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Introduction

Following the launch of the project during the kick-off meeting on 2 March 2020, the first online workshop for the Pilot Group took place on 6-7 April with the main objective to identify common KPIs and impact indicators across Food Banks, discuss what are the missing metrics and how data might look like with a platform’s web frame proposal.

The workshop was structured as an umbrella session, under which, three main messages found place:

1. **Make data speak** means first of all boost internal awareness, benchmarking and benchlearning (within FEBA network).

2. **Data should speak the language of recipients**; this means planning dedicated communication to the diverse stakeholders.

3. **Good Information with sound data and effective stories** can help fundraising.

The second online workshop focused on communication and on “make data speak”. It was organized by FEBA and took place virtually. Nine participants from the selected Pilot Group (Belgium, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Spain, and UK) actively participated in the online workshop. The workshop was guided by the leading team of the project (FEBA Team, Laura Gavinelli, Fabio Fraticelli, and Chiara Grassi) with inspiring insights from external experts.

Let’s get into more detail with what we shared!

Angela Frigo, FEBA Secretary General, and Laura Gavinelli, Management consultant and trainer, made an introduction to recap the previous meetings and to underline the importance of data to communicate what Food Banks are and what they do. Thanks to the participation of external experts, both from Food Banks and corporations, participants had the chance to see a broader scenario, with testimonials from different experiences.
Vivienne Lawlor, Head of Communications at FoodCloud, presented a case study of the communications journey and process that FoodCloud took to create a communication campaign for Covid-19 emergency food and funding appeal and the role that data played throughout the journey from communications messaging to campaign analysis.

1. Interrogating business or organizational challenge

Before creating any communication, it is important to work hard to understand the problem to solve - the specific organizational challenge that are faced, to which communications can help alleviate.

2. Knowing the audience

Every time it is considered sending out a communication through specific channels, whether that be social media, newsletters or the website, it is important to take the time to consider:

- Who is the audience for these communications and what positive actions could be done as a result?

A plan, for example, can be helpful in getting high level communications into one place. The context for communications is key and data has a strong role to play here.

It can be useful to have a picture in mind of the key target persons to try and help understand the main needs, what are the barriers to engagement and how specific communications can support these people in their role. It also helps to consider where they might see or hear about Food Banks. For a CEO it might be in the national newspaper, for the head of supply chain, it may be on LinkedIn or Twitter or via monthly newsletter updates.
Using data to tell a story – FoodCloud case study

Due to the pandemic in Ireland, 40% of charities who support vulnerable communities had suddenly closed, 550,000 people had lost employment and huge parts of the community were cocooning to protect themselves against the virus.

In this rapidly changing situation, FoodCloud urgently needed funding and food to maintain support over 500+ community groups, many of whom were experiencing increased demand for food of up to 50% related to the data highlighted above.

Following a press statement on FoodCloud website and a release to key media, a range of supporting ‘key campaign visuals’ were created for digital channels with consistent messages:

A. Reiterating the message of helping FoodCloud to support over 500+ charities all across Ireland.

B. The images were recognisable as FoodCloud through the use of branding and colour.

C. The visuals chosen represented the emergency that was unfolding.
4. Reviewing the impact and effectiveness of activities

As the campaign unfolded, the digital marketing team reviewed the key digital media analytics weekly: traffic to the Covid-19 response hub on the FoodCloud website, key search terms, insights from social media posts (engagement, impressions and reach) and the open rate of the newsletter content to assess the ongoing effectiveness of each of the elements of the campaign. The campaign saw over 130% uplift in engagement across their website versus the previous month.

One particular LinkedIn post featuring a message on the power of community achieved an 11% click through rate (CTR), with over 14.8% engagement rate. The average CTR on LinkedIn is 2.83%.

Partner Advocacy Communications

FoodCloud also used 500+ data and key messages in their partner communications to drive internal engagement within their own teams on the support they are providing to communities all over Ireland. These social media stories were shared with partners with a focus on LinkedIn and have helped FoodCloud by allowing partners to advocate the benefits of donating their surplus to charity on behalf of FoodCloud.

In April 2020, FoodCloud, thanks to the support of partners, redistributed over 167 tonnes of food to community groups all over Ireland, which is the largest volume in FoodCloud’s 8 years history!

Over the coming months FoodCloud will closely track data to deliver persuasive communications that ensure to continue delivering food for Ireland.
From Vivienne’s presentation emerged that communication is both strategic and tactical.

The first one requires a long-term perspective and effort and can treat brand, legitimacy, CRM and the positioning of a Food Bank to the eyes of its stakeholders.

The second type of communication is more tactical and short-term and can treat specific initiatives and projects which need the necessary visibility.

While communicating in the two manners, Food Banks must keep coherent to their mission and values. Through the inspiring example of the “Feeding kindness” campaign, participants learnt also the practical aspects of planning the contents of the communication, implementing its launch and measuring the results.

The presentation of Emma Togni, Marketing Manager at TechSoup Italy on “Social Media trends & Tips” was a precious occasion to have a comprehensive framework on what is called digital communication, in particular social media communication.

Covering the main touch points it is possible to keep in touch with stakeholders, understanding that the T.O.P. strategy is a must. “T” means tone of voice, “O” means offering - so the main content provided through the social media - and “P” means people, so keeping an emotional touch is part of a positive relation with different counterparts.
Pandemic has shaken routines, assumptions, work, daily life, inner life and opened up to new scenarios. Digital transformation is happening now, it is not anymore something relating to the future. A huge increase in traffic is happening on all platforms and data reveals that people’s digital behaviors are also changing dramatically as a result of coronavirus-related lockdowns. During this period, people are getting more and more familiar with digital platforms and this is why post-pandemic life will not look like it did pre Covid 19. With change comes challenges, but rapid shifts can also present enormous opportunities for growth. Now, more than ever, it is important to consider the customer journey as nonlinear, it is not a funnel as marketers used to think but implies many digital touchpoints bounded all together.

A good strategy on social media takes into consideration that this multichannel path cannot be strictly controlled. Brands and organizations need to seriously work on what is under their control - which are their tone of voice, their unique values and proposition, their community.

Selecting and orchestrating the digital channels (social media) to oversee is a call for any organization to be consistent, recognizable, and unique in the way it communicates and produces digital content. Each experience, project, and person within an organization is already a unique value, so the goal is to find a unique tone of voice that people will recognize among other voices and to offer people digital places where they can find content relevant to them and interact with each other by creating a virtuous circle of User Generated Content (UGC). User Generated Content can be a sustainable and influential source of content that any organization will need to help build trust, and deepen their long-term relationships with its community.

Alongside these rediscovered forms of interactions, non-profit organizations should take as promising opportunities all the tools that social media provide for fundraising, from Facebook to Instagram to YouTube. One unintended side-effect of the current Covid-19 lockdowns has been the dismantling of the corporate facade. This is a huge opportunity for non-profits and a positive breakthrough for each brand to tap into new ways of communicating (even) on social media.
Bruce Learner opened the floor to a really stimulating discussion on what are the data and information that enterprises are really interested in when talking about food recovery and redistribution.

Bruce Learner, Senior Manager CSR & Partnerships, Kellogg Europe

The starting point of any communication effort, when addressed to private sector, is in the view of Bruce Learner the following question: “What’s the impact of extra donation?”

Currently non-profit organizations, Food Banks included, are telling 20% of their story.

What lacks? Owing to the direct experience of Kellogg, the main things to bear in mind are:

1. **People must remain at the very centre of any story**

2. **The main info required are few but relevant**: how many organizations have been reached; how many people have been helped; what is the social impact of 1 kilo of food donated; what is the financial impact of 1 kilo of food donated; what is the environmental impact of 1 kilo of food donated, in comparison with animal feed, or GHG emissions, ...?

3. **Human stories are equally important**: they provide examples and show the need of poor people, together with the concrete help given by Food Banks and their partners (e.g. charities, companies).
Data visualization tools

Fabio Fraticelli, COO from TechSoup Italy with his presentation on “Data visualization tools” provided a first benchmark of several tools that can be embedded in the online platform. After showing the main functionalities of the tools, he illustrated pros and cons of each one of them.

The assumption is that good data, once collected and elaborated, deserve an effective visualization. FEBA is looking for a tool which is easy to be used, flexible, customizable and not too time consuming for its users.

Conclusions

After moderating the discussion with the three experts and summarizing what emerged from the virtual tours on data collection systems made via video conference and from the interviews help with most of the components of the pilot group, Laura Gavinelli - Management consultant and trainer - has presented the workflow of the project and the next steps.

From the next workshop onwards, vertical discussions will be organized on the indicators related to a specific area of impact: economic, social, nutritional, and environmental.

In the meantime, the agile approach to the implementation of the platform will proceed, including the indicators step by step selected together with the Pilot Group.

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The European Food Banks Federation takes this opportunity to gratefully acknowledge DG Health and Food Safety, European Commission for concretely supporting the reinforcement of the credibility and efficacity of FEBA and its membership.

A grateful acknowledgement to Laura Gavinelli for driving us to the discovery of the value of measuring and the importance of KPIs, especially in relation to communication.

A deep appreciation to Fabio Fraticelli and Chiara Grassi for giving an added value to the discussion thanks to their competence and expertise.

We warmly thank all three experts, Vivienne Lawlor, Bruce Learner, and Emma Togni for their time and expertise. Their experience and the open discussion were precious occasions to learn and understand better how to make data speak.

Last but not least, many thanks to all the participants who actively contributed to the success of the first FEBA virtual workshop.