenology, researchers explore a single experience shared by multiple parties (Tomkin & Eatough, 2013), which was not appropriate for this study as I sought to understand strategies each participant employed for success. Researchers use the ethnographic design to focus on the collective experiences of a group and how those experiences shape them as a demographic (Wall, 2015). Ethnography was an inappropriate approach here because this study was not about marketing managers as a group, but rather about the digital marketing strategies they deploy internationally.

Research Question

The central research question was: Which digital fundraising strategies have nonprofit healthcare marketing leaders used to generate funding from international donors?

Interview Questions

1. What experience do you have in digital fundraising from international donors?
2. What digital fundraising strategies have you used to focus your efforts in international markets?
3. Which digital fundraising strategies were most effective?
4. How did your digital fundraising strategies need to change in different international markets?
5. What common cultural barriers have you encountered when using digital fundraising strategies to market internationally?
6. As an international organization, how do you build trust through digital fundraising strategies?
7. How are digital fundraising strategies different for medical nonprofit organizations?

8. What additional insights can you share on digital fundraising strategies for international markets?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this research was marketing systems theory, pioneered by Layton (1968). In this theory, a marketing system is a network of people with common needs and those who provide solutions to meet those needs (Layton, 2011). In a marketing system, buyers and sellers connect socially (Layton, 2011). The cultural, economic, and social aspects of this connection affect how buyers and sellers interact. I evaluated marketing approaches using marketing systems theory to identify the synergies digital marketing creates as part of the greater marketing system.

Researchers use the model for measuring market performance (MMMP) to measure the success of marketing techniques (Gao, 2010). I used the MMMP to explore the success of nonprofit marketing leaders' fundraising strategies in international markets. Gao (2010) developed the MMMP as a concise way to measure the success and value of marketing efforts. Within this framework, marketing performance is a combination of marketing effectiveness and marketing efficiency. Marketing effectiveness refers to how successful marketing activities are in achieving organizational goals; marketing efficiency is how well organizations use resources to execute marketing activities (Gao, 2010). Effective marketing supports the success and growth of an organization, while efficient marketing saves the organization money. The goals and resources of the organization dictate the optimal balance of these two concepts (Gao, 2010).

Operational Definitions

Digital fundraising: Any fundraising technique that utilizes digital media to generate funds from an audience (Sargeant & Jay, 2014).

Digital marketing: Any marketing technique that utilizes the internet to connect with an audience (Leeflang, Verhoef, Dahlström, & Freundt, 2014).

Digital media: Any media delivered via the internet or mobile computing technology (Jensen, 2013).

Nonprofit organization: An organization legally required to spend financial earnings on individuals other than those who govern the organization (board members) or on services for members (Topor & Boroiu, 2011).

Social media: Technology or applications that people use to create profiles on the internet, interact with others, and share information with the public (Albarran, 2013). Examples of social media include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Some assumptions regarding the nature of nonprofit organizations were necessary for the conduct of this research. The study was subject to certain limitations based on sample size and participant availability. The delimitations of this study are geographic restrictions and the roles of the chosen participants within their organizations.

Assumptions

Assumptions are things considered true in the context of the research. If the assumptions are not true, the research cannot succeed (Lips-Wiersma & Mills, 2014; Simon & Goes, 2013); for example, a researcher analyzing the positive effects of vacation time on employee performance might assume that all participants enjoy time away from work. Not including assumptions may negatively impact the validity of research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). A key assumption for this study was that the participating nonprofit organizations require funding. As the focus of this study was digital marketing strategies for internationally-funded nonprofit healthcare organizations, another assumption was that each region in which the nonprofit organizations attempted to generate funding required the services provided by those organizations. Another assumption was that each participating organization had successfully established a North American membership base. The existence of this base was relevant to existing brand recognition. The final assumption was that participants in the study had an understanding of the digital fundraising strategies employed at their organization and that they were honest about these strategies.

Limitations

Limitations are necessary parameters of research and refer to boundaries that are out of the control of the researcher (Simon & Goes, 2013). One limitation of this study was the sample size. Using the minimum of five participants could create an uneven bias in results. However, the issue of uneven bias due to sample size is more significant to quantitative research than qualitative (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). The number of available participants and the time participants commit to interviews was also a limitation. Another limitation is that not all strategies shared by the participants were considered best practice. Finally, due to the pace at which digital marketing evolves, some results may no longer be applicable.

Delimitations

Delimitations are boundaries within the control of the researcher (Simon & Goes, 2013). For example, a delimitation of researchers studying the habits of migratory birds are the number of birds they see. Another delimitation of the same study would be the region researchers choose to watch. The first delimitation of this study was geography; participants had to be in North America. Another delimitation was the position held by interviewees. The focus of this study was only on marketing leaders, but other individuals in the participating organizations may be responsible for international digital fundraising strategies as well. For example, social media managers make digital marketing decisions.

Significance of the Study

As second- and third-world nations develop larger healthcare systems, their need for experienced guidance in the medical field grows (Fiedler & Bebber, 2013). North American healthcare organizations have an opportunity to fill this need (Management Team, 2013). At a time when North American nonprofit healthcare organizations need new sources of funding (Clark, 2012), understanding how to reach new markets could make a difference to their continued success.

Contribution to Business Practice

Although research exists on digital nonprofit marketing and international marketing, very little exists on the two together. This research may help nonprofit healthcare organizations make informed decisions about marketing to international audiences through digital media. This research may also give nonprofit healthcare organizations digital marketing tools to raise funds internationally in a cost-effective way.

Implications for Social Change

This study may help North American healthcare organizations raise funds by expanding into international markets. International expansion of North American healthcare organizations may bring the science and experience of our medical community to developing nations. Therefore, this study may affect social change by helping to improve the quality of medical care in developing nations.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

In this review, I cover the existing literature on the general state of North American nonprofit organizations, the marketing challenges they face, the challenges for North American organizations marketing internationally, and an overview of digital marketing with an emphasis on nonprofit digital marketing. I also explore the literature on marketing systems theory (Layton, 2011), complexity theory (Mason, 2014), and the MMMP (Gao, 2010) as well as opposing theories, specifically Dixonian marketing theory (Tadajewski, 2011) and resource-based theory (Grant, 1991. Of the 173 sources cited in this research, 92% are peer-reviewed, 1% is government-generated data, and 86% have published dates within 5 years of the approval of this study. Of the 106 articles used in this literature review, 93% are from peer-reviewed journals. I collected these articles using online searches, Business Source Complete, ABI/INFORM Complete, Emerald Management, and SAGE Premiere. Key terms used in the collection of literature were *nonprofit funding*, *nonprofit challenges*, *nonprofit marketing*, *nonprofit growth*, *international nonprofit*, *digital marketing*, *nonprofit social media*, *nonprofit digital*, *nonprofit Facebook*, *nonprofit Twitter*, *nonprofit YouTube*, *nonprofit LinkedIn*, *nonprofit email marketing*, and *nonprofit mobile marketing*.

Marketing Systems Theory

In marketing systems theory, marketplaces arise when networks of socially connected people, engaged in economic exchange, offer and consume goods and services (Layton, 2011). Providers of goods and services identify market needs based on observations from within the market. Marketing systems are economic biospheres in which consumers rely on vendors and vendors rely on consumers (Layton, 2011). When a marketing system works, it improves the quality of life for consumers and generates profit for sellers (Hounhouigan, Ingenbleek, Van der Lans, Van Trijp, & Linnemann, 2014). Marketing systems theory is scalable from small local markets to large international markets (Layton, 2011). For years, marketing researchers have described marketing systems using different terms (Shaw, 2014). However, the common themes of these different systems are groups of people networked in some way, often social, creating demands, and vendors responding to these demands (Shaw, 2014).

The core of marketing systems theory is economic exchange within a social network (Layton, 2011). As social networks evolve, so do their marketing systems (Hounhouigan et al., 2014). Within a marketing system, sellers employ marketing performance assessment tools to monitor markets and identify needs. Marketing performance assessment tools use a set of routine measurements to identify changes in a market and predict trends (Frösén, Tikkanen, Jaakkola, Vassinen, 2013). Sellers offer solutions to respond to these trends and meet anticipated needs (Hounhouigan et al., 2014). The marketing system therefore also influences the social network by fostering innovation. Larger, more complex marketing systems evolve more rapidly because they contain more participants, creating more needs and more sellers to respond to them (Hounhouigan et al., 2014).

Within the field of international marketing, marketing systems theory is particularly relevant. Marketing systems theory spans all levels of a networked market, similar to the concept of an ecosystem (Layton, 2011). All aspects of this system influence each other. Marketing systems theory connects small groups at the bottom of the system with the massive, encompassing groups at the top (Layton, 2011). A large organization may have large needs, like international expansion to increase membership revenues. However, that same organization is reliant on the support and, therefore, the satisfaction of the needs of individual members within that group. Marketing systems theory scales from the needs of those individual members to the needs of the larger organization (Layton, 2011). This scalability is significant for international marketing because the complexity of such marketing increases (Akaka, Vargo, & Lusch, 2013). Without a connected theory, organizations would market to those individual groups in silos.

Marketing systems theory balances the needs of sustainability and the needs of growth (Layton, 2011). Organizations must focus on member retention for sustainability. Organizations must focus on member acquisition to grow (Paliwoda & Thomas, 2013). Marketing systems theory draws connections between sustainability needs and growth needs. The complexity of connecting with an international audience requires additional support. International organizations now employ combinations of customer relationship management systems and supply chain management systems as part of a greater marketing plan (Paliwoda & Thomas, 2013).

According to marketing systems theory, by connecting to an audience through a social network, sellers identify consumer need and generate profits (Layton, 2010). These social networks scale from small groups of people to large organizations (Layton, 2010). By using digital marketing, marketers connect with large groups of people through social networks (Kabadayi & Price, 2014). Nonprofit organizations can benefit from digital marketing strategies, but often lack the skills to execute them (Bennett, 2014; Management Team, 2013). By applying marketing systems theory, nonprofit organizations can connect to audiences through social networks.

Complexity Theory

A complex system is one that contains many interacting parts that depend on each other (Simon, 1996). Complexity theory explains the concept of organic growth (evolution) within a system (Nolan & Varey, 2014). According to Simon (1996), a complex system contains four key elements: agents, self-organizing networks, coevolution, and recombination. Agents are parts of a system that interact and combine to produce an output (Simon, 1996). These can be individual agents or groups of agents. They respond to stimuli and interactions within the system. Self-organizing networks are groups of agents or smaller networks that come together through feedback connections (Simon, 1996). When one agent or group interacts with another agent or group, they provide feedback to one another (Simon, 1996). The feedback influences the agents or groups on both sides of the interaction. Negative feedback discourages certain types of interactions, while positive feedback encourages them (Simon, 1996). Self-organizing networks grow through positive feedback (Simon, 1996). Coevolution means that agents in a system evolve together (Simon, 1996). Each agent grows to optimize its performance within a system. Agents and groups interact with each other (Simon, 1996). They capitalize on the strengths and weaknesses of the other agents as they evolve. The evolution of one agent affects the evolution of the agents around it (Simon, 1996). When agents and groups recombine, they form new groups. Recombination alters the relationships between agents, which changes their interactions and evolution (Simon, 1996). Recombination is what makes the system dynamic. Without recombination, a system will eventually reach equilibrium, slowing evolution and growth (Simon, 1996). Nolan and Varey (2014) identified three essential elements of a complex system, similar to those identified by Simon. According to Nolan and Varey, the cornerstones of complexity theory are relationships, feedback, and connectedness of elements within a system (Nolan & Varey, 2014). The interaction between agents naturally develops into relationships (Mason, 2014). These relationships develop into systems with rules and dependencies. As systems evolve and interact (as agents themselves), they form new relationships and develop into more complex systems (Mason, 2014). Within a system, the more connected elements are, the more likely they are to grow into mutually beneficial relationships. Through connectedness, elements in a system find ways to support each other positively, thereby encouraging the overall growth of the system (Nolan & Varey, 2014).

Researchers use complexity theory to explain the patterns and growth of these systems. The core concept of complexity theory is unmanaged self-organization of interacting entities (Mason, 2014). Self-organization fosters creative, seemingly random evolution (Mason, 2014). Feedback within a system is also an important element. When elements in a system interact positively, they produce positive feedback and spur growth around that interaction (Mason, 2014). When they interact negatively, their feedback curbs growth and may create regression around that interaction (Mason, 2014). In an organizational capacity, the complexity of an organization's relationships creates complexity in the feedback it provides and the effect it has on the rest of the system (Schneider, Wickert, & Marti, 2016). An organization with few relationships with other organizations and consumer groups provides relatively simple feedback (Schneider et al., 2016), such as a brief list of services or concise communication with the marketplace. As the organization grows and develops more relationships, the feedback it provides becomes more complex, as does the feedback it requires (Schneider et al., 2016). A complex organization provides a wider array of services and needs more detailed market feedback to connect with its consumers (Schneider et al., 2016). Marketers at nonprofit organizations would like to use their relationships with their audiences to gather feedback and create targeted marketing communications (Stone & Woodcock, 2014).

Traditional marketing systems seek to establish stability in a marketplace (Mason, 2014). By identifying, controlling, and meeting demands, marketing creates a predictable, stable environment in which businesses and consumers interact. However, many markets have become too complicated for systems based on traditional, stable environments

(Mason, 2014). Traditional marketing systems are not equipped to anticipate the rapid changes of modern, turbulent marketplaces (Mason, 2014). Complexity theory specializes in understanding interactions within a complex, changing system (Mason, 2014). Marketers can thus use complexity theory to understand evolving marketplaces (Mason, 2014).

Chae (2012) used complexity theory to explain the intricacies of service innovation. Service innovation is the practice of developing and sharing new services with an audience (Chae, 2012). Traditionally, products and product information have been the cornerstones of marketing. However, as services have become more prevalent, service marketing has emerged as an alternative marketing strategy (Gummesson & Grönroos, 2012). Service marketing is a marketing strategy that promotes the service and identity of an organization rather than promoting goods (Gummesson & Grönroos, 2012). Service innovation and marketing are particularly relevant to organizations using technology to provide and market services, as the rate of technology innovation is higher than innovation in other fields (Chae, 2012; Gummesson & Grönroos, 2012). Organizations in the healthcare field practice service innovation and marketing because their business model is providing services (Gummesson & Grönroos, 2012). As providers of services, nonprofit organizations practice service innovation and marketing. Chae explained that services provided by organizations evolve based on the reaction of consumers and the landscape within which consumers and service providers interact. Service innovation follows the laws of complexity theory, in which consumers, services, and organizations are interacting agents within a system (marketplace) that grow and evolve based on those interactions (Chae, 2012). As organizations and consumer needs continue to evolve, services evolve to meet new needs. At the same time, the evolution of services changes the interaction between organizations and consumers, leading to the evolution of both agents (Chae, 2012). Organizations must respond to the evolving needs of consumers with new services or risk negative feedback (or a loss of consumer interest).

Opposing Theories

Dixon (1989) was one of the world's leading researchers on marketing theory (Tadajewski, 2011). Dixon challenged marketing beliefs that did not reflect real-world scenarios and championed the idea that marketing theories should be less theoretical and more functional (Dixon & Wilkinson, 1989)). While most marketing theories involve producers marketing to consumers, Dixonian marketing theory takes into account the distributor between those two parties (Tamilia, 2011). In Dixonian marketing, the purpose of marketing is to facilitate economic exchange (Tamilia, 2011). This exchange can be financial or involve barter, reciprocity, or redistribution. Dixonian marketing also applies to other, nonprofit-based exchanges (Tamilia, 2011). Services marketing and other mutual exchanges also fit this definition. According to Dixon and Wilkinson (1989), marketing theory should be practical and focus on the actual transaction between marketer and consumer. Unlike marketing systems theory or complexity theory, the focus of Dixonian marketing is the practical application of marketing techniques rather than the abstract concept of networked connections or relationships (Tamilia, 2011).

According to resource-based theory, a company's ability to prosper in a marketplace comes from the uniqueness of their resources (Grant, 1991). Resources are any asset that a company uses to make a profit or reduce costs. A resource must be difficult for competitors to acquire or use to be advantageous in a marketplace (Grant, 1991). Therefore, the most valuable resources are rare, costly, or difficult to exploit. If all companies have access to a resource, that resource does not provide a competitive advantage. Resources can be physical, like a specific building material or a talented employee. They can also be intangible, like an emotional attachment to a brand or historical significance.

Researchers frequently apply resource-based theory to the field of marketing. Kozlenkova, Samaha, and Palmatier (2014) examined existing research on resource-based theory in different marketing applications. When applied to specific domains of marketing, like marketing strategy or international marketing, resource-based theory explains how different combinations of internal resources, which might appear unrelated, create a competitive advantage in a marketplace (Kozlenkova et al., 2014). Researchers who have applied resource-based theory to market-based resources have found that intangible assets like brand recognition provide greater value and advantage to companies than tangible assets like material goods (Kozlenkova et al., 2014).

The focus of Dixonian marketing is the actual exchange between marketer and consumer (Tamilia, 2011). The focus of resource-based theory is the exploitation of a limited resource to create an advantage within a market (Kozlenkova et al., 2014). These theories differ from marketing systems theory and complexity theory because they do not address networks, connections, and relationships.

Overview of North American Nonprofit Organizations

Nonprofit organizations grow out of many causes and support different needs. The common denominator among American nonprofits is that they are legally required to spend financial earnings on individuals other than those who govern the organization (board members) or on services for members (Topor & Boroiu, 2011). This restriction is what makes an organization nonprofit. The goal of the organization must be to provide services rather than generate wealth for stakeholders.

Many nonprofit organizations develop in response to a lack of government support for a sector or group that needs it (Topor & Boroiu, 2011). Members of a community may identify a need that government has not adequately addressed and create a nonprofit organization as a solution (Topor & Boroiu, 2011). Most nonprofit organizations do not share the challenges of size and bureaucracy that government agencies face, making them abler to implement different problem-solving strategies (Topor & Boroiu, 2011). Often government will support nonprofit organizations because they can provide services more efficiently and effectively than the government; however, most nonprofits cannot exist solely on government support (Clark, 2012), and thus their main challenge is a financial one. Nonprofit organizations need further funding to provide services to their members and patrons.

The three major nonprofit organization funding categories are organizations that receive most of their funding through donations and grants, organizations that receive funding from revenue-generating services, and organizations that receive funding via membership dues (Primoff, 2012). Most organizations fall into one of these categories or are hybrids of two or three (Primoff, 2012). By definition, nonprofit organizations have tax-exempt status, which means they must provide documentation to the government on income spending (Topor & Boroiu, 2011). Smaller nonprofit organizations are financially simple; as they increase in size, they become more complex. Government scrutinizes larger organizations for financial compliance (Primoff, 2012). However, government funding of nonprofit organizations often helps to increase philanthropic donations (Sokolowski, 2013), so organizations simply choose to endure the scrutiny. Donations from private organizations come with legal restrictions, especially when the donations are large (Primoff, 2012). After a certain growth point, nonprofit organizations must employ accountants to manage finances and mitigate financial risk (Primoff, 2012). Accountants can save nonprofit organizations from disaster by identifying potential risks to funding, such as unpredictable donation sources (Primoff, 2012). Accountants also help nonprofit organizations navigate the complex process of obtaining funding from government (Primoff, 2012).

Reliance on government support is a problem for nonprofit organizations (Clark, 2012). The tax-exempt status of nonprofit organizations also creates challenges in the form of heavy government oversight (Primoff, 2012). Fundraising from donors would help nonprofit organizations alleviate the need for government funding. However, nonprofit organizations lack the skills and resources to connect with donors (Bennett, 2014).

Government funding of nonprofit organizations changes based on economic fluctuations and political agendas. In the 1980s, following a recession, the Reagan administration cut funding to nonprofit organizations by 25% (Norris-Tirrell, 2014). In the 1990s, government funding of nonprofit organizations became popular again, particularly for organizations providing social services (Norris-Tirrell, 2014). Despite government support, legal restrictions and complicated administrative requirements have made it more difficult for organizations to acquire governmental funding (Norris-Tirrell, 2014; Primoff, 2012). Many nonprofit organizations that formerly relied on government funding must now diversify funding sources to include non-government donations (Acton, Mammano, & Fagan, 2012). Large organizations to be particularly financially cautious because a reduction in funding could result in a reduction in paid staff.

Nonprofit organizations compete for resources and staff with other nonprofit organizations and for-profit companies (Norris-Tirrell, 2014; Park & Kim, 2014). Staff needs for young nonprofit organizations tend to be small. However, nonprofits that start as small, grassroots movements often grow to become large institutions (Norris-Tirrell, 2014). The needs of a large, professional nonprofit are different from those of a smaller, less professional one (Norris-Tirrell, 2014). The workforce supporting the organization grows as well (Norris-Tirrell, 2014), as volunteers give way to professionals. These larger nonprofit organizations compete for skilled workers, driving up staffing costs (Norris-Tirrell, 2014). Some nonprofit organizations also compete for resources with for-profit companies. Nonprofit organizations can often provide the same services as for-profit businesses by using a fee-based membership model (Park & Kim, 2014). Nonprofit organizations reinvest what would be profit back into their services and organizational needs. Therefore, they can focus on improving their offerings (Park & Kim, 2014), which may force competing for-profit companies to react by improving quality and reducing costs, thereby creating healthy marketplace competition. Competing with for-profit companies, however, requires resources, which is particularly problematic for small organizations.

Smaller nonprofit organizations face the challenge of making financial ends meet and struggling to expand without the professional resources that larger organizations have developed. To remain viable at a time when nonprofits face funding problems, small nonprofits need to engage in strategic planning (Hu et al., 2014; Sokolowski, 2013). Strategic planning outlines how an organization will allocate resources to achieve long-term goals. Frequently, this involves a marketing plan, something small nonprofit organizations tend to overlook (Hu et al., 2014). Without a strategic plan, these organizations may potentially waste resources on things that do not contribute to their long-term success. However, developing and implementing a strategic plan requires resources as well. Nonprofit funding typically follows a crowding model in which the donation from one party leads to donations from additional parties (Sokolowski, 2013). A strategic plan can help map out this expansion of growth.

Another problem nonprofit organizations face is a focus on day-to-day operations as opposed to long-term plans (Hu et al., 2014). Small nonprofits have the benefit of agility due to their size, which helps them react quickly to short-term events (Norris-Tirrell, 2014). However, in a recent study of 20 small nonprofit organizations, leadership agreed that strategic planning is beneficial to long-term success (Hu et al., 2014). Leaders of those organizations believed that the early investment of resources in a strategic plan led to more growth and stability (Hu et al., 2014). Some nonprofits combine with other nonprofits to pool resources and implement sustainable long-term strategies for survival (Acton et al., 2012). Focusing on day-to-day operations keeps nonprofits functioning in the short term, but without strategic planning, nonprofits reduce the likelihood of long-term success (Hu et al., 2014).

Part of strategic planning is program development. As opposed to creating programs focused exclusively on filling an immediate need, marketers use program development to create programs with long-term strategies for success (Trzcinski & Sobeck, 2012). Program planning helps organizations produce programs that can change over time to respond to the needs of their membership base (Trzcinski & Sobeck, 2012). As with strategic planning, small nonprofit organizations find this particularly difficult because they do not have the resources to look beyond the immediate needs of the community (Hu et al., 2014). However, organizations that invest in program planning consistently report higher levels of growth than organizations that do not (Trzcinski & Sobeck, 2012). The best program plans account for uncertainty in the future, which allows the program to react to unplanned trends and events (Trzcinski & Sobeck, 2012).

Another factor contributing to nonprofit organizational growth is a willingness to change (Trzcinski & Sobeck, 2012). Organizations that are open to change in strategy and direction grow more than organizations that do not (Trzcinski & Sobeck, 2012). Comfort with change signifies an entrepreneurial perspective in an organization’s culture

(Nesbit & Lam, 2014). Entrepreneurs embrace new opportunities rather than resisting them. Organizations that empower lower-level employees to formulate or implement changes create a culture of change and adaptability (Nesbit & Lam, 2014). Acceptance of this philosophy at all employee levels is important to creating a change-friendly organization (Nesbit & Lam, 2014). Particularly with small nonprofits, this attitude creates growth and allows the organization to meet new membership needs quickly (Trzcinski & Sobeck, 2012).

Corporations frequently collaborate with nonprofit organizations to improve public perception of the former (Kang & Hustvedt, 2014; Myers, Kwon, & Forsythe, 2013). Cause-related marketing promotes a partnership between corporations and nonprofits to support a specific cause (Liston-Heyes & Liu, 2013), often in reaction to the fact that consumers expect that corporations will share some of their social/environmental concerns and donate money to related causes (Kang & Hustvedt, 2014; Myers et al., 2013). These partnerships can be an excellent source of revenue for nonprofits (Liston-Heyes & Liu, 2013). The Energizer Company and the Susan G. Komen Foundation aligned the Energizer motto "Keep Going" with the Susan G. Komen initiative to encourage cancer patients through treatment. The resulting *Keep Going Spirit* campaign was successful for both Energizer and the Susan G. Komen Foundation (Percival, 2014). Consumer perception of these alliances can be fickle, however (Myers et al., 2013). The relationship between a corporation and a nonprofit organization must appear logical to consumers. If the relationship does not appear to make sense, it can damage public perception of the nonprofit and the corporation (Liston-Heyes & Liu, 2013; Myers et al., 2013). However, the right combination of nonprofit and corporation can generate positive public reactions for both sides (Kang & Hustvedt, 2014).

Unfortunately, the relationship between companies and nonprofits is not always advantageous to the latter. Corporate partnerships can create unwanted conflicts for nonprofit organizations. Traditionally, corporate agendas conflict with those of nonprofit organization agendas (De Bakker, Den Hond, King, & Weber, 2013). When a nonprofit accepts resources from a corporation, it often relinquishes some control (Al-Tabbaa, Leach, & March, 2013; Lefroy & Tsarenko, 2013; Liston-Heyes & Liu, 2013), and nonprofit members thus sometimes distrust corporate partnerships (Sanzo, Álvarez, Rey, & García, 2015). Corporations may expect nonprofits to behave in a certain manner or support specific programs, sometimes treating nonprofits as accounting tools rather than partners (Al-Tabbaa, Leach, & March, 2013; Lefroy & Tsarenko, 2013); often, only the nonprofit organization views the relationship as a partnership (Lefroy & Tsarenko, 2013). However, when nonprofit organizations market their partnership with a corporation, it forces the corporation to reflect the views and mission of the nonprofit giving the nonprofit an advantage in the relationship (Lefroy & Tsarenko, 2013; Liston-Heyes & Liu, 2013). But this advantage does not necessarily resolve the conflict. Nonprofit organizations need resources for things like marketing, which companies can provide, but those resources often require compromise.

As government funding decreases, nonprofit organizations must seek new funding sources (Hu, Kapucu, & O'Byrne, 2014; Sokolowski, 2013). When the government does fund nonprofit organizations, it requires those nonprofits to follow complex rules that can be challenging to adhere to (Primoff, 2012). Some nonprofits choose to partner with corporations for funding, but that relationship is often unbalanced in favor of the corporation (De Bakker et al., 2013). Funding challenges can result in a lack of long-term strategy for nonprofit organizations because they must focus their resources on day-to-day operations (Hu et al., 2014). If nonprofit organizations could reach new audiences for fundraising, they could resolve their funding issue (Bennett, 2014). Unfortunately, most nonprofits lack the resources and skills to do so (Bennett, 2014).

Nonprofit Organization Marketing Challenges

Traditionally, product marketing – selling products to an audience – was the cornerstone of the marketing field (Lages, Simões, Fisk, & Kunz, 2013; Kauppinen-Räisänen & Grönroos, 2015). Service marketing – promoting services to an audience – was a less-significant form of marketing (Lages et al., 2012). This perspective is changing. However, most marketing professionals do not have as deep an understanding of service marketing as they do of product marketing (Kauppinen-Räisänen & Grönroos, 2015). Service marketing focuses on creating relationships with customers; nonprofit organizations provide services to members and communities, making them service organizations (Lages et al., 2012). Like corporate service marketing, nonprofit marketing is about relationships, which can be difficult to quantify (Čačija, 2014).

Measuring the success of nonprofit organizations is more challenging than that of for-profit organizations. Nonprofit success is not revenue-generated but measured according to the support a nonprofit provides its community (Čačija, 2014). However, to provide that support, nonprofit organizations need resources. One proven strategy for generating those resources is marketing (Čačija, 2014). Nonprofit organizations use marketing for different purposes and to different degrees. Some smaller nonprofit organizations rely on just a few key donors for all of their support. These organizations do not need to market to their audience (Management Team, 2013). Other organizations use marketing not only for revenue generation but also to increase volunteerism (Management Team, 2013).

Although nonprofit marketing is a specialized form of marketing, research on the field is limited (Wymer, 2013). Traditionally, the marketing community has considered nonprofit organizations different from for-profit companies regarding complexity and marketing needs (Wright, Chew, & Hines, 2012). Marketing to donors and volunteers is different from marketing to consumers, and nonprofit organizations must employ different marketing strategies to connect with these audiences (Wymer, 2013). However, nonprofit marketing is a nontraditional topic in the field of marketing research (Wymer, 2013). The result is a paucity of scholarly research to support the marketing needs of nonprofit organizations. Some researchers believe that the perception of nonprofit organizations requiring different marketing strategies from those of for-profits is outdated, arguing that the marketing needs of modern nonprofit organizations align more with for-profit companies now than in the past (Wright et al., 2012).

Paradoxically, nonprofit organizations face resource challenges when trying to implement marketing strategies (Management Team, 2013). Gaining internal support for marketing within nonprofit organizations is difficult (Chad, Kyriazis, & Motion, 2014). Staff frequently reject the idea of spending resources on marketing initiatives. Managers without marketing experience underestimate the complexity that marketing requires. These managers think they can implement marketing initiatives without employing experienced professionals (Chad et al., 2014). By their very nature, nonprofit organizations are often not as financially able to support marketing as for-profit businesses. Nonprofit organizations may wish to engage in online marketing but do not have, for instance, web designers on staff to create websites (Management Team, 2013). They may wish to engage in social media marketing but are not able to employ a social media strategist (Management Team, 2013). Often these nonprofits see the potential value of marketing but are simply unable to pursue it.

Volunteers are essential to nonprofit organizations because they help nonprofits achieve their goals while saving money for the organization. Volunteer donations also represent an important source of income for nonprofit organizations; statistically, organizations with higher volunteer rates have higher donation rates (Moura & Forster, 2014). Nonprofit organizations within the same field compete for the same pool of volunteers (Moura & Forster, 2014). Nonprofit organizations also use marketing to attract volunteers (Randle, Leitch, & Dolnicar, 2013).

Marketing to increase nonprofit volunteerism has two key focuses. The first is raising awareness, which communicates to the volunteer community an organization's ideals (Randle et al., 2013). Raising awareness creates brand perception among potential volunteers (Randle et al., 2013). Nonprofit brands that appear heroic and supportive of a community have more success raising volunteerism than those that do not (Randle et al., 2013). When raising awareness, marketers must understand how volunteers think of themselves regarding social causes (Amin & Mahasan, 2013). By aligning marketing messages with volunteer self-identification, marketers create stronger connections with their audience and increase volunteerism (Amin & Mahasan, 2013). The second focus, differentiation from competition, ties into the first focus. Volunteers tend to choose to support one nonprofit in a given field (Randle et al., 2013). By connecting with volunteers more effectively than the competition, nonprofit organizations increase the likelihood that volunteers will select them over others (Randle et al., 2013). Volunteers desire long-term relationships with nonprofit organizations, which means nonprofits must continue to offer volunteers opportunities for engagement (Amin & Mahasan, 2013; Rupp & Helmig, 2014).

Nonprofit organizations tend to have little success with transactional marketing, an approach that focuses on single transactions (Rupp & Helmig, 2014). Instead, effective nonprofit marketing creates long-term strategic marketing plans based on strong donor/organization relationships (Čačija, 2013). The goal of strategic marketing, also known as relationship marketing, is to generate regular donations over a long period (Čačija, 2013; Khodakarami, Petersen, & Venkatesan, 2015). Relationships are personal attachments between audience and organization. Relationship marketing leads to many donations and interactions over time, as opposed to single transactions (Rupp & Helmig, 2014).

The challenge of relationship marketing is that it requires a deep understanding of the audience (Khodakarami et al., 2015). One successful technique for understanding an audience is market segmentation (Rupp & Helmig, 2014). Nonprofit organizations' audiences vary widely, from volunteers to corporate donors. Often a single nonprofit will provide support to different communities (Rupp & Helmig, 2014). Marketers use market segmentation to split these groups up and create targeted marketing specific to each group (Rupp & Helmig, 2014). Nonprofit audiences segment according to sociodemographic, psychographic, and behavioral traits (Rupp & Helmig, 2014). Audiences differ in their responsiveness to marketing strategies depending on the market segment. For example, educated and wealthy people respond more strongly to organizations that have a socially conscious brand reputation (Schloderer, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2014). By customizing marketing messages and strategies for individual market segments, marketers improve their chances of success.

Relationship marketing can become a standardized process over time. The tools of relationship marketing, like segmentation and donor satisfaction measurements, can limit innovation in marketing (Boenigk, 2014). An organization gets accustomed to these tools and uses the same marketing approaches continuously. Without occasionally breaking from standard relationship marketing strategies, marketing becomes repetitive and can lose an audience's interest (Boenigk, 2014). Updating the marketing relationship maintains the interest of the audience. After establishing a relationship, nonprofit organizations must take care to keep the interest of the donor. At first, donors give money to support a single cause. However, they will lose interest in that cause over time (Khodakarami et al., 2015). A mix of marketing strategies may create more perceived value to the donor (Murshid, Halim, & Osman, 2014). Organizations must provide donors with new marketing approaches and new reasons to give to ensure continued support

(Khodakarami et al., 2015; Murshid et al., 2014). Continued marketing is more effective at generating donations than marketing for a one-time donation. (Čačija, 2013; Khodakarami et al., 2015). When organizations vary donation options and market regularly, donors contribute more money with less scrutiny of the individual initiatives (Khodakarami et al., 2015).

Disruptive innovation can be very effective for nonprofit organizations competing in a marketplace (Hansen-Turton, 2014). When organizations create new solutions for an audience, solutions that break from tradition, they create an opportunity to connect with people in a new way (Hansen-Turton, 2014). Being the disruptor means being unique until the rest of the marketplace catches up (Hansen-Turton, 2014). Disruptive marketing techniques break preconceived notions of marketing and challenge the audience's ideas about what their community represents (Cooper & Vlaskovits, 2013). The use of innovative technologies in marketing may create new opportunities for revenue growth (Cooper & Vlaskovits, 2013). Disruptive marketing can have a large impact using few resources (Cooper & Vlaskovits, 2013), making it ideal for underfunded nonprofit organizations. Consumers use the internet to spread disruptive marketing on behalf of organizations and companies. These powerful marketing materials spread quickly and can give insight into the minds of consumers (Gamble & Gilmore, 2013).

Some nonprofit organizations, like the New York-based One World United & Virtuous, operate on a small budget but seek to gain international members (McGovern, 2012). Instead of investing resources in more traditional, local marketing approaches, One World United & Virtuous chose to cast a wider net using digital media. They used social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter as well as mobile marketing to send their message (McGovern, 2012). Marketing via social media gives nonprofit organizations the ability to develop complex, two-channel relationships with an audience (Krueger & Haytko, 2015). This approach has proved more cost-effective than traditional marketing while also connecting with a large international audience (McGovern, 2012). Organizations using social media marketing realize increases in donor support and engagement (Krueger & Haytko, 2015). Marketers also use social media to connect with audiences through content marketing, which is the practice of generating content relevant to specific demographics (Forouzandeh, Soltanpanah, & Sheikhahmadi, 2014). By sharing relevant content with users, marketers generate trust with the audience. That trust increases product sales (Forouzandeh et al., 2014).

When a nonprofit organization faces abrupt financial cutbacks, like the loss of government funding, marketing can help keep the organization afloat (Bennett, 2014). Unfortunately, many nonprofits that face such a challenge are small and do not have the resources to employ marketing professionals (Chad et al., 2014). When this happens, the responsibility for marketing often falls on the CEO or some other senior manager (Bennett, 2014). In a study of 26 small nonprofits in this position, Bennett (2014) found that, without a marketing background, managers use personal judgment to create marketing plans. Bennett showed that this leads to problems with prioritizing audiences and determining prices for services. Many nonprofits often elect simply to break even. Managers reported that the experience of stepping up as marketing managers showed them how essential marketing is to their organizational success and how little they knew about it (Bennett, 2014). Digital marketing strategies compound this issue because they are often foreign to the uninitiated (Krueger & Haytko, 2015).

Due to the nature of the benefits they provide, nonprofit organizations rely on service marketing to generate funds (Lages et al., 2012). Most marketers have less experience with service marketing than with the more traditional product marketing (Kauppinen-Räisänen & Grönroos, 2015). Because marketing for nonprofits is specialized, less research exists on the subject than on marketing for corporations (Wymer, 2013). Nonprofit organizations do not have the resources to invest in expensive marketing strategies, so must seek cost-effective alternatives (Management Team, 2013). Ideally, marketers at nonprofit organizations would employ relationship marketing, which builds personal attachment with the audience through multiple, targeted messages over time (Management Team, 2013). Disruptive marketing techniques may also be an effective method for generating audience interest in nonprofits (Hansen-Turton, 2014). However, nonprofit marketers and volunteers lack the skills to implement these techniques (Chad, et al., 2014).

Healthcare Professional Marketing Challenges

Portegies and Waaga (2014) conducted a study of 51 healthcare professionals and their response to the marketing of medical devices. The researchers asked medical professionals to rate which concepts in marketing messages had the strongest impact on them. Some of these concepts were price, peer recommendation, patient outcomes, innovation, and education. Most medical professionals in the study said that patient outcome and education were very significant factors in their decision-making, while peer recommendation and price were not as important (Portegies & Waaga, 2014). A study of 443 medical professionals also showed that medical professionals place a high value on education (Siverbo, Eriksson, Raharjo, & Moonen, 2014), and the majority of participants reported improved attitudes towards work following training (Siverbo et al., 2014).

When marketing within the healthcare community, companies, and nonprofit organizations must also consider the ethical implications of their marketing strategy. The marketing of some products in the medical field, such as pharmaceuticals, poses ethical concerns (Al-Hamdi et al., 2012). It is unethical for pharmaceutical companies to offer financial incentives to medical professionals (Al-Hamdi, Hassali, & Ibrahim, 2012; Sismondo, 2013). However, pharmaceutical companies can offer free samples, gifts, and professional development opportunities as marketing incentives (Al-Hamdi et al., 2012). While physicians tend to claim they prescribe medicine with only patients' best interests in mind, their actions often show otherwise (Al-Hamdi et al., 2012). Not only do physicians prescribe medicine based on the influence of marketing practices, but they may also raise public awareness of the products by endorsing them (Sismondo, 2013). Pharmaceutical companies use incentive marketing to target key opinion leaders in the medical field (Sismondo, 2013). Pharmaceutical companies also use incentive marketing to influence medical students. Recent medical school graduates targeted by such incentive marketing prescribe the marketed pharmaceuticals more frequently than those who do not receive such incentives (King, Essick, Bearman, & Ross, 2013). Physicians respond to marketing strategies that fill their needs. If a physician has educational or professional development needs, it is likely that he or she will prescribe medication from a pharmaceutical company that helps him or her meet those needs (Al-Hamdi et al., 2012). While regulations prevent financial incentives in developed nations, in developing nations physicians often prescribe medication for financial gain (Al-Hamdi et al., 2012).

International Marketing Challenges

A truly global organization can provide the same set of goods or services to different countries with minimal changes to the product, keeping costs down and quality consistent (Ukey, 2014). Pricing, distribution, and marketing, however, are different for each region (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2013; Ukey, 2014). For example, most of the world sells Coca-Cola. The recipe and (typically) packaging remain the same from market to market. However, Coca-Cola does not cost the same in each country, and the manner in which Coca-Cola sells products (retailers, restaurants, vending machines, etccetera) is not universal (Ukey, 2014). The marketing approach in each country varies, sometimes dramatically (Ukey, 2014). Beyond the basic language, economic, and political barriers, each country has its cultural expectations (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2013; De Mooij, 2013). Native populations take these expectations for granted but become aware when they are not met (De Mooij, 2013). It is up to a marketing team to provide messaging that directly connects a product – such as Coca-Cola – with specific audiences. Marketers need to understand how consumers use their products in each country (Ukey, 2014). Depending on the country, people will want a given product for different reasons and marketing must speak to these unique needs (De Mooij, 2013; Ukey, 2014). People may consume products at different times or different locations. Marketers need to understand these patterns to reach the audience at the appropriate time and place (Ukey, 2014). This is often difficult because the international cultural landscape constantly changes (Ukey, 2014). Social media is often helpful in overcoming international cultural differences because marketers use it to interact with international communities in a direct way (Ray, 2014). The anonymity of social media also frees people in more oppressed cultures share and consume knowledge, making social media platforms ideal for marketers seeking to penetrate those audiences (Ray, 2014).

The international market challenges companies with frequent, dramatic shifts in the marketplace. Economically, countries develop and decline. These changes affect where a company chooses to do business and how it may connect with an audience (Ukey, 2014). Social media can be used to predict product sales and market demands (Kalampokis, Tambouris, & Tarabanis, 2013). Marketers use data from sites like Twitter to monitor public sentiment on products and react to changes in public opinion quickly (Tuarob & Tucker, 2013). Social media presents opportunities to identify market changes early and react to them quickly; however, to do this, international companies must have social media analysts who speak different languages or can translate social media content, which takes up valuable response time (Zhang & Vos, 2014). Social media can also bring disparate international audiences together. Consumers from different cultures can easily connect via social media, helping marketers to bring people from different cultures together around shared experiences with a product (Okazaki & Taylor, 2013).

In some areas, the challenge is not connecting with just one group, but with many (Demangeot, Broderick, & Craig, 2015). Instead of specializing marketing to target individual smaller nations, such as those in Europe, organizations may attempt marketing to the region as a whole (Demangeot et al., 2015). Marketing to a multinational region requires adherence to the laws and cultural norms of each nation (Ukey, 2014). The different politics of nations can create issues for marketers (Ukey, 2014). For example, certain governments block social media platforms like Facebook (Demangeot et al., 2015), cutting off potential marketing channels. Cultures in such areas tend to mix, creating a need for marketing cohesion that spans the cultures (Demangeot et al., 2015). Combining target audiences means that the task of crafting messages becomes more complex (Demangeot et al., 2015). This same challenge sometimes occurs within the multicultural areas of an individual nation. Large cities have cultural needs different from those of the overall nation; New York City, for example, is a melting pot of many cultures. Messages targeted to such a multicultural city may not resonate with the rest of the country (Demangeot et al., 2015).

International marketing requires marketers to change strategy based on the needs of individual regions (Ukey, 2014). Native populations expect marketing messages to be sensitive to their unique cultural preferences (De Mooij, 2013). Regional cultural and economic changes make it difficult for marketers to stay current (Ukey, 2014). Social media can help marketers stay connected to audience needs and react quickly to cultural change (Tuarob & Tucker, 2013), but this requires an investment in social media professionals (Zhang & Vos, 2014).

Overview of Digital Marketing

In 2012, 73% of Fortune 500 companies had official social media accounts (Okazaki & Taylor, 2013). The new, digital-driven economy changes the way in which consumers discover and purchase products (Constantinides, 2014). Previously small markets expanded through digital channels. Audiences expect tailored marketing experiences based on personal preference and consumption (Umrez, 2014). Formerly domestic products now have an international consumer base (Umrez, 2014). Digital marketing helps companies gather market information, develop customer relationships, and provide feedback to customers (Tiago & Verissimo, 2014). It also helps companies predict and react to market events (Kalampokis et al., 2013). Even nonprofits, which have been slower in adopting digital marketing (Krueger & Haytko, 2015), are getting involved in social media. Social media use among nonprofits rose 61% from 2012 to 2013 (Krueger & Haytko, 2015). One reason for this is that these technologies represent cost-effective alternatives to traditional marketing platforms.

Traditional mass-marketing like print requires a large audience to be effective, making it expensive and inefficient for smaller, more targeted audiences (Magee, 2013). Direct marketing targets a specific audience, making the message more likely to connect (Magee, 2013). While digital marketing can be traditional – for example, a static website – it can also be direct. Targeted email communications, social media campaigns, and mobile marketing are all forms of direct digital marketing (Stone & Woodcock, 2014). The data in digital platforms make digital marketing an inherently strong direct marketing tool (Stone & Woodcock, 2014). The direct marketing capabilities of digital platforms are powerful, but they are not the only strength of digital marketing; digital platforms change marketing from single-direction communication to a conversation between the company or organization and its audience (Mata & Quesada, 2014).

Early on, social media was a platform for sending information to users, much like traditional websites (Mata & Quesada, 2014). The Internet has since moved from a flat, one directional communication platform of companies sharing information to an interactive platform for user-driven content creation (Constantinides, 2014; Mata & Quesada, 2014). This shift is the move from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 (Mata & Quesada, 2014). As users become more comfortable with social media, marketers must change their tactics. Traditional marketing tactics that push content to a large audience are no longer effective (Constantinides, 2014). However, marketers who embrace the shift to Web 2.0 can use this change to their advantage. More advanced social media marketing strategies use two-way communication between users to create marketing buzz and cultivate a partnership between company and audience (Constantinides, 2014). By establishing social media relationships with consumers in the early phases of the decision journey, companies may increase the likelihood of purchase (Hudson & Thal, 2013).

Social media has three marketing strengths: it facilitates communication between companies and consumers; it helps consumers shape their public identity through the sharing of their brand decisions; and it provides a connection between consumers that allows them to share their experiences (Okazaki & Taylor, 2013). Social media can cross geographic and cultural borders (Ray, 2014). The connection between consumers and companies opens new avenues for international marketing (Okazaki & Taylor, 2013). Customers now expect a connection with almost any company via social media, putting pressure on companies to adopt social media strategies (Tiago & Verissimo, 2014).

Social media interaction can positively shape customer perception (Dijkmans, Kerkhof, & Beukeboom, 2015); however, social media marketing also poses unique challenges. Discussions grow rapidly in social media channels, and organizations maintaining social media profiles need to implement monitoring strategies to detect these discussions quickly (Constantinides, 2014). Protecting a brand via social media is difficult because users with negative opinions have an open forum for sharing those opinions. Companies must respond quickly and publicly to protect their image (Dijkmans et al., 2015; Zhang & Vos, 2014). Negative feedback can present opportunities, though: when companies publicly address complaints with solutions on social media, it can create a positive public reaction (Malthouse, Haenlein, Skiera, Wege, & Zhang, 2013). Another challenge with social media marketing is staying current with social media trends. Marketers must stay in tune with emerging social media platforms to meet their audience in those spaces (Zhang & Vos, 2014).

Digital marketing and social media provide companies with large amounts of data, giving marketers a different context from traditional market-trend data. Digital marketing data reveal consumers' opinions and behavior (Evangelos, Efthimios, & Konstantinos, 2013). Companies use data mining techniques to generate predictive analytics about future market trends (Evangelos et al., 2013). The statistical model of prediction, where analysts review existing social media to identify trends and calculate how those trends will continue, is the most successful (Schoen, Gayo-Avello, Takis Metaxas, Mustafaraj, Strohmaier, & Gloor, 2013). Other models of data-based predictive analytics exist but are not as tested and proven. Many companies use a service called

Klout to measure social media influence (Bacile, 2013). Marketers use Klout to analyze the online activity of a person or company and generate a score that reflects their level of influence in the social media world (Bacile, 2013).

The use of digital technology in marketing creates new marketing strategies, which require the support of information technology and information management. Businesses using digital technology in marketing must align their technology and marketing departments to better work towards the shared goal of connecting with consumers (Bharadwaj, El Sawy, Pavlou, & Venkatraman, 2013). Barbu (2013) identified eight techniques for applying digital technology to marketing, including using digital data for market research, handling big data, digitally monitoring user behavior, data privacy issues, and international digital marketing. Instead of beginning with general information and becoming more granular (a funnel model), users move around information for a while. Consumers research products from multiple angles before deciding on a particular item. As part of their research, consumers use the social media input of others to validate purchase choices (Hudson & Thal, 2013). Behaviorally, engaged customers tend to be emotionally engaged in a product, as illustrated by gamification techniques (Barbu, 2013; Harwood & Garry, 2015). Passive monitoring of digital activity shows user trends such as satisfaction or annoyance, determined by how much time customers view a website or their level of topical engagement on social media (Barbu, 2013). Internationally, developing nations on the cusp of adopting new technology are ideal places for pioneering new digital marketing efforts.

One area in which many countries are advancing is mobile technology. Mobile technology has become so widespread that it has created new markets and marketing techniques (Amirkhanpour, Vrontis, & Thrassou, 2014). Mobile marketing is the practice of marketing to an audience through their mobile devices. Consumers respond most favorably to mobile marketing that is useful to them in some way (Gao, Rohm, Sultan, & Pagani, 2013). Consumers also favor mobile marketing that is innovative or fosters personal attachment with a brand (Gao et al., 2013). People consume mobile messages anywhere, unlike messages consumed via computers and other digital platforms. Marketers tailor these messages based on location and behavior. Someone passing a store might receive a text prompting him or her to stop in for a special promotion. Some marketers use text messaging as part of a mobile marketing strategy. Unfortunately, consumers often find this practice invasive and react negatively. However, by asking permission to text promotional content and sending messages that are relevant and helpful to users, marketers can overcome this stigma (Watson, McCarthy, & Rowley, 2013). Mobile technology gives marketers a platform through which to stay in constant touch with an audience, making it a powerful, influential tool.

Technology accelerates the spread of new cultural trends (Ghani, 2014). Through technology, people interact, spread ideas, and form opinions (Levin, 2014). Digital technology connects people, forming social movements (Ghani, 2014). Technology also makes it easy for bodies other than corporations to influence culture through social media and websites (Ghani, 2014). Unlike the case with traditional media, when people consume content through digital technology, they do so from an individual perspective

(Levin, 2014). People have access to so many different ideas and perspectives that the content they choose to consume is more personal to them. Some companies combine customer relationship management platforms with social media to drive personalized, targeted content to users (Trainor, Andzulis, Rapp, & Agnihotri, 2014). By providing more personalized content, technology helps companies influence consumer perception, and therefore culture (Levin, 2014). With this powerful influence, technology has allowed Western culture to have a deep impact on the rest of the world (Ghani, 2014).

Digital technology has changed the way audiences interact with brands (Constantinides, 2014). People now expect targeted marketing messages that speak to their individual preferences (Umrez, 2014). Digital marketing allows marketers to monitor audience preferences and develop relationships with people in specific demographics (Tiago & Verissimo, 2014). Digital marketing platforms such as social media and mobile technology are cost-effective alternatives to traditional marketing platforms such as print or television (Magee, 2013). Social media generates user data that can be used to predict market trends (Evangelos et al., 2013). Because of its viral nature, social media can also influence and culture (Ghani, 2014). Mobile technology presents another opportunity for marketers to connect with people in a personal way (Amirkhanpour, Vrontis, & Thrassou, 2014). While these strategies are powerful ways to build relationships with audiences, they require skill to implement (Zhang & Vos, 2014).

Nonprofit Digital Marketing

A 2013 study of 188 nonprofit organizations revealed that over 93% used social media (Guo & Saxton). The most popular social media platform for nonprofit organizations was Facebook, followed by Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn (Guo & Saxton). Social media allows nonprofit organizations to engage users with messages, responses to questions, images, contests, and polls (Paek, Hove, Jung, & Cole, 2013). Social media also provides new marketing opportunities for nonprofit fundraising; people make more frequent, small donations through social media than through traditional channels (Saxton & Wang, 2013). Nonprofit marketing on social media platforms also increases activism and volunteerism (Paek et al., 2013). The more active an individual is on a specific social media platform, the more likely he or she will be to volunteer with a nonprofit organization (Paek et al., 2013). Each social media platform comes with its unique advantages and marketing applications.

Facebook is a social networking website through which users send each other messages and share information based on personal ties. The main idea of social networking sites like Facebook is that people using it remain casually connected (Paek et al., 2013). On Facebook, users express their appreciation for specific content by clicking *like* or sharing the content with others. In a 2014 study (Saxton & Waters) of 1000 Facebook posts by the 100 largest nonprofit organizations in North America, the average number of Facebook posts by a nonprofit organization in a 2-month period was 75.7. Of those 1000 posts, 48.8% were informational, 29% were promotional (fundraising), and 22.2% were community-building (Saxton & Waters, 2014). The number of likes was higher for community-building posts than for informational or promotional posts, but the number of shares was higher for informational posts than for community-building or promotional posts. Audiences responded least favorably overall to promotional or fundraising posts (Saxton & Waters, 2014). Facebook users also comment on posts. The most frequently commented upon nonprofit posts were those designed specifically to elicit responses from the audience (Cho, Schweickart, & Haase, 2014) which supports the idea that community-building posts are the most effective at creating engagement. To reach an audience on Facebook, an organization must speak with them, not at them. The audience perceives informational and promotional messaging as propaganda, but they perceive posts fostering a two-way dialogue as democratic (Auger, 2013; Krueger & Haytko, 2015).

Many nonprofits use microblogging to connect with their audience (Messner et al., 2013). Microblogs are online platforms on which users share written content and images, but with a character limit. The most popular of these platforms is Twitter, which limits users to 140 characters or fewer per post. Microblogging is a powerful alternative to traditional blogs because it encourages interaction (Guo & Saxton, 2013). When a nonprofit organization reaches out to a member of the community using Twitter, followers of that person perceive this exchange as a sign that the nonprofit is interested in participating in the community as a whole (Guo & Saxton, 2013). Other Twitter users may then follow the nonprofit organization, thus expanding the organization's digital reach (Guo & Saxton, 2013). Guidry (2013) showed how different types of microblog messages from nonprofit organizations generate different responses. Complex messages are more likely to be shared, but not as likely to generate conversation (Guidry, 2013). Posts directed at another individual or profile are most likely to generate conversation, but not as likely to be shared (Guidry, 2013). Posts with images are more likely to be shared and responded to than those without images (Guidry, 2013).

Online video sites like YouTube are another popular social media marketing tool among nonprofit organizations (Kapin & Ward, 2013). These sites aggregate videos, host video pages for individual users and organizations, and encourage comment feedback on videos. According to a prediction from Cisco (2016), 82% of all internet traffic will be video by 2020. Online video, specifically YouTube, is a powerful marketing tool for nonprofit organizations because it provides a platform for them to tell stories (Kapin & Ward, 2013). An effective YouTube marketing technique for nonprofit organizations is encouraging users to share videos that relate to the nonprofit cause (Kapin & Ward, 2013). This creates a sense of participation for the users, which results in more sharing and engagement (Kapin & Ward, 2013). Nonprofit organizations also use YouTube content as a means to increase activity on other social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter by linking from those platforms to YouTube Videos (Karan, 2013). Another area in which nonprofit organizations use YouTube videos is sponsorship (Auger, 2013). Nonprofit organizations are more likely to showcase the sponsorship of a famous figure on YouTube than on other social media platforms (Auger, 2013).

Despite the popularity of LinkedIn, a professional-focused social media platform, nonprofit organizations have been slow to adopt it. According to Guo and Saxton (2013), only 42% of nonprofit organizations use "other" social media platforms like LinkedIn or Google+. However, Calkins (2013) argues that LinkedIn is an ideal platform for nonprofit advocacy groups because of its robust networking tools. Organizations using

LinkedIn can easily create online groups of people with similar social interests and connect those groups with influencers in the relevant nonprofit field (Calkins, 2013). LinkedIn offers features for nonprofits like a donation button, making it easy for people to contribute to nonprofits directly from their videos.

Nonprofit organizations commonly use email marketing to communicate with their audience (Krueger & Haytko, 2015). Many online email platforms like MailChimp are free, and therefore appealing to nonprofits (Wilson, 2015); however, these applications tend to change frequently, and nonprofit staff members, particularly volunteers, can have difficulty keeping up with them (Wilson, 2015). Online engagement can predict the level to which individuals will be receptive to nonprofit email marketing (Garland, Yang, & Kang, 2016). People who are active in social media and other online applications respond more favorably to email marketing than print marketing, while the opposite is true for people who are less active online (Garland et al., 2016).

Nonprofit organizations use social media platforms like Facebook (Guo & Saxton), Twitter (Messner et al., 2013), Youtube (Kapin & Ward, 2013), and email (Krueger & Haytko, 2015) for digital marketing. The most used social media platform for nonprofit organizations is Facebook, on which they primarily share informational content (Saxton & Waters, 2014). Nonprofit organizations use microblogging sites like Twitter to indicate that they are interested in participating in a community. Video platforms like Twitter allow nonprofits to share stories with their audience (Kapin & Ward, 2013). Email platforms give nonprofits measurements regarding user engagement (Garland et al., 2016). Although over 93% of nonprofits use social media (Guo & Saxton), many of them lack the resources to do so effectively (Bennett, 2014; Management Team, 2013).

Transition

Nonprofits need cost-effective strategies to generate revenue. Digital marketing provides nonprofits with the ability to connect with their intended audience and generate revenue through personalized interaction. However, nonprofit organization professionals often lack strategies to implement digital marketing effectively. The purpose of this study was to explore successfully implemented international digital marketing strategies for nonprofit healthcare organizations. In Section 1, I introduce the problem, explain the background, and explore the existing literature on this topic. In Section 2, I explain how I conducted this case-based study, who the participants were, and how my methods adhered to ethical standards. In Section 3, I present the interviews I conducted, share the results, draw conclusions, explain how these results apply to current nonprofit organizations, and make recommendations for future research.

Section 2: The Project

The purpose of this qualitative multicase study was to determine the digital fundraising strategies that nonprofit healthcare marketing leaders use in international markets. Nonprofit organizations often lack the funding to implement traditional marketing strategies for fundraising; however, digital marketing strategies offer a cost-effective alternative (Bennett, 2014). Unfortunately, many nonprofit organizations lack the skills to implement a digital marketing campaign effectively (Bennett, 2014; Management Team, 2013). In the previous section, I reviewed the background of this problem, my research question, and the literature surrounding issues related to the problem. This section includes (a) the purpose statement, (b) the role of the researcher, (c) the participants, (d) the research method and the design, (e) population and sampling, (f) ethical research, (g) the data collection instruments, (h) the data collection technique, (i) the data organization techniques, (j) the data analysis techniques, and (k) the reliability and validity of the data.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multicase study was to determine the digital fundraising strategies that nonprofit healthcare marketing leaders use for international donors. The population consisted of marketing leaders from five nonprofit healthcare organizations in North America that successfully employed international digital fundraising strategies. The findings from this study may effect social change by helping nonprofit healthcare organizations generate funding from international donors. By increasing donations, North American nonprofit healthcare organizations will have more resources to fund education, research, and science in the medical field.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in qualitative research is to observe and collect data (Merriam, 2015; Yin, 2014). In doing so, the researcher becomes an instrument of the study (Merriam, 2015; Yin, 2014). This research was a multicase study of the international digital fundraising strategies successfully employed by five medical nonprofit organizations. I interviewed marketing leaders from each of these organizations. I utilized an interview protocol (see Appendix C), which includes introductory questions, interview questions, and conclusion dialog. I recorded the interviews using an iPhone 7s and transcribed them through the Rev transcription service. Once all interviews were complete, I analyzed them and documented the key themes for each answer given. I then compared the interviews to find common themes among participants. I reported which strategies proved effective for each of the organizations and which strategies the organizations shared. In compliance with the Belmont Report (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1979), I informed all participants about the purpose of the work and their rights as participants in a written consent form. I also adhered to the Belmont Report standards for ethical treatment of research subjects

Working in the nonprofit field provided me with some advantages as a researcher on this subject. I understood the context of the subjects addressed in interviews, and interview subjects are more apt to be comfortable and truthful with an insider (Unluer, 2012). That same familiarity had the potential to damage objectivity if I was too close to the research subject. However, my role in the nonprofit world is web development; I am not responsible for marketing strategy, which was the subject of this research. I mitigated bias by using participants from organizations other than my own and with which I had no relationship. I did not make any comparisons between these organizations and my own, nor did I discuss the activities of my organization with the interview participants. I also employed bracketing to identify areas related to the research with which I had opinions and preconceived notions. Bracketing helps a researcher determine aspects of their research that might contain bias by providing the researcher with an outlet to explore their thoughts and feelings, separate from the research itself (Tufford & Newman, 2012). I utilized the bracketing practice of memoing, in which the researcher writes reflective memos throughout the data collection process. By reviewing these memos, I identified areas in which I had a bias on the research topic, thereby helping myself to separate those biases from the research.

Participants

In an interview setting, participants provide detailed responses to open-ended questions, so the interviewer has an insightful account of their experience (Anyan, 2013; Merriam, 2015, Yin 2014). Therefore, interview participants must have experience relevant to the research question (Anderson et al., 2014). The participants were nonprofit healthcare organization marketing leaders who have successfully implemented international digital fundraising strategies. Participants were at the marketing-manager level or above to ensure that they were strategic marketing decision-makers within their organizations and able to answer the interview questions. My work in the medical nonprofit field connects me to staff in other nonprofit medical organizations. Through my connections with other nonprofit medical organizations, I arranged interviews with the marketing leaders of those organizations. After receiving consent for interviews, I arranged interview places and times convenient to the participants. I established a working relationship with the participants by sending them an invitation email (see Appendix A) that explained the purpose of the research, the participant involvement, and the interview structure. During the interview, asking conversational introductory questions helps cultivate the relationship between interviewer and interviewee (Merriam, 2015). The interview protocol contained these types of questions. I encouraged participants to ask questions in advance via email if they had any concerns.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

The study was a qualitative exploration of organizations and their digital international marketing strategies. In a qualitative study, the researcher can listen to the experiences of others and identify underlying concepts (Anyan, 2013). Through direct interaction with participants, researchers gain insight into their experiences (Anderson et al., 2014). Researchers use the qualitative method to provide a deeper understanding of behavioral choices and motivations than with quantitative methods (Anyan, 2013). Researchers frequently use qualitative studies to answer questions regarding shared processes (Garcia & Gluesing, 2013).

Quantitative research methods would not work on this research topic. Quantitative methods are good tools for scientifically testing hypotheses (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). However, qualitative methods are more effective than quantitative methods for discovering new hypotheses and knowledge (Anyan, 2013; McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). The purpose of this study was to identify effective digital marketing strategies, not to prove the effectiveness of already documented strategies, making qualitative research is a better choice than quantitative research. Qualitative methods allow for the exploration of personal experiences in a manner that quantitative methods cannot match (Anyan, 2013).

The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods in mixed method research creates unique issues. A challenge when using mixed method research is establishing real and meaningful connections across different research types (Venkatesh et al., 2013). One difference between qualitative research and quantitative research is the type of questions asked in interviews and questionnaires. Questions in qualitative research are usually open-ended, while questions in quantitative research are closed-ended (Zohrabi, 2013). When conducting mixed method research, researchers often find it difficult to establish meaningful connections between the results of open-ended and closed-ended questions (Venkatesh et al., 2013). The nature of this research necessitated open-ended questions to uncover successful digital marketing strategies, which made qualitative research a better option than quantitative. Mixed method research contains separate qualitative and quantitative components. Researchers must decide if their study is primarily one or the other. The primary method is the foundation of the research, and the secondary method supports the primary (Morse & Cheek, 2014). I identified strategies employed by marketing leaders by reporting their experiences. A quantitative component of mixed-method research would exceed the intended scope of the study.

In qualitative methodology, the researcher is the data collection instrument of the study (Merriam, 2015; Yin, 2014). Qualitative research has an exploratory aspect that gives researchers flexibility in the areas of the topic they investigate and the way in which they conduct research (Graebner, Martin, & Roundy, 2012). By using multiple subjects or drawing from multiple studies, a researcher identifies common themes. This approach prevents the perspective of the researcher from skewing results towards a single subject (Ring et al., 2011). Add summary and synthesis to fully conclude the section and connect back to your study.

Researchers using qualitative research interact directly with participants to gain insights (Anderson et al., 2014). Qualitative research is also often used to identify common themes in shared experiences (Garcia & Gluesing, 2013). Quantitative research is not as open-ended in questioning (Venkatesh et al., 2013) or as exploratory (Graebner et al., 2012) as qualitative research. Mixed method research contains both qualitative and quantitative components (Morse & Cheek, 2014). Qualitative research was best for this study because the goal was to explore the experiences of marketing professionals who successfully employed digital fundraising techniques for nonprofit organizations to identify common themes.

Research Design

I chose the interpretive research paradigm for this study. With this approach, research comes from interactions with and observations of subjects based on their environments and experiences (Oliver, 2004). An alternative would be the positivist research paradigm; however, the positivist paradigm uses only measurable data and observable facts (Oliver, 2004), which makes it unsuitable for this research topic. Positivist research leaves no room for exploration of concepts and causes. I conducted a multicase study on five medical organizations that have achieved success in international digital marketing. In this multicase study, I focused on the digital marketing used by each organization. Because case studies allow deep exploration into the experiences of a few important subjects (Ardhendu, 2014).), they were a better choice for this study than other research designs. Following the interviews, I analyzed the data to find common themes. Unlike other research designs, the case study is an effective design for scenarios in which the researcher has no control over events but must analyze details behind real-life situations (Ardhendu, 2014). I chose the multicase study over grounded theory, phenomenology, and ethnography research designs. Grounded theory is popular in qualitative research for its rigorous data collection and analysis procedures (Gringeri et al., 2013). However, this study required more flexibility in interview questioning. In phenomenology, researchers identify the roots of a single experience shared by multiple parties (Tomkin & Eatough, 2013). Using a phenomenological approach, a researcher defines why a shared experience occurs, but cannot explain the different strategies each participant employs for success. Researchers use ethnography to focus on a specific group of people (Wall, 2015). It could make sense to use ethnography because this study exclusively involved marketing managers; however, ethnography is about the collective experiences of a group and how those experiences shape the group as a demographic

(Wall, 2015). This study was not about marketing managers as a group, but rather about the digital fundraising strategies they employ.

Data saturation is when there is enough information in a study for it to be valid and replicable (Fusch & Ness, 2015). In this study, I conducted five interviews. According to Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006), five interviews should provide the majority of common themes among participants. When using interviews, one way to achieve data saturation is to ask all the participants the same questions (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I ensured that all participants were asked the same questions by using an interview protocol. By documenting common themes among interview participants, a researcher demonstrates data saturation (Ando, Cousins, & Young, 2014). I identified themes from each interview by reviewing the transcript. I then compared themes from each organization in a chart with the themes of each organization in separate boxes.

Population and Sampling

I used the snowball sampling method, which is a form of purposeful sampling. Qualitative researchers employ purposeful sampling to choose subjects that possess an understanding of the research problem and central ideas (Suri, 2011). Robinson (2014) stated that to accurately identify common themes, participants must be selected using the same sampling method. Therefore, I did not use any other sampling methods. Researchers use the snowball approach because people within a field know which individuals are rich in experience and knowledge on a subject related to that field (Suri, 2011). Data saturation is the point at which the full range themes are identified across all the participants (Toles & Barroso, 2014). Interviews with people experienced in a subject are one method for achieving data saturation. (Fusch & Ness, 2015). In this case, research subjects needed experience using digital marketing techniques to expand nonprofit healthcare organizations internationally. Although many companies employ digital media strategists, the responsibility for digital marketing in nonprofit organizations often falls on marketing leaders (Krueger & Haytko, 2015). Therefore, the subjects of this study were nonprofit healthcare organization marketing leaders who successfully implemented international digital fundraising strategies. I included marketing managers from five medical nonprofit organizations. According to Guest et al. (2006), five interviews should be enough to identify the major common themes. Collecting enough data to identify these common themes supports data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Suri (2011) recommended maximum variation sampling, in which the researcher chooses subjects that vary within set criteria to achieve a broad perspective. I varied the organizations in this study based on size, using large and small organizations. Interviews took place at the offices of the participants or via phone for their convenience.

Ethical Research

Following The Belmont Report guidance, I selected participants fairly, and they joined the study willingly to participate, as recommended by Mikesell, Bromley, and Khodyakov (2013). I selected participants based solely on their role in organizations as marketing leaders and their success in using digital marketing to expand membership internationally. By following the informed consent process, the researcher protects the rights of the participants (Kumar, 2013). Participants verified that they understood the study and their rights as participants by signing the informed consent form. In this informed consent form, I explained the nature of the research, the absence of any incentives, participant confidentiality, how participants may withdraw from the research, and how long I will store data. I communicated in my initial request that their participation was voluntary and they could withdraw at any time, for any reason, by phoning or emailing me. I also communicated there were no incentives for participation in the study, nor was there any penalty for withdrawing. If a participant wished to withdraw from the study, they could do so at any time by phoning or emailing me, as explained to them in the informed consent form. I would immediately destroy data collected from participants who withdrew and send an email confirmation. To maintain confidentiality, I did not use the names of the organizations and participants in my recorded research; instead, I referred to organizations as Organization 1, Organization 2, etcetera. I referred to participants as Organization 1 Participant, Organization 2 Participant, etcetera. I will keep study data for 5 years on a USB drive in a locked file cabinet at my home. After 5 years, I will destroy the data. If participants agreed to participate in the study, I requested via email that they print and sign the informed consent form. I collected the signed informed consent form at the beginning of the interview or, in the case of a phone interview, had the participant mail me the signed informed consent form before conducting the interview.

Data Collection Instruments

There are three phases of qualitative data analysis: preparation, organization, and reporting (Elo et al., 2014). The primary data collection method for this research was interviewing. Interviewing is advantageous in this type of research because the goal of interviewing is to explore and understand experiences (Graebner et al., 2012; Seidman, 2013). In this research, I sought to understand the successful experiences marketing leaders had when using digital marketing strategies. In qualitative research interviews, the interviewer is the primary data collection instrument (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). I used semistructured interviews to collect data. Although audio recording may increase the length of the interview, it also increases the quality of data (McGonagle, Brown, & Schoeni, 2015). It is easier to understand the subjects' thoughts and experiences from interview data than when quantitative data is used (Graebner et al., 2012). Interviewees also tend to provide more detail in their responses in audio recordings (McGonagle et al., 2015). In this study, I used an iPhone as an audio recording device. One disadvantage to using audio recordings for interviews is that some nonverbal information (hand gestures, body language, eye contact, etcetera) is not captured (Neal, Neal, VanDyke, & Kornbluh, 2015). Combining audio recording and notation provides the most detailed possible data and helps prevent losing that nonverbal information (Neal et al., 2015). While recording the interviews, I wrote notes about the responses using an interview protocol – a document with the interview questions in a prescribed order and spaces for answers. The interview protocol functions as a redundancy in case the audio fails, and allows the interviewer to take notes.

Member checking is the process of verifying with the participant that the interview data collected is accurate (Morse, 2015). To ensure the validity of the data, I conducted member checking by summarizing to participants my understanding of their responses during the interview process. Participants confirmed that my understanding was correct or clarified their statements during the interview. I also conducted transcript reviews by sharing transcripts of the interviews with participants via email. I asked the participants if they wished to revise their responses. Their revisions were submitted back to me via email.

An interviewer must remain open and listen carefully to collect the best data (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). I followed this advice by giving the subjects time to talk and prompting them for more detail. Interviewers must also remain aware of their biases about the subject matter based on existing knowledge (Elo et al., 2014; Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). I kept the interviews on track and avoided tangents based on my personal biases by following questions in the interview protocol. A good interview protocol begins with easily answerable questions to establish trust and builds in depth as it progresses (Elo et al., 2014). The interview protocol for this study followed that model with simple introductory questions before the research questions begin. To mitigate bias during and after the interviews, I employed the bracketing technique of memoing. In memoing, the researcher writes memos about their thoughts and feelings regarding the research topic (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Through these memos, the researcher develops a clearer picture of areas related to the research topic with which they may have a bias, thereby helping them to separate their bias from the research (Tufford & Newman, 2012). I did not project my bias on the participants during the interview or in my analysis of the data.

The secondary data collection method for this research was document collection. Document collection supports the interview data and helps validate the research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013). I collected documents that illustrated the digital marketing techniques of each organization. These documents included annual reports and print versions of digital campaigns. The purpose of collecting documents is to provide detail on the researched experience, not to validate the research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I requested documents that provided evidence of each organization's digital marketing strategy and impartially illustrated the outcomes.

Data Collection Technique

The location of an interview affects the quality of the results (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Interviews should take place in a location in which the interviewee feels comfortable (Doody & Noonan, 2013). I conducted interviews at a location of the participant's choosing or by phone. I recorded the interview using the voice memo feature on an iPhone 6s. I transcribed the recordings using the Rev transcription application. To prevent any unforeseen technical issues, I recorded a test interview at a desk in my home and transcribed it using Rev. Unlike written documentation, audio-recording an interview has the advantage of allowing the interviewer to review the interview later (Al-Yateem, 2012). Interview questions should be expansive and open-ended to encourage deep responses and prevent the question from steering the answers (Elo et al., 2014). The questions in the interview protocol met this requirement. Explaining the purpose and background of the study creates trust between the interviewer and the interviewee (Al-Yateem, 2012). Interviewees received the informed consent form, which explained the purpose and background of the research, in advance of the interview. Interviewees also received the interview protocol in advance of the interview to familiarize themselves with the questions. I shared my findings with participants so that they could verify for accuracy. After each interview, I used document collection to gather additional information from each participant. These documents, such as reports and print versions of digital campaigns, further illustrated the digital marketing strategies and results for each organization. To ensure the validity of interview data, it should be member-checked, which means to verify the data with the interview participants (Morse, 2015). Once the interviews were complete, I member-checked my data with the participants to get their approval. I did so by emailing each participant with their transcript and asking them to verify the data. Their revisions were submitted back to me via email

Data Organization Technique

The transcript of the interviews and notes from the interview protocol were the initial data. To organize the data for analysis, I transferred the data to a two-column table with the transcript and notes on the left and a column for themes on the right. I identified the themes and documented them in the right column next to each question. Combining the audio transcript and notes produce the most accurate picture from which to identify themes (Neal et al., 2015). Some researchers share the transcription with interviewees after identifying themes (Elo et al., 2014). However, interviewees often do not realize the core themes behind their experiences, and sharing the theme data can taint the results (Elo et al., 2014). To analyze the themes, I organized them into a five-cell MS Word table and assigned each organization a cell, a data organization format for cross-case analysis as recommended by Cruzes, Dybå, Runeson, and Höst (2015). I will keep study data for five years on a USB drive in a locked file cabinet at my home. After five years, I will destroy the study data.

Data Analysis

Before interviewing each subject, I reviewed the annual reports and related marketing pieces from the past five years for each organization. These documents show when and how organizations gain funding. I compared data in the annual reports and marketing plans against data collected from the interviews to see if the document data aligned with experiences shared by the interview participants. Reviewing this written data was a form of methodological triangulation, which supplemented the interview data and provided insight for questioning (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2016). To analyze the data, I annotated the interview transcripts using NVivo software for coding, which identified key terms and ideas for each response. The coding of linked audio file and transcript offers the greatest detail because it captures both verbal information, through the audio recording and written transcript, and nonverbal information, through notes about the interviewee written in the transcript (Neal et al., 2015). After identifying the key terms and ideas, I laid them out in an MS Word table with a field for each organization to compare them and identify common themes. This form of data analysis, called cross-case analysis, compares the themes from multiple subjects to determine commonalities and differences (Cruzes et al., 2015). I based the results of the study on a comparison of the common themes. I compared the themes against existing literature on digital marketing and nonprofit organizations, including research published after the approval of the proposal.

Reliability and Validity

The trustworthiness of qualitative research is a measure of the reliability and validity of the data. Standards for this measurement include the dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability of the study results (Elo et al., 2014; Houghton et al., 2013). I followed the recommendations of existing research from Cope (2014) and Houghton, Casey, Shaw, and Murphy (2013) on study reliability and validity.

Houghton, Casey, Shaw, and Murphy (2013) recommend member checking to ensure data dependability. I employed member checking during the interviews by describing my understanding of their answers for clarification. I also shared the transcripts of each interview with the participant to ensure their responses were accurate. Data summarized through interviews filters through the perceptions of the researcher. Therefore, the researcher must verify their understanding of the participant responses to ensure data saturation and accurate identification of themes. (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I achieved data saturation when no new information comes from the interviews and document review. Audio recording increases the accuracy and dependability of interview data (McGonagle et al., 2015; Neal et al., 2015). Additionally, by taking notes to supplement the audio recording, I documented the interview in greater detail, and therefore increased the dependability of the data (Neal et al., 2015).

Methodological triangulation is the process of comparing data from multiple sources to ensure credibility (Morse, 2015). The credibility of research increases when data from multiple methods support the same conclusion, (Houghton et al., 2013; Hussein, 2016; Taylor et al., 2016). I reviewed annual reports from each organization to compare them against the interview data results. I reviewed international engagement numbers in the annual reports and international digital marketing efforts in the interviews. I also created an audit trail of my notes and assumptions as I progressed through the research to give my process transparency and create credibility, as recommended by Cope (2014).

By member checking my results, I helped to verify data saturation. Because data summarized through interviews filters through the perceptions of the researcher, the researcher must verify their understanding of the participant responses to ensure accuracy and data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I shared my findings with each participant after completion of the research to confirm that the findings are accurate and valid. A common mistake in research with multiple subjects is emphasizing themes reported by a small number of subjects but frequently appearing in the data (Houghton et al., 2013). I compared the frequency of themes against the number of interviewees reporting those themes as recommended by Houghton et al. (2013). Another method for establishing confirmability is using quotes from interview participants to illustrate specific themes (Cope, 2014). I used rich text interview quotes on key themes to show how I identified them as significant. Sharing the audit trail with peers for review is a good research practice for confirmability (Cope, 2014).

By making research transferable, the researcher presents their research in a manner that the audience can apply to other contexts (Noble, 2015). For this to happen, the audience must have a deep understanding of the data, research subjects, and conclusions (Cope, 2014; Houghton et al., 2013). Following an interview protocol helps create transferability by ensuring that the same questions are asked of each participant, therefore making it easier for the audience to understand the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). My interview questions were open-ended and designed to encourage detailed responses, which will help the audience better understand the research subjects.

Transition

This research is a qualitative multicase study about international digital fundraising strategies for nonprofit healthcare organizations. In this section, I explain my role in the research, information on the participants, the research design, and research method. I also explain how I collected, analyzed, and organized data, as well as my plan for ensuring the reliability and validity of the data. Through semistructured interviews with five marketing leaders, I gathered data on the digital marketing strategies used by nonprofit medical organizations. By using a multicase design and the snowball sampling method, I collected live interview data on an audio recording device and also by taking notes during the interviews. I kept the interviews on track and avoided tangents based on my personal biases by following questions in an interview protocol. By transcribing the interviews and notes into a two-column Word document, I kept the data organized. To analyze the data, I identified themes in the transcripts and notes. I employed methodological triangulation by comparing the interview data against a document review of annual reports and other documents relating to digital fundraising strategies for each organization from the last five years. In the next section, I share my findings, implications of the results, and potential applications of the results as well as make recommendations for future research.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

The purpose of this qualitative multicase study was to determine the digital fundraising strategies that nonprofit healthcare marketing leaders use for international donors. The data came from interviews with marketing leaders from five nonprofit healthcare organizations with successful experience in international digital fundraising. Data also came from the review of annual reports from each organization. The most common recurring themes from the interviews were about culture, partnership, language, and targeted messaging. The findings of this research are that nonprofit healthcare organizations should partner with local organizations, research the culture of their audience, translate messages into the local language, appeal to the emotions of the audience, craft messaging relevant to the specific audience, and build trust with the audience over time when using digital fundraising techniques in an international market.

Presentation of Findings

The overarching research question was: Which digital fundraising strategies have nonprofit healthcare marketing leaders used to generate funding from international donors? Several key themes emerged. One was the importance of understanding the culture to which an organization is appealing. By understanding culture, organizations produce marketing that feels more genuine. Another theme was translating and crafting messages specifically for the local audience. The participants agreed that sending messages in the local language and customizing message content for each region produces a more favorable audience response. Use of email was a consistent theme among all participants. The participants found email to be the most effective method of digital marketing. Finally, a key theme was partnering with local organizations. By partnering with local organizations, the participating organizations had an easier time connecting with local audiences. Annual reports showed that income from fundraising increased for all five organizations over the past five years.

Theme 1: Culture

Most of the participants in this study agreed that understanding culture is important for marketing success. By taking the time to research and understand international cultures, the participants made their international campaigns more effective. This confirms the existing knowledge that cultural insight improves marketing results in international markets. Modern audiences expect more than direct, informational messaging. They expect organizations to their appeal to their emotions (Adab & Valdés, 2016), which is the practice of relationship marketing. Participant 1 said,

> We try very hard to adequately address the audience that we're speaking to at any given moment... We spend a lot of time thinking about and working on how we communicate to make sure that they feel that their needs are being addressed... regardless of where they come from.

To communicate emotionally with an audience, a marketer must understand the culture of that audience (Adab & Valdés, 2016). Culture-specific marketing demonstrates to an audience that the organization is speaking directly to them (Ukey, 2014).

Showing insight into the culture of an international market builds trust with the audience (Samaha, Beck, & Palmatier, 2014). For example, Participant 2 said that “in many countries, like Latin America, an introduction by a peer or by somebody either via email or via telephone is very important." Participant 2 used their knowledge of Latin American culture to ensure that their initial message was shared through a culturally appropriate channel and that the message was culturally respectful. Trust improves communication between the organization and the audience and makes the audience more receptive to marketing messages (Graca, Barry, & Doney, 2015). When an audience perceives that the cultural message is incorrect, they lose trust in the source, which damages the credibility of the organization (De Mooij, 2015).

When consumers perceive a message to be written in a culturally authentic way, they respond more favorably to it (Cavanaugh & Shankar, 2014). To help ensure that cultural-specific messages were genuine, some participants employed locals from other countries or partnered with local organizations. Participant 2 said,

> Local presence helps the campaign. Native speakers are better in interactions with their own countries because they have both the language skills and cultural understanding to communicate most effectively. Listening to people that are from the areas where you're trying to market or target is very important.

This strategy of partnering with local people and organizations was shared by two other participants in the study. By doing so, they were better able to create cultural specific marketing messages that resonated with their international audiences.

In marketing systems theory, the conceptual framework for this research, consumers align according to social grouping, culture being a significant factor (Shaw, 2014). The experiences of the participants regarding the importance of cultural understanding align with this marketing system theory concept. Each market has its own unique culture and audiences expect marketing messages to reflect an understanding of that culture (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2013; De Mooij, 2013). By understanding the culture of a group within a system, sellers can better connect with the needs of the group (Layton, 2011).

Theme 2: Language

The experiences of the participants confirm the existing knowledge that language in international marketing should be translated and culturally informed or, at the very least, clear and concise. Translating marketing materials into the native language of the audience is another important international marketing strategy (Blakeman, 2018). Four of the five participants addressed the importance of translating messages. Participant 4 said, “The perception that saying something in English will be empowering for them to contribute is not there anymore. It has evolved.” Participant 2 said

> It's one thing to say the right thing and to present yourself as understanding their perspective in English, and it's a completely different thing to open up an email and have it be your native language, and then it's obvious. Of course, you get it, you know? You speak my language, literally.

By translating messages, marketers increase consumer interest (Blakeman, 2018). Translating marketing messages also helps to build trust for the organization. According to Participant 5, “People see information in their native language, they may be more receptive of opening it and reading it.” Audiences respond more favorably to marketing in their native language than marketing in a foreign language (Blakeman, 2018).

Translation alone is not enough to write marketing messages that connect with international audiences. Considering the meaning of words in other countries is also important. In a study of advertising students at Kazan Federal University, Gorelova (2014) showed that an understanding of culture helped marketers write more effective translations of marketing copy. Even though a message is translated, the recipient may mistake the intended meaning (Blakeman, 2018). One participant in this study used the word authoritative as an example. A medical journal produced by an organization may be an authoritative source. However, the word authoritative takes on negative connotations in a country under an authoritarian regime.

Finally, when it is not possible to translate into the native language, it is best to use clear, simple English terms (Feinberg, 2015). Also, using images to convey ideas is a good alternative to words when possible (Bazzo et al.). Most participants agreed that translation is preferable. However, they also agreed that when translation is not possible keeping the language simple is important. Two of the participants felt that images help communicate ideas and build a connection with the audience more effectively than words when translation is not an option.

> Instead of kind of sending out a card with 'Thank you for your donation' or that type of thing," said one participant, "we were able to put [images of donation recipients] up on the website and send that out to them. 'Here's what your donations have gone to, here's why you're giving money to this is because of XYZ. (Participant 4)

By using images, the participant showed the audience the importance of their donations. The use of images in international marketing is stronger when the images reflect the audience (Bazzo et al.). One participant said, “We generally include a quote and a photograph of an award recipient who's from that region or country, just to really connect with them.” Participants in the study agreed that using images not only helps overcome communication barriers but also helps create an emotional connection with the audience, especially when the images are relevant to the culture of the audience.

Communicating in the local language is necessary for marketers to connect with foreign audiences (Ukey, 2014). By communicating in the local language, sellers make themselves part of a regional social group, which makes consumers in that group more likely to engage with them (Shaw, 2014). In marketing systems theory, geography and language are forms of social grouping (Lawton, 2011). Therefore, the research results align with the conceptual framework of marketing systems theory by demonstrating that use of native language increases trust and engagement with an audience.

Theme 3: Email

Out of all the discussed marketing platforms, email was consistently the most recommended for international fundraising. One participant said that “In terms of our email marketing, we do actually have a higher open rate among our international members than we do among our US members.” Participant 1 felt that email is better than other digital marketing platforms because it is easier to target specific audiences. They said that they want their targeted messages to say to their audience, "We are speaking to you. You're not just one in a huge group of people, and we don't care who responds back.

We are actively trying to recruit you and people like you." Regarding targeted email marketing, another participant said, “We do send a lot of emails to promote applications for grants, and we target people very specifically through those.” These results extend the existing knowledge that email is an effective targeted promotional tool by demonstrating its effectiveness for non-profit organizations in an international setting. In a 2014 study (Sahni, Zou, & Chintagunta), targeted email promotion produced a 37.2% increase in customer spending over non-targeted email promotion. With email, marketers also have access to important data like open rates and user actions (such as clicking links).

Timing the delivery of email for specific international audiences improves the chances of success. This is another area where an understanding of the culture helps the marketing campaign. Participant 5 said,

> We work with our partners to identify timing of emails because that area can be tricky with different holidays like Carnivale, for instance. Or they have big winter breaks there, so we need to take into consideration when people are reading our information and when is the best time to send it to them.

By knowing when the audience is most receptive to receiving email, marketers make it more likely that their message reaches and connects with the audience (Samaha, Beck, & Palmatier, 2014).

According to existing literature, audiences expect marketing messages tailored to their specific needs (Umrez, 2014). The experiences of the participants regarding email as a digital marketing platform support this concept. Email allows marketers to send targeted messages to audiences in a manner more cost effective than traditional marketing platforms (Magee, 2013).

Theme 4: Partnership

Every participant agreed that partnering with local organizations helps improve the effectiveness of international digital fundraising campaigns. Participant 4 said that "One of the most fundamental ways [of building trust with an international audience] is getting the right partner." According to the annual reports and websites of the participating organizations in the study, all five organizations work with local institutions and organizations through their foundations. Local organizations understand the culture and language of their markets (Adab & Valdés, 2016; Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2013), which helps domestic organizations avoid cultural mistakes. For example, Participant 5 said, "We work with our [international] partners to identify timing of emails because that area can be tricky with different holidays like Carnivale, for instance." International audiences trust local organizations more than international organizations (Graca et al., 2015). Local organizations also have networks in place that international organizations can use for fundraising.

Several participants said that translation alone is enough of a reason for them to partner with local organizations. By using local organizations to translate material or write original material, organizations save money on translation services. "We have a whole licensing department, and they work overseas" said Participant 1. "Once an organization or a publisher would license [Organization 1] content, they can translate it, so essentially a lot of our stuff does end up out there in other languages." Participants also trust local organizations to understand the culture of the audience, which reduces the risk of miscommunication. Partnering with local organizations may improve an organization's understanding of local language and culture (Hitt, Li, & Xu, 2016).

Local organizations give credibility to international organizations. Participant 4 cited experiences in marketing to Middle Eastern and New Zealand audiences. In both campaigns, they partnered with local organizations. The participant said, "I was lent a lot more credibility there [in the Middle East and New Zealand]. When you're with a partner that already has established trust with a populous or with a customer segment. That's always gonna be the easiest way." This credibility works in both directions. Participant 1 said, "People see that we're promoting something on their site, and I think it gives them added credibility because we are the largest global society representing all oncology subspecialties." When a local organization sends messages on behalf of or in partnership with an international organization, the audience trusts the message more (Graca et al., 2015).

As discussed in the literature review, international audiences are challenging to connect with due to the constant cultural, social, and economic changes (De Mooij, 2013; Ukey, 2014). Local organization partnerships help marketers stay informed of these changes (Adab & Valdés, 2016; Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2013). Additionally, local organizations are within geographic social groupings which, according to marketing systems theory, makes it easier for sellers to reach consumers (Shaw, 2014). As a conceptual framework, marketing systems theory supports the findings of the research that partnership with local organizations improves credibility.

Additional Findings

Relationship marketing requires multiple touch points to build a relationship over time (Adab & Valdés, 2016). “You kind of have to have a much longer view of entering the market space and to establish the trust incrementally,” said Participant 4. When using digital techniques to raise funds, a mixture of approaches works well. By connecting with audiences across different platforms, participants saw better results. Participant 2 had success using digital marketing in advance of print marketing. They said,

> Send messages related to product X or campaign X one or two months ahead of time, and then soon you say, ‘By the way, we're sending you some information in writing. We'll encourage you to take a look at it.’ That works very well.

By connecting with audiences across different platforms, participants saw better results.

Participants in the study said that they successfully used video to create emotional messaging and to tell stories about their cause. Participant 4 said that video made them “able to put stuff out there that provided more of a touchy-feely, more tangible item for folks that could really tie in.” Researchers have shown that video generates emotional engagement with the audience (Botha & Reyneke, 2013). Participant 4 shared a story about a program that used video to show student recipients of donations.

> We were able to use video for them to be able to see the program and then put that book basically online, which allowed people to connect the faces and the backgrounds of these students directly to what their donations were going towards. (Participant 4)

Users are more emotionally connected to video content, specifically when it is targeted at them (Botha & Reyneke, 2013). Users are also likely to share video content, which is a form of engagement (Kapin & Ward, 2013). By sharing video, the audience feels more connected to the source.

Essentially, relationship marketing is about cultivating an emotional connection with the audience (Adab & Valdés, 2016). According to four participants, emotional attachment is what sets nonprofit healthcare organizations apart from their for-profit counterparts. Relationship marketing strategy builds on multiple communications over time. As Participant 2 put it, “You get to know the partner and the other people and little by little you build that trust. And by building that trust, you will be able to get people in the country to help you become an ambassador.” Targeted messages show the audience that the organization is speaking directly to them (Sahni et al., 2014). Cultural insight shows the audience that the organization understands them (Umrez, 2014). Translation shows the audience that the organization is trustworthy (Blakeman, 2018). Images of people that look like the audience show that the organization knows who they are (Bazzo et al.). Stories about the audience demonstrate that the organization cares (Botha & Reyneke, 2013). The goal is to build an emotional attachment to the organization. Add summary and synthesis to integrate the quote and fully conclude the section.

Application to Professional Practice

The study findings apply to nonprofit healthcare organizations seeking to use digital marketing techniques for fundraising in international markets. The combination of limited resources and fundraising challenges force nonprofit organizations to seek inexpensive ways to raise funds in new markets (Hu et al., 2014; Sokolowski, 2013). International marketing requires a relationship approach in which the marketer has a more personal understanding of the audience (Ukey, 2014). However, many marketing professionals lack experience with relationship marketing (Kauppinen-Räisänen & Grönroos, 2015). Digital marketing is a cost-effective method for connecting with an international audience in a targeted, personal way (Umrez, 2014). Nonprofit organizations wish to implement international digital fundraising strategies but lack the relationship marketing experience (Kauppinen-Räisänen & Grönroos, 2015) and digital marketing experience to do so (Management Team, 2013). Research on nonprofit marketing is limited (Wymer, 2013), so marketing leaders in these organizations do not have resources to learn new marketing techniques, like digital marketing. The strategies documented in this study are relevant to improved business practice for nonprofit healthcare organizations because they demonstrate cost-effective ways in which organizations may increase international fundraising through digital marketing. By following documented successful strategies, nonprofit healthcare organizations will not have to spend resources learning these strategies through trial and error. Nonprofit healthcare organizations can use these international digital marketing strategies to raise funds with less risk of failure.

Implications for Social Change

This study may help North American healthcare organizations raise funds by expanding into international markets. By documenting proven international digital marketing strategies for nonprofit healthcare organizations, this study may help nonprofit healthcare organizations implement international fundraising in a cost-effective way. This study may also open international markets to nonprofit healthcare organizations, markets that would otherwise be cost prohibitive to reach. North American healthcare organizations may then bring the science and experience of our medical community to developing nations. Therefore, this study may affect social change by improving the resources available to provide medical care in developing nations.

By implementing these digital fundraising strategies to reach international audiences, nonprofit healthcare organizations will have more fundraising opportunities. The results of this study may benefit healthcare professionals, both domestic and international, by helping the organizations that support them generate funds. Additional fundraising opportunities may result in increased revenue and growth for these organizations, making the organizations better able to provide services to all members.

Recommendations for Action

This study produced several international digital marketing strategy recommendations for marketing leaders at North American nonprofit healthcare organizations. Marketing leaders for nonprofit healthcare organizations interested in pursuing cost-effective methods for reaching international audiences should read it. The recommendations include (a) research the culture of the specific targeted audience and include cultural references in marketing messages; (b) translate marketing messages into the native language; (c) use email as the primary channel for sending marketing messages, but use social media (including youtube) as secondary channels; (d) partner with local organizations; (f) tell stories that resonate with the audience; (g) appeal to the emotion of the audience.

This study will be disseminated in several ways. Researchers will have access to the study through the ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database. All participants in this study will receive a copy. Anyone else interested in the study may request a copy by writing to the author.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study may lay the foundation for future research in related areas. The international digital fundraising strategies documented in this research may apply to nonprofit organizations outside the field of healthcare. Additional research on marketing leaders from other nonprofit fields is needed to determine if the results align or diverge outside healthcare. Another area of research to explore are the different types of healthcare organizations. Do certain international digital fundraising strategies work differently for large organizations versus small organizations? These strategies may also change based on medical specialty. For example, a pediatric medicine organization might apply these fundraising strategies differently than an orthopedic organization.

Most of the participants reported the successful use of storytelling in their international digital fundraising. One research possibility is the role of storytelling in nonprofit organization fundraising. How can nonprofit organizations use storytelling to develop emotional attachment?

Because digital platforms and technologies evolve rapidly, this study is limited by time. The digital marketing tools marketing leaders will soon have access to may be different than the ones used today. Therefore, this subject should be revisited in the future to document new digital fundraising strategies for nonprofit healthcare organizations.

Reflections

This study gave me the opportunity to view digital international nonprofit healthcare through the lens of marketing leaders. My experience in nonprofit healthcare has been with the development of websites, but not the strategy behind reaching international audiences. The most interesting result to me was the value of partnering with local organizations. I always expected this to be the case, but it was gratifying to see that suspicion validated. To prevent personal bias in my interviews, I deliberately never asked any direct questions about partnering with other organizations.

I don't believe the research process impacted the thinking of the participants, but I expect the results will. Seeing common themes shared by other participants may validate these approaches and create confidence to invest in them further. None of the participant's experiences were identical, so by reading this study, the participants will be exposed to digital marketing strategies they may not have tried. This study may encourage all participants to collaborate with local organizations and use emotional appeal in their fundraising strategies.

Conclusion

Funding in the nonprofit sector continues to decline as government support becomes more limited (United States Department of the Treasury, 2016). Nonprofit organizations need marketing to help increase fundraising revenue but lack the money for large-scale marketing campaigns (Hu et al., 2014; Sokolowski, 2013). Digital marketing strategies are a cost-effective alternative to traditional marketing (Bennett, 2014). As competition increases for funding, nonprofit organizations need to find new sources of revenue. International markets provide fundraising potential for nonprofit organizations, but they come with their own set of challenges, including language, culture, and trust building (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2013; De Mooij, 2013). Unfortunately, marketing leaders at many nonprofit organizations lack the skills to implement a digital marketing campaign and the experience to connect with an international audience.

The results of this multicase study show that nonprofit healthcare organizations can successfully raise funds from international markets by following some proven digital marketing strategies. Nonprofit healthcare organizations should understand the language and culture of the international markets they intend to expand in to, possibly through a partnership with local organizations. Messaging to these audiences should feel personal, with images or video reflecting the local population. The best platform for sending marketing messages to international audiences is email, but other platforms should also play a role in a larger strategy. Nonprofit healthcare organizations should take the time to build an emotional connection with their international audiences through multiple points of contact. Emotional engagement should be the goal of nonprofit marketing leaders seeking to raise funds from international audiences.

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Appendix A: Invitation Email

Date

Dear ______________,

I am conducting a doctoral study on digital fundraising strategies for nonprofit marketing leaders in international markets. You have been referred to me for this study by ______________ because you are a marketing manager in the nonprofit healthcare field with experience using digital marketing to connect with an international audience. Participation in the study involves an interview lasting approximately 30 minutes. If you are interested in participating, please reply to this email at john.basco@waldenu.edu. I will respond via email to coordinate a time to conduct the interview. Attached is an informed consent form which provides details about the study and your participation in it. Please review this form. Before the interview begins, you will be asked to sign a copy of the informed consent form.

Thank you for considering participation in this study.

Sincerely,

John Basco