

## **Captivate to donate: How NPOs can use Facebook to engage with their customers**

The number of registered non-profit organisations (NPOs) in South Africa has exploded of late, with more than 220,116 NPOs currently working to alleviate the social and economic plight in communities across the country. Although NPOs play a vital role, many are forced to close their doors as a result of a lack of funding, which is often found to be caused by the loss of even a single primary donor. Seeking donor funding and other sources of support therefore becomes a primary objective for all NPOs. The challenge for managers and marketers in this highly competitive industry is thus to find ways to get customers to commit to a sustained buy-in, and so constantly foster in them a desire to offer financial support.

A research study was conducted by Roxanne Janse van Rensburg, a [Master's](#) student in the [Department of Marketing Management](#), to investigate whether customer engagement on Facebook can act as a catalyst for people's willingness to donate and thus address the challenge of funding differently. The social presence of organisations, and the customer satisfaction that NPOs create on these pages, were also explored. Service-dominant logic was referenced in guiding this research to advance an understanding of how NPOs could improve their value perception for the purpose of obtaining financial support.

Convenience sampling was used to collect 180 responses from South African social media users who follow Facebook brand pages of NPOs. The results revealed that the behavioural aspect of customer engagement influenced their willingness to donate – although, interestingly, the emotional and cognitive aspects of customer engagement did not. Furthermore, customer satisfaction and social presence did not expressly contribute to a willingness to donate.

The findings therefore offer managers of NPOs a possible additional tool to broaden their choice of the methods used to secure funding, and so improve their financial independence in a small pool of large donors.

To entice interested parties to engage with NPOs, their marketers need to establish Facebook brand pages that stimulate the interest of their customers so that they receive

value from the shared content. This could be done by posting visually enticing performance- and impact-related items that promote the co-creation of content. The resulting behaviour will be revealed in customers' willingness deliberately to look for and to view posts on the page, and in turn be more willing to contribute to the NPO's well-being.

This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2020 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Roxanne Janse van Rensburg under the supervision of [Dr Danita van Heerden](#).