ARTS NONPROFITS, CULTURAL BRANDING PRINCIPLES

AND THE SOCIAL MEDIA REVOLUTION

Kendra Meret Chong

Major paper submitted to the faculty of Goucher College in partial

fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Abstract

Title of Thesis: ARTS NONPROFITS, CULTURAL BRANDING PRINCIPLES AND THE SOCIAL MEDIA REVOLUTION

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Social media is an integral element to our day-to-day lives and has forever changed how we communicate, socialize, and consume content. Societal trends have proven that social media is ideal for reaching masses of people instantaneously. However, this formidable communication tool has been systematically underutilized by arts nonprofits. The nature of this uniquely twenty-first century form of communication debunks well-established marketing models. To achieve maximum engagement with audience members through social media platforms, arts nonprofits should move away from established marketing models and embrace cultural branding principles.

Cultural branding is a form of marketing that harnesses meaningful issues or current tensions to create significant consumer-brand relevance. These issues when

framed in the context of history and modern trends, inherently make the brand more authentic to the consumer and may create a sustained subconscious and emotional connection. Arts nonprofits have an ideal organizational model for implementing cultural branding principles, specifically regarding social media. Arts nonprofits are governed by a mission that guides every decision made by the organization. The mission of an arts nonprofit is often grounded in an issue pertinent to contemporary society. Using cultural branding principles will allow arts nonprofits to participate with more relevance in the dialogue on social media, potentially leading to increased followers across all sectors, higher attendance numbers and consequently operational sustainability. Arts nonprofits face significant operational hurdles in implementing sustainable social media strategies based on cultural branding principles. Determining issues to target, avoiding politicization of the organization and content development are extremely challenging.

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This paper is dedicated to Kevin Chong, who was a pillar of strength and encouragement when I needed it most. Also, to the MAAAvericks—eight dear friends whose humor, mischief and support made all the madness worthwhile.

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Introduction

Social media has revealed and emphasized much about human nature, our

willingness to share and to be valued, our need to create community and connection.

Culture and identity form the building blocks of these interactions. Modern research on

consumer culture and brand relationships reveals an experience economy influenced by

historic patterns, societal tensions, and individual aspirations. Brands and products are

experienced and can influence consumer habits and beliefs.

Social media is a complicated yet simple means for sharing anything from a

photo, to news, to love and hate. It is now a ubiquitous twenty-first century technology

that has revolutionized interaction and communication. It has also provided new

opportunities for individuals to easily access entertainment—expanding and flooding the

arts and entertainment industry sector with a multitude of entertainment options. The

marketing potential of social media has gone from a gleefully accepted opportunity to a

confounding problem corporate America continues to spend inordinate amounts of

money on. Arts nonprofits, while acknowledging the importance and vital role social

media can play in strengthening their ability to market themselves, have nonetheless also

failed to wield this marketing tool with much impact.

Traditional marketing efforts have failed to create brand relevance on social

media, and are often ignored or ridiculed. Cultural Branding, pioneered by Douglas B.

Holt, has been instrumental in the success of some of America's most iconic brands,

including Coca-Cola, Harley Davidson, and Marlboro. Cultural branding harnesses

cultural and historical tensions to create relevant brand alignment with key issues in

society. This form of branding is especially well-suited to the unique characteristics of

social media. It relies on the Consumer Culture and Relationship Theory framework to tap into the identity of consumers through relevant issues. Recent trends in social media reveal that users are choosing to access news and participate in social movements as they have never done before. However, when corporate America attempts to overtly align itself with issues, it is often met with a high level of distrust, suspicion or ambivalence from consumers.

The distinctive nature of arts nonprofits makes them perfectly suited to use cultural branding on social media and successfully gain the trust of consumers. An arts nonprofit is always guided by its mission, and this mission is often grounded in an issue or community concern. Arts nonprofits that use mission-aligned cultural branding on social media will be naturally authentic in their content choices and thus appreciated as legitimate participants in the conversation. Arts nonprofits that implement cultural branding principles will be successful in engaging the public through social media, leading to a stronger relationship with their current audience and exposure to previously unreached audience sectors supporting viability in an increasingly competitive entertainment environment.

This study is relevant to and encompasses all arts nonprofits. It is limited to the benefits of implementing cultural branding principles using social media. Successful corporate sector-based social media campaigns that overtly use cultural branding principles have been included as exemplars.

Chapter I
FOUNDATIONS: EXPERIENCE ECONOMY
AND THE CULTURE OF CONSUMPTION

To fully understand why traditional marketing efforts are not as successful on social media, it is critical to recognize the psychological factors that influence consumer behavior trends as well as the anthropological and societal framework of consumption: the experience economy. Historically, consumer behavior has been defined as an exchange of goods and services in the marketplace. Exchange Theory states that the act of consumption is solely influenced by the exchange of certain resources broadly defined as love, status, information, money, goods, and services (Brinberg and Wood 330). The economic principles of scarcity and need-satisfaction have been assumed to predominantly determine the exchange of these resources (331). Twenty-first century marketing to individuals accepts that consumption is simply an exchange of goods and services to satisfy a need and nothing more.

However, modern studies of human behavior, marketing, and consumption of goods and services have shown that the consumption practices of individuals are more nuanced than a simple exchange. Anthropological, social science, and consumer research provide evidence that cultural phenomena such as identity, myth and iconography; social structure; ethos; ecology including environment, habits and technology exist and are integral to consumer interaction with branding, marketing, and even the products themselves. John F. Sherry, Jr., a renowned anthropologist and expert in the study of sociocultural impacts on consumption states that:

> Anthropologists have always known we live in an experience economy and consumption is about experience. And once you take that view, products are not

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simply tools or benefits or practical utilitarian kinds of things, they're really more

about meaning. They're the way people create meaning and transform meaning…

(Temple 3)

Identity, mythology, and psychology are critical elements of society, culture, and human

expression. They are also critical elements of a successful marketing and branding model.

Therefore, branding is an inherently human experience. Individuals choosing to align

themselves with the brand of an arts nonprofit or its product are influenced by these same

factors. Arts nonprofits are champions of the experience economy, for they are selling a

product that is also an experience, and furthermore an ideology as evidenced in the

nonprofit mission.

Modern consumer research has shown that consumption practices and choices

may also provide the framework for and influence of one's sense of self. Sherry and his

contemporaries have found that "marketing is also a way of structuring other people's

experiences, a way of shaping behavior that may not have anything to do directly with

buying and selling products" (Temple 2). This complicated brand and consumer

interaction, this experience economy, is a cornerstone of two influential modern theories

that have shaped modern conceptions of the culture of consumption and the consumer-

product relationship.

<div align="center">Consumer Culture Theory and Relationship Theory</div>

Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) is a "...family of theoretical perspectives that

address the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and

cultural meaning" (Arnould and Thompson 868). Individuals do not make consumer

choices in a vacuum; rather, as consumers, we are surrounded by external and internal

influences such as societal ideals and norms, history, current events and trends, as well as

our own personality and life experiences—these elements are the source of "consumer

culture" (869). Consumer decisions and preferences in the marketplace not only reflect

the individual but also hint at a framework that guides a sense of self and identity, as well

as societal ideals. The existence of consumer culture allows individuals to:

> …conceptualize an interconnected system of commercially produced images,
>
> texts, and other objects that groups use—through the construction of overlapping
>
> and often conflicting practices, identities, and meanings—to make collective
>
> sense of their environments and to orient their members' experiences and lives.
>
> (Arnould and Thompson 869)

The marketplace provides an intersection of practices, identities, and meanings where

individuals can search for the product or brand that aligns with their perception of self

and even societal expectation. Several CCT concepts are particularly relevant to this

discussion and provide a foundation for comprehending why modern cultural branding

practices can be successful, particularly on social media.

Individuals use the marketplace to create a sense of self; this is especially evident

in the day-to-day interaction of individuals with each other and brands on social media.

With the ease of access to the marketplace and commodities through the Internet and

social media, the marketplace has increasingly evolved in modern times to "…become a

preeminent source of mythic and symbolic resources through which people…construct

narratives of identity." Individuals accessing the marketplace are categorized as "Identity

Seekers" or "Identity Makers" (Arnould and Thompson 871). Identity Seeker consumers

consciously and subconsciously access and absorb fundamental identity characteristics by aligning themselves with certain brands to emulate a sought-after identity. Or, Identity Maker consumers create their own identity by purposefully differentiating themselves from the norm through their consumption and brand preference. In either case, these consumer activities are goal-driven but clearly complicated. The activities of individuals in the marketplace "…are often tacit in nature and marked by points of conflict, internal contradictions, ambivalence and even pathology" (Arnould and Thompson 871). The organic and shifting nature of individuals' activities and allegiances in the marketplace hint at an oscillating relationship with societal ideals and a complicated search for preferred identity characteristics.

The marketplace environment is not one-dimensional but rather layered and organic, creating opportunities for consumers to "forge feelings of social solidarity and create distinctive, fragmentary, self-selected and sometimes transient cultural worlds through the pursuit of common consumption interests" (Arnould and Thompson 873). Individuals feel a connection when they appreciate a product or align with the essence of a brand experience, revealing shared beliefs and an attraction to similar preferred identity characteristics. This confluence of consumers around certain brands has been defined by CCT as "brand communities." Brand communities are unique in that they "…retain traditional markers of community, while relaxing constraints of geography, and are characterized by explicit attempts to build community through consumption of commercial brands" (Arnould and Thompson 874). While these brand communities have always been prevalent, they are now particularly easy to observe on social media. Social

media provides an unprecedented opportunity to view, track, and understand the development of these groups and their brand communities as they form and disband.

The growth of brand communities, marketplace trends, and the shifting nature of consumer culture does not occur in a vacuum. Analysis of socio-historic patterns of consumption shows that institutional and social structures, such as class, community, ethnicity and gender "systematically influence consumption" (Arnould and Thompson 874). The changing nature of consumption is directly correlated to the ebb and flow of history, technology and the significant impact they have on our social structures. Consumers do not float uninterested with this tide of change, but rather engage and submit, or reject and change pervasive societal ideals. The consumer is not passive but rather an "interpretive agent" as he or she translates "identity and life-style ideals portrayed in advertising and mass media" (Arnould and Thompson 874). There are numerous complexities as to why an individual may choose to deviate from or accept societal norms, however it is clear that these often-conflicting choices create multiple realities: "many consumers' lives are constructed around multiple realities and…they use consumption to experience realities (linked to fantasies, invocative desires, aesthetics, and identity play) that differ dramatically from the quotidian" (Arnould and Thompson 875). CCT has taught modern marketers that consumption is highly personal and sometimes illogical; it is emotive and driven by beliefs and the experience of that individual.

Susan Fournier's Relationship Theory reveals that individuals develop complicated relationships with brands and that these relationships are structured by context, whether it is psychological, social-cultural or relational (344). Like CCT,

Fournier's Relationship Theory finds that individuals not only form viable relationships with a brand but that these relationships have meaning and create meaning for the individual. Fournier's study has found that consumers

> …are not just buying brands because they like them or because they work well. They are involved in a relationship with a collectivity of brands so as to benefit from the meanings they add in their lives. Some of these meanings are functional and utilitarian; others are more psychological and emotional. All, however are purposive and ego-centered and therefore of great significance to the persons. engaging them (360-361).

The relationships developed with and by the audience, donors, consultants, artists, or performers with the perceived brand and experience of an arts nonprofit, also have elements of this interaction, both informal and formal. Furthermore, Relationship Theory correlates with CCT findings that brands exist as "powerful repositories of meaning, purposively and differentially employed in the substantiation, creation, and (re)production of concepts of self in the marketing age" (365). Choosing a brand is a personal choice, and this is even more obvious on the Internet and on social media. Social media allows instant access to these choices and the broadcasting of an idealized identity. Fournier states that "brands cohere into systems that consumers create not only to aid in living but also to give meaning to their lives…consumers do not choose brands, they choose lives" (367). This relationship between the consumer and brand is not one-sided; the consumer participates in the relationship, and there is a "growing body of evidence on the active role of the consumer in the production of modern culture" (Fournier 367). This is especially true on social media, and also can be seen in marketing exercises that are

interactive and participatory. Social media is driven almost entirely by participating individuals. Common participatory marketing initiatives include allowing consumers to comment in a forum on the product or involve them in the final development of a product so that it has more personal meaning to them. Social media has been used by certain brands to create a dialogue with their consumers to create a sense of partnership as well as ownership of the brand.

Consumer Culture Theory, Relationship Theory and the experience economy illustrate that elements of identity and culture are integral to consumer choices and relationships with the marketplace. Social media has revealed just how intertwined the economy is with these experiences and beliefs. By using cultural branding principles in crafting social media content, arts nonprofits will have more opportunities to tap into pre-existing identity-markers and beliefs to develop relationships with new potential audience members.

Chapter II
SOCIAL MEDIA: A COMPLICATED MODERN REVELATION
AND MARKETING CONUNDRUM

Since the inception of online social networking in the 1970s, social media has taken the world by storm ("The History"). It is an organic and ever-changing tidal wave of communication that has manifested as an evolving mechanism for modern interaction and information collection. Social media has revolutionized communication and empowerment, embraced by individuals, governments, corporations, and nonprofit organizations (Arnaboldi and Coget 47). It is also a misunderstood revolution, one that has left many corporations and organizations scrambling to harness its potential marketing power (47). The speed and voracity with which society has accepted social media is unprecedented, "…while it took radio and television 38 years and 13 years respectively, to reach 50 million users, it took Facebook less than nine months to reach 100 million users" (Patel 60). Within a span of ten years, we are now, more than ever, a connected society, and social media is an integral element of our day-to-day lives. The Millennial generation was the first to embrace and accept the social media "revolution," initially popularizing its use. As social media has surged in popularity and become an indispensable aspect in community communication, older generations, typically categorized as less tech-savvy, have embraced social media and now surpass the Millennial generation in usage. Nielsen reported in January 2017, that now "the heavy social media user group isn't Millennials. In fact, Generation X (ages 35-49) spends the most time on social media: almost 7 hours per week versus Millennials, who come in second, spending just over 6 hours per week" (Casey). Social media now "…reaches [more than] 82% of the world's internet population aged 15+ and represents the largest

portion of individuals' internet usage, accounting for nearly one of every five minutes spent online globally" (Zhu and Chen 335). Social media has come to dominate the Internet and this is reflected in the significant amount of time individuals spend on social media platforms.

As of 2015, 90% of young adults in the United States used social media in some form, and since 2005, usage among those sixty-five and older has tripled (Perrin 3). Nielsen's 2017 report on usage trends shows that individuals ages 50 and older, when accessing their smartphones, now spend 63% of their time on social media ("2016 Nielsen" 5). A report on social media habits in the United States, released by the Pew Research Center in 2015, found that men and women use social media at similar rates and that there is a similar rate of usage across different racial and ethnic groups (Perrin 3). It has been embraced across the spectrum of our society. However, education, income and geographic location do influence the rate of social media use. Individuals with higher levels of education and more income were found to use social media at a significantly higher rate, while suburban and urban communities were also more likely to use it (Perrin 3). At the time of the Pew study, it was noted that the rural community's usage of social media jumped significantly from 2005 and now more than half of rural residents surveyed do use it (Perrin 3). A separate report released by the Pew Research Center showed that, from 2014 to 2015, there was a substantial increase in social media engagement; individual usage of social media went from occurring weekly to daily to multiple times a day (Duggan 15). Not only was there an increase in the different types of individuals using social media, but there was also a significant increase in the rate of access.

Teenagers' usage of social media is a lens through which the future evolution of

social media and its impact on societal norms may be viewed. A 2015 report conducted

by the Pew Research Center found that "24% of teens go online 'almost constantly' and

92% go online daily" (Lenhart 2). Through smartphone devices, social media is

constantly and easily accessible through applications (apps). With social media platforms

at their fingertips at all hours of the day, users can now access social media apps

whenever they want, receive notifications of other users' activities all day long, and be

constantly tuned in to trending material. Teenagers are also "diversifying their social

network site use"—71% of teenagers use more than one social media site (Lenhart 3).

Facebook, *Instagram* and *Snapchat* are in heavy rotation for teenager use. As individuals

continue to embrace and utilize social media, so must arts nonprofits. The high rate of

increase in social media engagement shows that a significant portion of the population is

available for interaction on social media, including the present and future audience,

donors and staff of arts nonprofits.

The Internet is no longer "solely an information access tool"—rather it is the

medium through which individuals access social media—an "interaction tool used by

individuals to discover and share content, opinions and information" (Heinrichs et al.

347). Consequently, the entertainment environment has evolved to include interaction

and activity generated through social media—the Internet provides unhindered access to

all manner of entertainment including video games, music, film, art, and sports. This

saturation of content has made the entertainment environment more competitive and can

make it difficult for arts nonprofits to compete in. Not only is social media integral to our

society's daily activities, the amount of time spent on social media continues to grow and

dominate in both personal and professional sectors. Consequently, societal habits have shifted to embrace social media as a necessary tool for both personal and professional communications, often blurring the line of appropriate content between these two sectors of society. In addition, social media has become integral to consumer access of brands and products: "thirty-nine percent of heavy social media users believe that finding out about products and services is an important reason for using a social network" (Casey). Social media has forever changed how we communicate, socialize, and consume content. Current generations are voraciously documenting their lives through and being entertained by social media. It is imperative that arts nonprofits learn to successfully navigate and utilize this dynamic communication tool in order to remain relevant.

<center>Distinguishing Characteristics of Social Media</center>

Social media has several distinguishing characteristics that differentiate it from previously existing methods of communication. These characteristics make it a uniquely twenty-first century model of expression and consequently difficult to harness with traditional marketing approaches. First, it is fast—allowing instantaneous connection and discussion between users whether they are individuals or entities such as corporations or nonprofits (Arnaboldi and Coget 48). Second, it is free or relatively affordable; anyone with a smartphone, computer and Internet access can participate (Arnaboldi and Coget 48). There is no limit to who can participate. Consequently, the nature and structure of social media has provided a new platform of communication that has shifted the balance of power and interaction in society between individuals and corporate entities. The distribution of communication through social media allows for any individual to publicly

communicate his or her displeasure and appreciation, or make an inquiry directly to any entity (Arnaboldi and Coget 48).

Social media can be characterized by the following activities and communication styles: it is typically personal, emotional, conversational and dialogic, visual, concise, mobile, and unrestrained by geography. All content is presented through a distinctly human lens. Social media is dialogic; comments and interactions, such as liking or retweeting form the social media conversation. The recent proliferation of the story option on platforms like *SnapChat* and *Instagram* encourage participants to be more engaged by communicating a series of personal events, a story, rather than a disconnected moment in time. Individuals are also now going live on *Facebook* to communicate and share their experience in real-time. Social media content is typically short, quickly read and easily shared. The fleeting nature of social media content as it cycles through feeds, reflects the short bursts of attention most individuals pay towards it.

Social media is personal to the individual that uses it. It is no coincidence that the most popular social media platforms originated in the personal realm. In order to build relationships and connections on social media, an element of trust and shared common interest is required. Trust and authenticity are core components of successful social media interaction; "early research on Facebook…found that users who provided profile elements that were more difficult to fake and that helped to establish common background had more connections" (Leondardi et al. 13). The more authentic content is perceived to be, the more likely it will be attractive to other individuals who may want to connect over a shared idea, belief or circumstance.

Social media is constantly changing and evolving as users create content. It has normalized an expectation of immediacy regarding content creation and it often occurs in real-time. This expectation for immediacy and authenticity is reflected in broader societal changes in habit (Arnaboldi and Coget 48). Quick snippets or sound bites of information popularized by social media are now typically more successful at holding our attention than long articles or videos.

Social media content is often created around shared interests and between individuals who have an element of shared trust—these actions stimulate the creation of interest communities and even "enhances pre-existing communities" (Arnaboldi and Coget 48). Adding to the dynamic nature of social media-enhanced communities is the fact that they are created without the constraints of geography, allowing for a diverse cross-section of individuals to share and access new content (Arnaboldi and Coget 48). Social media has removed the physical boundaries that may have separated individuals with shared interests, and now anyone, anywhere can participate in a community that shares their interests. The community-centric nature of social media reflects the personal nature of social media; individuals typically join groups or follow content that is perceived as authentically related to their interests. However, social media can also be an "echo chamber" of synonymous ideas and beliefs; "…where like-minded people connect with each other and conflicting ideas are avoided" (Leondardi et al. 12).

The trend towards visualization of this content is an important and differentiating characteristic of social media. Communication of content is often visual, through the use of images or video, and there has been an increase in the popularity of social media platforms that are predominantly image- or video-based, including *YouTube*, *Pinterest*,

Instagram, *Snapchat*, and even *Facebook*. The visual tendency of social media platforms may reflect our distinctly human nature to absorb and embrace information visually: "between 65% and 85% of people describe themselves as visual learners, forming meaning and organizing thoughts on what they see" (Zhu and Chen 343). From 2012 to 2015, *Pinterest* and *Instagram* use doubled, and now 31% of adults use *Pinterest* compared to 15% in 2012, and 28% of adults use *Instagram* compared to 13% in 2012 (Duggan 2). These statistics indicate that visually dominant social media platforms will continue to surge in popularity.

Current Organizational Use of Social Media for Marketing Purposes

Major corporations and small businesses recognize that social media is a necessary and efficient marketing tool and are willing to spend money on it: "…US companies spent $5.1 billion on advertising in social media in 2013, hoping to promote their products and services. By 2018, that number is projected to grow to nearly $15 billion" (Zhu and Chen 335). Social media has proven economic benefits; "brands most heavily engaged in social media marketing show[ed] [an] 18% revenue growth against 6% revenue decline for not involved brands" (Constantinides 43). The very nature of social media makes it an ideal tool for reaching masses of people instantaneously. Social media can be a valuable tool for public relations, allowing users to instantly access and be exposed to breaking news. It is also a valuable tool for users to leave positive feedback about an organization. Social media may also increase sales, by providing multiple avenues for advertisements both organic and contrived. For instance, an individual purchasing a product or a ticket to an event may share this action on social media,

inspiring those who follow them, and who likely share the same interests, to make the same purchase. In fact, the *2016 Nielsen Social Media Report* reveals that social media is used by a significant number of users to discover products and services (Casey). Social media has proven that it can initially increase profits; using social media marketing strategies "81% of companies generated more market exposure; 61% increased customer traffic [to their website]; 56% resulted in new business partnerships; [and] 45% reduced marketing expenses" (Constantinides 43).

With the near constant stream of corporate investment, and acknowledgement of the importance of social media, one would assume that corporate America has developed superior marketing strategies to bend social media to its benefit. This is not the case: "…social media [platforms] are not the powerful and persuasive marketing force many companies hoped that they would be [because] consumers are highly adept at tuning out brand-related *Facebook* and *Twitter* content" (Zhu and Chen 335). Consumers and users of social media "perceive companies and brands as 'interlopers,' 'party crashers,' or unwanted guests in the interactive space." And yet the same consumers and social media users "expect firms to participate in social media and may even purposefully pull firms into the social media conversation by either mentioning the brand or 'hash tagging' the firm" (Felix et al. 119).

Social media has been adopted by 97% of arts nonprofits, but at arm's length (Thomson et al 3). Arts nonprofits have underutilized social media, and are behind in interaction when compared with other types of nonprofit organizations. Arts nonprofits do not typically have a large number of followers on social media, and usually subscribe to traditional marketing efforts in crafting social media content. The organization Top

Nonprofit published a vetted list of the top fifty nonprofits using social media in 2016, and on this list, only six were arts nonprofits: the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Smithsonian Institute, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Metropolitan Opera, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston ("Top Nonprofits"). The majority, 88%, of the list was comprised of charities, foundations and nonprofits focused on the environment, human and health services, as well as science and research. In comparison to other nonprofits, arts nonprofits had a significantly lower social media following. The first ranked arts nonprofit, the Museum of Modern Art, had 128% fewer followers on *Twitter* and 182% fewer likes on *Facebook* in comparison with the number one ranked nonprofit, the National Geographic Society ("Top Nonprofits").

There has not been a significant amount of research on the arts nonprofit relationship with and use of social media. However, from the little research that has been conducted, what has become clear is that arts nonprofits know and believe that social media is relevant to their continued success and survival (Thomson et al. 2). The arts nonprofit community believes there are a number of positive impacts that they could benefit from if they use social media, including:

> Help organizations clarify what they do, and better describe how audiences can engage with their mission-driven work; Help organizations communicate with alumni, patrons and audiences; Make it possible for patrons to engage with each other; and for messages to spread virally. (4)

Arts nonprofits also believe that social media has value; 92% believe that social media is worth the time an organization spends on it (4).

Nonprofits mostly use social media to support their organizational websites (Nah and Saxton 295). Even though the same organizations believe social media has value, can provide a positive impact, and supplies them with "innovative" tools, research shows "heavy reliance on basic informational uses… [is] a lost opportunity for deeper engagement with supporters" (Nah and Saxton 296). Arts nonprofits need to change their tactics regarding social media to realize its full marketing potential.

<u>Societal Movements and Issues on Social Media: A New Marketing Opportunity</u>

Social media content trends reveal changes in how, when and what we are consuming as users. Social media is a repository of pop culture, entertainment, and personal gratification, but it is also now a place where social movements are made and find relevance. Previous research into content shared on social media reveals a tendency towards the frivolous and entertaining:

> [individuals] refrain from sharing sad events, horror or advertisements among each other…social media is a platform where people want to entertain themselves, escape from the harsh realities of life, search for sincerity and fun as well as share information and instructions among each other. (Eren Erdoğmuş and Çiçek 1359)

Current studies show that this is no longer the overall trend of social media content. Recent movements, elections, and shifts in habit regarding consumption of news and politics on social media show that sad, angry, and disappointing events are in fact common social media content. Furthermore, individuals care about issues, and they are sharing them on social media.

As a society, we now access, share and promote all kinds of news and events whether they are sad or happy, as well as cultural and societal issues: "Americans are increasingly turning to social media for news and political information and to encourage others to get involved with a cause or movement" (Anderson and Hitlin 2). In 2016, surveys found that a "majority of U.S. adults—62%—[accessed] news on social media and 18% [did] so often…"; comparatively, in 2012 only 49% of U.S. adults used social media to access the news (Gottfried and Shearer 2). The Pew Research Center found that, in the summer of 2016, 44% of the public got their news on *Facebook* (Gottfried and Shearer 3). In fact, most people who access news online use just one social media site and the platform typically used is *Facebook* (Gottfried and Shearer 5).

More and more news agencies, organizations, and grass-roots movements organizers are using social media to share news and grow support; "…social media sites can help users bring greater attention to issues through their collective voice" (Anderson and Hitlin 2). An example of this is the 2017 Women's March on Washington on January 21, 2017, which began with a single Facebook event that ignited a grassroots movement, resulting in over 500,000 people converging on the District of Columbia to protest and over 600 sister marches around the world (Keneally). In addition to being exposed to the news, individuals are also following politicians and political events through social media as they have never done before. For example: "In January 2016, 44% of United States adults reported having learned about the 2016 presidential election in the past week from social media, outpacing both local and national print newspapers" ("Election 2016" 13). With the end of the 2016 presidential election, this trend has now become normalized. Politicians are now using social media in full force, as evidenced by US Senator

Elizabeth Warren's use of Facebook Live to broadcast a message, after being silenced

regarding the confirmation of Jeff Sessions for Attorney General (Kane and O'Keefe).

The resulting video has been viewed over 12 million times, reacted to over 578,000 times

and shared over 224,000 times (Warren). Issues, in all shapes and forms, have come to

dominate content on social media.

There are many ways that individuals show solidarity with issues on social media.

The most common way is to hashtag a relevant issue. Hashtags were first used on *Twitter*

and were historically developed as:

> an informal method of highlighting ideas in unformatted text and [to try to] grow
>
> conversations around a topic. In 2009, *Twitter* began to hyperlink and compile
>
> hashtags, making them searchable and increasing their utility as identifiers. While
>
> most hashtags are developed organically, some groups deliberately use hashtags
>
> to promote a message. (Anderson and Hitlin 10)

It is now common practice to comment, post, and tweet using hashtags. Because of the

popularity of hashtagging an incident, and promoting a specific hashtag for an event,

hashtags can now be used to track movements and issues. On its tenth anniversary,

Twitter released a list of the top ten most-used hashtags related to social causes

(Sichynsky). At number ten, #GivingTuesday was shown to have been used in posts and

shared over three million times resulting in $10.1 million in donations to nonprofits and

charities (Sichynsky). The viral nature of hashtags has shown that social media

movements are inextricably linked to real-time events and that "major events can caus[e]

a dramatic shift in the tone of conversation" (Anderson and Hitlin 23). Individuals are

responding to events and posting through their own personal lens on social media, using a

hashtag to create a sense of solidarity. For instance, 60% of tweets about race using #blacklivesmatter were tied to current events, while 40% were linked to individual or personal experiences not tied to a current event (Anderson and Hitlin 12).

Individuals also show solidarity on social media by changing their profile images when a tragic or momentous event has occurred. An example of this occurred after the Supreme Court's historic ruling on same-sex marriage. In response, individuals changed their *Facebook* profile photos to have a rainbow overlay or took a *SnapChat* with a custom rainbow filter to show solidarity. In addition, #LoveWins was mentioned over 12.8 million times on *Twitter* (Sichynsky).

Social media is personal, and engaging a brand is an individual's choice. Individuals may have a variety of reasons to do so but these reasons typically align with their identities and beliefs. Most corporations and organizations look at social media as a simple marketing tool and view platforms through the lens of what social media can do for them. Modern for-profit organizations have struggled to insinuate themselves into these social media communities because it is "the social form most foreign to the operation of modern for-profit organizations" (Arnaboldi and Coget 51). There is an "incongruence between the nature of social media and marketing. Users go on social media to connect with people, whereas marketers go on social media to sell things" (Zhu and Chen 335). When branded content shows up in an individual's feed uninvited, it is ignored and or deleted; "…people ignore and disregard social media advertisements by simply turning a blind eye to them" (Zhu and Chen 336). There is no personal connection between the user and the content, other than a tertiary connection insidiously gleaned from tracked Internet activities such as mouse clicks on specific content, webpages

visited, and pages liked. Not only do consumers ignore branded content foisted on them, they are often cynical of it on social media, "…only 15% of consumers trust social media marketing in the U.S." (Zhu and Chen 339).

Consequently, the nature of this uniquely twenty-first century form of communication debunks well-established marketing models. Yet, the vast majority of corporations and arts nonprofits still use formulaic marketing plans presented through social media. These marketing plans create content that comes across as fake, boring and irrelevant to the intended audience:

> It turns out that consumers have little interest in the content that brands churn out. Very few people want it in their feed. Most view it as clutter – as brand spam. When *Facebook* realized this, it began charging companies to get "sponsored" content into the feeds of people who were supposed to be their fans.
> (Holt, "Branding" 8).

This is especially true as cultural shifts and societal tensions manifest on social media: "conventional branding models lack a coherent approach for managing brand equity in the face of cultural change" (Holt, *How Brands* 126). It is critical that organizations acknowledge that "…surviving in the age of the empowered customer requires less dependence on traditional mass-marketing tactics" (Constantinides 41). An important component of this survival is understanding the shifting role and nature of the consumer. The consumer and social media user is no longer a passive player: "… social media made customers more sophisticated and helped them develop new tactics in searching, evaluating, choosing and buying goods and services" (42). Consumers are now more involved than ever in the life-cycle of a brand or product because of the ease of access to

these brands on social media and the Internet. It is clear that the "…future marketing paradigm will be based on openness, cooperation, co-creation and honest commitment to listen to and help rather than control the customer." Traditional marketing models like mind-share marketing, viral marketing, and emotional marketing will not be as successful on social media (Holt, *How Brands* 126). Each of these marketing models is based on some form of manipulation, whether it is aligning with a benefit, forcing content on the user, or using emotion to coerce a connection with a brand.

Many corporations recognize the personal nature of social media and have attempted to create a branded "personality" that they use on social media; for instance, "social media interaction had a positive effect on brand relationship quality…when the brand was highly anthropomorphized" (Erdem at al. 5). Their hope is to create a brand that simulates the personality of an individual who would normally be a fan of their brand or product. This can come across as inauthentic, especially if marketing efforts abruptly abandon precious brand characteristics. Consumers will react badly to what they perceive as inauthentic brand attributes because social media "…allows consumers to set boundaries, in effect, on a firm's possible behaviors, e.g., such that claims that which are too far-fetched may quickly backfire" (Erdem et al 4). This is another reason commonly used marketing methods do not work well on social media.

Arts nonprofits need to move away from traditional marketing models and embrace a new form of branding that is more authentic and successful at harnessing the communication power of social media. The recent trend of movements and issue-driven content on social media provides an opportunity for arts nonprofits to engage individuals on social media using a different but increasingly relevant tactic.

Chapter III
CULTURAL BRANDING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Introduction to Cultural Branding

Social media has significantly altered how we embrace culture and communicate with each other. This alteration in our communication styles and the way we absorb and share cultural elements requires a new form of marketing and a shift in how marketers' approach branding, specifically on social media. Social media has also changed how individuals align with brands:

> Brands succeed when they breakthrough in culture…and branding is a set of techniques designed to generate cultural relevance. Digital technologies have not only created potent new social networks but also dramatically altered how culture works. (Holt, "Branding" 42)

Cultural branding is a form of marketing that harnesses meaningful issues or current societal tensions to create significant consumer-brand relevance. These issues when framed in the context of history and modern trends inherently make a brand more authentic to the consumer and may create a sustained subconscious and emotional connection (Holt, *How Brands*). Once identified, aspects of cultural branding can be seen everywhere in ad campaigns on television and in print, but the most impactful brand content can be found on social media. There are several corporations that currently use aspects of cultural branding, specifically for their social media campaigns. Under Armour's "I Will What I Want" campaign featuring Misty Copeland and Gisele Bündchen used cultural branding tactics to align itself with current societal issues such as body image, race, and gender. CoverGirl's #LashEquality social media campaign

celebrates gender equality and inclusivity, a societal tension that has been especially

fraught since bathroom legislation swept the nation, alienating transgender individuals.

CoverGirl's campaign does this by breaking the mold of make-up models with its first-

ever male model. Riding the same wave of societal backlash against transgender

discrimination and an increasing acceptance of LGTBQ rights, Clairol released a

promotional video on social media that featured the first black transgender model, Tracey

"Africa" Norman, embracing her identity after thirty years of forced retirement. The

video poignantly ends with the tag line: "Color as real as you are" (Clairol). Icebreakers'

recent social media campaign called #UnicornMoment aligns with gender and pay

equality issues. The campaign features a video of a professional woman asking for three

weeks of leave, which she receives to the chanting of "Break Through!" as a unicorn

literally crashes through a glass wall. The spot ends with her telling her boss "I'm not

standard" and the hashtag #UnicornMoment (Ice Breakers).

     Douglas B. Holt has led the study of cultural branding, and he believes that iconic

brands that stand the test of time and are integrated within popular culture have

unknowingly used elements of cultural branding. Cultural branding is a key component

of their relevance and, thus, iconic nature. By pinpointing relevant issues or flashpoints in

history and aligning themselves with the resulting shifts in attitude through cultural

branding, arts nonprofits may naturally accrue some of these iconic attributes and

successfully navigate and implement marketing platforms on social media.

     There are several key principles of cultural branding that allow it to be successful,

specifically the existence of the following phenomena in our society: identity myth and

populist worlds or "crowdculture" on social media (Holt, "Branding" 43). Current

research has found that there are "seven functional building blocks common to all forms of social media: identity, conversation, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups" (Felix et al. 119). The key principles of cultural branding embrace each of these building blocks, creating relevance through that which already shapes and enhances our society and identities.

Holt defines identity myths as "…simple fictions that address cultural anxieties from afar, from imaginary worlds rather than from the worlds that consumers regularly encounter in their everyday lives" (Holt, *How Brands* 8). Identity myths are stories and characteristics that we absorb and imbue with personal relevance to navigate shifting societal ideals and challenges. Examples of identity myths include the allure of the artist and bohemian lifestyle or embracing the raw power of nature and dreams of conquering the frontier. Identity myths are innately tied to the national identity or ideology of a society; they allow individuals to assert their place in the world. When there is conflict and turmoil, identity myths "smooth over these tensions, helping people create purpose in their lives and cement their desired identity in place when it is under stress" (Holt, *How Brands* 8). As societies shift and evolve, so do myths and identity, and often through this change tensions bubble up; "… myths are relevant because, through simple metaphors, [these] stories address profound social tensions" (126). By authentically attributing a brand to an issue, an organization can align itself with that which has influenced or played a part in an individual's identity creation. A brand that aligns itself authentically with an issue or tension, may be imbued with the identity myths that inform an individual's response to that issue. Authenticity is a critical component of this equation. Only if the alignment is believable and in keeping with the history of the brand will it be

accepted and embraced by individuals. Otherwise, it will come across as fraudulent, and the resulting backlash may negatively affect the brand—alienating original fans and dissuading future ones. In many ways, this concept is grounded in Consumer Culture Theory which emphasizes that marketplace choices influence the consumer's sense of self, or Relationship Theory where the individual is choosing a brand as a reflection of their preferred way of life.

We often use issues to inform our framework of identity. Brands are channels through which individuals present themselves, their beliefs, and their mores to the rest of society, therefore "…products or services that are conducive to self-presentation, for example music, books, magazines, movies, TV shows, or newspapers that are known to embody the interests, attitudes, and opinions of a group or a culture – are ideally suited for…social media marketing" (Zhu and Chen 338). Arts nonprofits also embody interests, attitudes, and opinions of a group through their mission, which has originated from a core issue, belief or tension that affects individuals personally and is relevant to the community. As identity myths become intertwined with society ideals and mores, they "grow two kinds of assets—cultural authority and political authority" (Holt, *How Brands* 95). Arts nonprofits already have cultural authority. They are creating culture and adding to culture through their product: the arts. This authority will allow them to be even more relevant and authentic in the myths they may create or respond to.

Douglas B. Holt defines populist worlds as "groups that express a distinctive ideology through their activities." Often found at the margins of society, populist worlds form naturally around societal issues or tensions and the resulting shared ethos is "the collective and voluntary product of their participants" (Holt, *How Brands* 58). Cultural

innovation has often stemmed from the margins of society, where "fringe groups, social movements, and artistic circles [have] challenged mainstream norms and conventions" (Holt, "Branding" 42). These innovations and movements are organically formed, the result of groups of people coming together because of a shared belief or inspiration. For this reason, "activities found within the populist world are perceived as intrinsically valuable to the participants... [and they are] not motivated by commercial or political interests" (Holt, *How Brands* 58). Individuals join a populist world because they truly believe in what that group believes or aspires to. An example of a populist world is the organic foods movement in the context of industrial farming or the peace and love hippy counter-movement to the traditional nuclear family of the 1950s. Populist worlds synthesize complex societal issues into relevant and meaningful beliefs that are easy to understand and identify with. On social media, Holt describes the same populist worlds as crowdcultures. Crowdcultures are populist worlds on social media that are no longer restricted by geography; they are nimble and connected, allowing for an unlimited array of ideologies and innovation to form and disperse (Holt, "Branding" 43). A recent history of social media habits and the rise and fall of hashtags have shown that crowdcultures can quickly gain momentum and just as quickly disperse. There is a natural ebb and flow to culture and society, as ideologies are absorbed and discarded. Typically, this process spanned years and was difficult to track and observe, only revealing itself as time passed and a look back at history exposed patterns. The interconnectedness of social media and the ability to track movements through identifiers such as hashtags allows for a glimpse into the natural rise and fall of societal tensions, and the groups that form around them.

When a brand attempts to align itself to a movement, issue, or any other element of culture that does not seem to fit, it comes off as a tired trope. Few individuals will be moved to react because the brand is clearly trying too hard and feels unnatural. It is easily forgotten—a blip on the radar. There is an instinctual and visceral response "when a brand chases after populist worlds that are incongruous relative to its cultural and political authority, the brand comes off as stilted, even foolish" (Holt, *How Brands* 198). Another reason authenticity is critical is that most individuals on social media are already cynical of brand behavior. Suspicion theory underscores this trend, illustrating "that suspicion is heightened when publics have difficulty determining an organization's motives or seemingly incompatible motives" (Miller Gaither and Austin 699). The millennial social-media generation "call[s] for more 'authenticity' and in general, are more untrustworthy of traditional brands they grew up with" (Kell). It is important to acknowledge that social media and the internet has created a hyper-informed consumer and user.

When an authentic connection is created between an individual and a brand, brand communities begin to form: "brand communities form when a brand provides a myth that is compelling enough to draw people together…so that they can amplify the myth through interactions" (Holt, *How Brands* 184). This can be clearly seen online and on social media. When individuals like an entity's page, follow and hashtag a brand, or participate with the brand by leaving reviews, they are part of the brand community. Using cultural branding to "engage followers to not only passively 'like' but also actively 'love' posting about the brand and sharing their experience with your brand, [is] the ultimate dream of social marketers" (Zhu and Chen 344). Individuals will love a brand if

it has meaning to them, if it is integral to their identity and beliefs. By creating an emotional connection through an authentic shared experience and belief, a stronger bond may be established with the individual.

The users of traditional marketing strategies have struggled to be relevant on social media, however cultural branding is perfectly suited for it. Social media allows instantaneous connection to and observation of social change. Social media is an organic communication tool where issues, often from the fringes of our society, are discussed, popularized, and eventually become contemporary movements. Historic shifts and tensions are more obvious on social media platforms, and these platforms can be the conduit through which individuals access a movement. The organic nature of social media, with multitudes of individuals accessing and adding to content, creates opportunities for discovery. There are many contemporary examples of this phenomenon occurring on social media, but the campaigns developed by Under Armour in 2014 and CoverGirl in 2016 are exemplary models that can help to inform the arts nonprofit implementation of cultural branding through social media.

<u>Under Armour's "I Will What I Want" Social Media Campaign</u>

Founded in 1996 by Kevin Plank, Under Armour's vision statement is "Empower Athletes Everywhere" ("Mission & Values"). In the span of twenty years, Under Armour has built a multibillion-dollar empire of sports apparel and equipment (Harrison). The success of the company is rooted in performance and technology. A former University of Maryland football player, Plank designed an undershirt that would wick away sweat and improve the performance of the players. Through their performance-enhancing apparel

Under Armour has built a cult following by pro football players and professional athletes. However, the performance-driven nature of the products and its history with competitive sports built a brand that was perceived as "uber masculine and testosterone-driven" especially by women ("Insight & Strategy" 1).

Women's fitness apparel has become one of the fastest growing sports apparel markets at $11.4 billion and growing ("I Will" 3). Until 2014, Under Armour struggled to enter this market because "women perceived the brand to be meat-headed and testosterone-driven and purely performance-driven [and] those were all things that 'she' wasn't looking for in a sports brand" ("Insight & Strategy" 2). Candice Chen, who at the time worked for Droga5, the advertising firm hired by Under Armour, worked to help them align with this new market:

> In the past [Under Armour] had dipped their toe into the women's [market], but by their own admission they hadn't gotten it right. In Kevin Plank's words, 'we don't want to do a 'pink it and shrink it' campaign. [Under Armour] actually wanted to uncover a real truth and insight about women that shows her that [they] understand her—not just another brand trying to pander to her. (4)

Droga5 conducted market studies and qualitative research to thoroughly understand women's disengagement from Under Armour. From these studies, it became clear that the average woman did not see herself as a professional athlete and that working out was an important personal choice (4).

To approach the women's market, Droga5 realized that they had to "take Under Armour out of a competitive context and into a personal one" ("Insight & Strategy" 5). To understand why and how to personalize performance, Droga5 surveyed ten powerful

and athletic women ("I Will" 8). This focus group revealed that modern women are "surrounded by pressure" (9). This key insight showed that:

> [The athletic woman's] cultural context…is one of struggle. She feels surrounded by a tremendous amount of pressure. Everywhere she turns, she is preached to with messages disguised as help. One expert may say "lean forward," but another will say "lean out." One may say "you can have it all" but the very next will say focus on one thing. (9)

Droga5 stumbled upon a modern societal tension, one that was growing big and fast. Gender equity and women's struggle to balance work and life, motherhood and career, has continued to be a roiling jumble of contradictions and expectations. Every professional woman now feels she must choose between career or family, and struggles for legitimacy in the boardroom. Under Armour and Droga5 interpreted this issue, and realized that "these [conflicting] messages don't empower women. They do the very opposite by generalizing what a woman should aspire to, thereby denying her the power to decide for herself" ("I Will" 9). Under Armour chose to respond to this tension and empower women with their "I Will What I Want" campaign:

> In a culture obsessed with what a woman should be, the only way for her to free herself from pressure is to define success on her own terms, beyond society's pressure. This wasn't just a truth about fitness, but a truth about what it means to be a woman in the 21st century. (10)

Under Armour and Droga5 purposefully aligned themselves with women. They perceived the issue and chose to empower women rather than add another message to the already-competing noise of uniformity. The idea that women work out for themselves,

that they need only to impress themselves, and that they set personal goals for themselves led the "I Will What I Want" campaign to present "the Under Armour woman as a woman who doesn't need permission because she has will" ("I Will" 11). The "I Will What I Want" campaign had three goals:

> 1. Represent women who don't need permission by telling stories of women who achieve success on their terms. 2. Prove Under Armour offers more than function by showcasing nontraditional athletes who resist pressure and reclaim control of their lives. 3. Ignite communities of women with a statement they can rally behind. (12)

These three goals synchronize with cultural branding principles. Under Armour created a campaign that allowed their brand to tackle a current societal tension, create an identity myth by highlighting heroes that consumers could identify with, all while authentically inserting themselves into the populist world of willful women who have had enough with idealized societal pressures. The "I Will What I Want" campaign used stories to engage and connect with individuals, and these "powerful stories of women tuning out pressure to define success on their own terms," reverberated across social media ("I Will" 13).

The "I Will What I Want" campaign launched with Misty Copeland, a ballerina who did not have "the right body" but nevertheless persevered to become the first African-American soloist for the American Ballet Theater ("I Will" 14). The powerful video that went viral on social media features Misty Copeland dancing beautifully and athletically while a rejection letter is read by a young girl stating that she does not have the right body to do ballet. The video ends with the slogan: "I Will What I Want" and a clear celebration of her success in the face of adversity but also a recognition that there is

more work to do. This video went viral on social media because it is empowering and dynamic, but, most of all, because it is meaningful and authentic. It focuses on the issue of body image and tells the true story of a woman who has overcome stigma, stereotypes, and the so-called perfect body to achieve her goals. The video was shared over and over by anyone who was inspired, could relate, or wanted to make a statement about body image or race. It catapulted Under Armour into the spotlight, turning it "into a symbol of female athletic inspiration and put the brand at the heart of a cultural conversation" ("I Will" 17). Now the Under Armour brand is subconsciously connected in a positive manner to this issue. They are more than just a clothing company and their social media following has never been bigger. Cheryl Benton of the US National Committee for UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women commended the campaign, saying "The 'I Will What I Want' campaign is exemplary in its positive and empowering message for girls" ("I Will" 18).

This social media campaign propelled Under Armour into the women's fitness apparel market. The "I Will What I Want" campaign "generat[ed] five billion media impressions worldwide and more than $35 million in earned media." The Under Armour brand experienced a complete turnaround and the campaign "increased brand health scores around being 'stylish' (9x increase) and 'empowering' (7.3x increase)." After the launch of the campaign, Under Armour had a "367% increase in purchase intent and an astonishing 28% increase in sales" ("I Will" 17).

The Under Armour brand has always been a "challenger, an underdog brand, and…with a really defined voice" ("Insight & Strategy 4). This perception of the brand allowed them to embrace the issue that they did. There is a history of the brand striving to

do the best for its athletes, because it is the right thing to do, not just for the sake of the bottom line, which made their social media campaign authentic and relevant. It was not viewed with cynicism or mistrust because the message of "I Will What I Want" had roots in the scrappy achiever identity of Under Armour.

CoverGirl's #LashEquality Campaign

CoverGirl's roots can be traced to the Noxzema Chemical Company founded in 1917 by George Avery Bunting in Baltimore, Maryland, which sold one medicinal-smelling skin salve product used to treat sunburns, eczema and acne ("Overview" 2). CoverGirl branding, from the very beginning, seemed to break the mold. CoverGirl was sold in grocery stores unlike most cosmetics at the time and the Sullivan, Stauffer, Colwell & Bayles (SSC&B) team that handled CoverGirl was predominantly female, a "rarity" among ad agencies at that time (Scott 1). CoverGirl ad campaigns are also responsible for the famous super models of today, they "helped to elevate fashion modeling…to the celebrated stature it holds today" (Scott 1).

CoverGirl ad campaigns of the late 1960s and 1970s featured models that were beautiful, Caucasian, blonde and with blue eyes, dressed in white and airbrushed to perfection (Scott 17). These campaigns emphasized "clean make up," an almost virginal innocence, and the friendly girl-next door type (Scott 20). This branding worked for CoverGirl until the late 1980s, when the post-feminist movement found the CoverGirl campaigns to be frivolous or distasteful. Focus group interviews to realign the brand revealed "one overriding message: [women] wanted control over their own lives" and this control included what kind of makeup they chose to wear (Scott 24). It was at this point,

that CoverGirl's brand shifted. Shortly thereafter, Proctor & Gamble acquired CoverGirl and moved the brand to its creative agency, Grey. Working with Grey in the early 2000s, CoverGirl began to embrace an ethnically diverse array of actresses, comedians, and rock stars as their brand voice. The brand hired Queen Latifah as a CoverGirl spokesperson, and then in 2011 Ellen DeGeneres (Scott 29). After years of virginal blondes, the hiring of an African American woman and a lesbian was a statement of the diversity the brand was now embracing but also questioned the "gender ideology from which cosmetic advertising has always spoken" (Scott 30).

These shifts set the stage for CoverGirl's recent social media campaign #LashEquality. At the bottom of their press release, CoverGirl defines itself as: "Easy, breezy, beautiful from the start, COVERGIRL now holds an iconic position in the world of beauty and pop culture: the brand that has been empowering women to rock their beautiful for more than 50 years" ("COVERGIRL Celebrates" 2). The word empower is a key component of the brand, and harkens back to when the idea of "control," discovered with the focus groups conducted in the 1980s, began to influence the brand.

In October 2016, CoverGirl signed its first gay male model; *Instagram* and *YouTube* make-up tutorial sensation, 17-year-old James Charles (Safronova 1). The hiring of James Charles is a nod to the current societal trend of "questioning of traditional gender boundaries in fashion and beauty" (2). In addition, social media has made it possible for:

> a group of young men [to make] their way into the [beauty] industry through a
> grass-roots entrepreneurial effort entrenched in *YouTube*, *Instagram*, *Twitter* and

Snapchat. With devoted followings, they have carved out a space to experiment

and expand the notion of being male. (Safronova 2)

Social media has fomented a crowdculture where it is acceptable for all genders to wear

and experiment with make-up.

A month later, CoverGirl announced that Muslim beauty blogger Nura Afia, who

wears a hijab, would also be a spokeswoman. At a time when there is mass stereotyping

and tensions with the Muslim community, CoverGirl's Nura Afia said her inclusion

provides "little girls that grew up like me [to] have something to look up to. [And it]

shows that we're average Americans" (Larimer). The hijab has become a misunderstood

symbol, often interpreted as encouraging extreme religious belief and banned in multiple

countries. Nura Afia hopes Muslim girls watching her will be inspired, and underscores

CoverGirl's efforts to empower women:

I can relate to a lot of Muslim girls, we've all felt insecure about either being

Muslim, wearing a hijab, or just your culture, at one point. Just because it's not

the norm here. So I want them to feel proud of who they are, and where they

come from… (Larimer)

CoverGirl's inclusion of a gay male and a hijab-wearing woman as spokesmodels

shows that the brand aligning itself with the new perceived "norm" of the beauty

industry. This is an attitude of inclusiveness that is predominant in the Millennial

Generation and Generation Z: "Our population is becoming increasingly diverse. These

trends are certainly something millennials have appreciated as they've grown up, but

they'll be even more important for Gen Z" (Kell). Generation Z is the most ethnically

diverse generation to-date and is "far more accepting of gender fluidity;" 56% of

Generation Z "know someone who uses gender neutral pronouns" (Kell).

Both James Charles and Nura Afia join Sofia Vergara, Katy Perry, DJ Amy

Pham, and *YouTube* stars Chloe + Halle as "brand ambassadors" for CoverGirl's most

recent social media campaign #LashEquality (Walano). #LashEquality promotes

CoverGirl's new mascara, So Lashy, as a universal mascara designed "for anyone

wanting to transform their lashes into a bold look." By saying "anyone," the brand

implies that they are not just marketing this product to women (Kell). The *YouTube* video

promoting #LashEquality published on November 16, 2016, has over 5.5 million views.

It features all ambassadors, and opens with James Charles proclaiming "Today is a great

day for lash equality," followed by two stacked parallel black lines that transform into a

blinking eye with lashes ("So Lashy!"). The two parallel black lines are reminiscent of

the Human Rights Campaign logo of two stacked yellow lines in a blue square. The

thirty-second spot ends with a call to action to "celebrate lash equality" and a play on the

"Easy, Breezy, Beautiful" slogan transforming it into "From Easy, Breezy—Equal is

beautiful! —CoverGirl." The video has over 7,000 comments with over 20,000 likes and

6,500 dislikes ("So Lashy!").

CoverGirl is taking a stand on polarizing societal tensions in the United States—

transgender visibility, gender fluidity, immigration, religious tolerance—all while

emphasizing the need for equality, inclusiveness, and empowerment for all. This social

media campaign works for CoverGirl because it has laid the foundation in previous ad

campaigns, and it has a long history as an innovative brand. Cultural branding embraces

an issue, often from the fringes of society, and that is exactly what CoverGirl is doing.

The hiring of these two models was embraced by most CoverGirl fans and sparked

immediate press coverage by news outlets ranging from the *New York Times* to *Teen*

Vogue, all espousing the ground-breaking model choices in a positive light.

Arts Organizations and Cultural Branding Examples

Arts organizations and arts nonprofits have dabbled in elements of cultural

branding. A recent trend is for performing arts groups to respond to a cultural tension or

issue through a video posted on social media. The *Kinky Boots* writer Harvey Fierstein,

composer and lyricist Cyndi Lauper, and cast responded to the bathroom legislation

affecting transgender citizen's rights with a video featuring the play's finale "Just Be"

reinvented into "Just Pee (Where You Want To Pee)" (Snetiker). The video features the

Kinky Boots cast taking a "Bathroom Break." The song and video encourage the audience

to accept gender diversity and the transgender community. The video, which has been

viewed over 216,000 times, ends with a call to arms: "You change the world when you

change your mind" ("Kinky Boots"). The cast of *WICKED The Musical* posted a video

at the end of Women's History Month on *Facebook* of the "women of Oz performing

'Break the Chain' with moves inspired by the song's original choreography…in support

of V-Day's One Billion Rising campaign" ("WICKED"). This video was posted to show

solidarity with the organization One Billion Rising, which seeks to create "mass action to

end violence against women in human history" ("About One Billion"). The video, posted

on March 31, 2017 with 3,400 likes, 650 shares and 72 comments, is especially poignant

as tensions over political and violent extremism towards women continue to spread

across the globe ("WICKED").

An example of arts nonprofits participating in cultural branding was the campaign #DayofFacts on February 17, 2017. In response to the 2016 presidential election and the scandal over 'alternative facts,' over 280 library and museum institutions participated in the social media campaign #DayofFacts organized by museum educators Alli Hartley and Mara Kurlandsky (Kaplan). The campaign sought to give a voice to museums, libraries, and other institutions during a moment of societal tension:

> While there were no limits on the factual content that could be shared, we encouraged institutions to share content relevant to this particular moment in American history. By not taking an overt political stand but simply sharing mission-related, objective, and relevant facts, we aimed to show the world that our institutions are still trusted sources for truth and knowledge. ("Day of Facts")

This campaign allowed museums and libraries to enter the conversation authentically, by drawing on their mission and presenting what they know best. Alli Hartley, co-organizer of the campaign, states: "it's important for museums to remind people … we're here as trusted sources of information and facts are important and truth is important" (Kaplan). Participating museums and libraries did not make an overtly political statement but rather used their mission to authentically place themselves in the center of an issue and create relevant content. The campaign had astonishing success, and the #DayofFacts was used and shared thousands of times, so that it became a trending hashtag. The campaign was covered in the media and multiple museums, libraries, and other organizations were featured and interviewed.

Chapter IV
THE ARTS NONPROFITS' DISTINCTION

A Compatible Organizational Model

Arts nonprofits have an ideal organizational model for implementing cultural branding principles, specifically regarding social media. The arts nonprofit financial structure is belief-based and mission-driven rather than profit-based. Arts nonprofits do not attempt to solely profit from the community, rather they are guided by their mission to create meaning, opportunity and entertainment to add value to their community. In addition, arts nonprofits have fiscal transparency, they submit a Form 990 to the IRS which is published to the public and can be accessed in searchable databases provided by entities like Guidestar and the Foundation Center. The practice of published financials ensures that arts nonprofits have a habit of disclosure, which may prevent the community from feeling detached and skeptical of the arts nonprofit agenda on social media. In addition, because arts nonprofits rely on donors, they are more likely to want to engage individuals: "…organizations more focused on acquiring funds through external sources are more likely to adopt and utilize technologies, such as *Facebook* and *Twitter*, that enable them to reach and interact with a broader set of potential donors" (Nah and Saxton 297). Arts nonprofits want donors to be both financially and philosophically invested in their organization. Passion and belief guide investment in arts nonprofits and, furthermore, so can engagement with the nonprofit on social media. Through cultural branding, these elements can enhance an individual donor's attachment to the arts nonprofit.

The arts nonprofit's mission makes it a perfect fit for cultural branding. Arts nonprofits can naturally and authentically attach themselves to an issue because of their structural dependence on the mission to guide decisions. This mission, which is vetted by the founder, board, major donors, and even staff, ensures that it is an accepted and believed-in cause by its constituents. It sets a goal that the nonprofit strives to achieve or a problem to solve, but most of all it is community and humanity based. Most importantly, the mission typically encompasses an issue that is relevant to the community: "in nonprofit organizations the ultimate strategic goal is fulfillment of a social mission – the creation of public value" (Nah and Saxton 297). If an arts nonprofit uses cultural branding to align with an issue that is inextricably linked to its mission, any action that it takes will be considered an authentic extension of its mission. In cultural branding, "the brand becomes the symbol, a material embodiment of the myth. So as customers drink, drive, or wear the product, they experience a bit of myth." (Holt, *How Brands* 8). The brand and identity of an arts nonprofit must be a direct reflection of its mission goals and principles. The brand should be created from the framework that is the mission statement. The issue arts nonprofits align themselves with will always be reflected in their mission. This will create an authentic connection between the nonprofit brand and an individual's identity.

Arts nonprofits already have an intangible community connection which may make it easier for them to immerse themselves in crowdcultures found online. The mission of an arts nonprofit legitimately connects and binds it to the community. Arts nonprofits know, through their fundraising initiatives and the feedback that they receive, that their audience responds to and cares about societal and cultural issues. In addition,

arts nonprofits are perceived to not be overtly commercialized which may allow them to naturally tap into populist worlds and crowdcultures. They do not impose on individuals in a commercial manner in the way for-profit corporations do, rather, they want audience members and participants to be genuinely interested in their offerings. Using their mission as a guidepost, arts nonprofits can naturally assimilate within the populist worlds or crowdcultures that share their values.

The arts nonprofit product can be defined as art, entertainment, and education, but most of all it is an experience. The product and existing brand elements should inform the application of cultural branding and its potential success. The product is "simply a conduit through which customers can experience the stories the brand tells" (Holt, *How Brands* 36). The arts nonprofit product is also often visual. Humans are visual creatures and the evolutionary arc of social media platforms from text-based to image-based content proves just how visual we are. Most platforms are based in visual language, whether it is the manipulation of images or the creation of videos, or simply sharing visual content created by another. In 2016, the top three social media platforms for nonprofits were *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *YouTube*, while "the importance of Instagram has risen faster than any other social media site" (Leroux Miller 3). There is recognition that arts nonprofits have access to visual content and it is a strength to be used. Visual social media platforms may be considered more dynamic, emotional, and intriguing. Carefully curated visual social media allows arts nonprofits to tell their story, to create a brand and to align themselves with issues relevant to their missions in a way that is poignant but also easy for the social media user to digest and understand.

An arts nonprofit's products are integrally connected with its mission but are also connected to emotion and experience, forming a cohesive consumer story. The emotional nature of the arts nonprofit product makes it perfect for telling stories around the issues it is aligning itself with. The arts nonprofit's very existence is based on personal and emotional stories: "One of the most inspiring aspects of working in philanthropy is the opportunity to hear powerful stories from so many different organizations – stories of transformed lives, revitalized neighborhoods, and game-changing partnerships" ("Stories" 3). The branding of a product can be defined as the communication with potential customers in the form of stories and myths; "customers buy the product to experience these stories [or myths]" (Holt, *How Brands* 36). There is an opportunity to engage individuals on social media through visuals but also through the story told by the arts nonprofit. Not only does this personalize the content, but it creates an emotional connection to the individual which may also align with his or her identity and values. There may also be opportunities to craft a story that authentically places the arts nonprofit in the center of a movement, setting the stage for an issue that will create connections with others.

Research on cultural branding has shown that subcultures, groups or beliefs that are on the fringes of society, are an integral element to the creation of crowdcultures and identity myth on social media. Arts nonprofits are imbued with cultural authority in many communities because of their role in providing art for consumption. Some arts nonprofits may also find themselves on the edges of society because they push the envelope, innovate and ask uncomfortable questions. Arts nonprofits often explore creatively and stretch their audience's perceptions and experiences through the experiences they

provide. They can be an important element of subcultures which are often influential in shifting perceptions and ultimately may be catalysts of societal movements. This makes arts nonprofits a relevant contributor to content about issues that are directly related to their mission on social media.

Arts Nonprofits' Social Media Usage Trends

Arts nonprofits are now ready more than ever to embrace cultural branding and social media. A survey conducted in 2013 by the Pew Research Center found that a large portion of arts nonprofits are already posting visual content: "…94% of these organizations use their website to post photos, 81% are posting or streaming video, and 57% are streaming audio." Over 50% of arts nonprofits are using blogs to tell stories, write opinion pieces, share news and update their audiences. Arts nonprofits are willing to share their content; "…90% allow users to share the organization's content via email, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, or another social media platform, and 81% allow users to post public comments on their blog and website" (Thomson et al. 20). Public interaction and comments are not only the norm on social media, but are critical practices necessary for increasing and encouraging engagement with an arts nonprofit's social media content.

The most commonly-used platforms by arts nonprofits are *Facebook* at 99%, *Twitter* at 74% and *YouTube* at 67% (Thompson et al. 26). Many arts nonprofits use social media platforms other than these three and over half (56%) of arts nonprofits have a profile on four to nine social media sites (26). Arts nonprofits are active on social media: 48% post to social networks daily, 25% post several times a day, 28% several times a week, 16% once a week, and only 11% post even less frequently (28). Arts

nonprofits surveyed use social media to engage with their audience (82%), monitor their

organizational profile in the community (77%), gather information and input (65%), and

to crowdsource an idea (52%) (30). Social media requires near-constant maintenance and

content creation to stay relevant, and the statistics above "…suggest that many arts

organizations see social media activity as an important part of their work flow, and one

that requires frequent tending to keep content up to date and relevant" (28).

It is clear that the benefits of social media are numerous (Thomson et al. 36). Of

surveyed arts nonprofits, 85% believed that the statement "social media created more

risks than benefits" was not true at all (39). A Pew Research Center survey emphasizes a

sea-change in thinking towards social media:

> Survey results reveal that on a purely practical level, the internet, digital
>
> technologies and social media are powerful tools, giving arts organizations new
>
> ways to promote events, engage with audiences, reach new patrons, and extend
>
> the life and scope of their work…Their response suggests that the majority of
>
> these arts organizations, with enough funding and foresight, are eager to use the
>
> new digital tools to sustain and amplify their mission-driven work. (56)

By aligning with a mission-oriented issue on social media, organizations are given

incentives to join in the conversation with relevant content. The arts nonprofit voice goes

from an unwanted advertisement to a potentially welcome participant in a conversation or

movement. Social media also increases an organization's audience by providing "…arts

organizations with broad cultural opportunities" that they may not have known existed

(Thomson et al. 56). Social media keeps arts nonprofits from becoming stagnant and

losing touch with their communities, and it also may keep their communities more

engaged. The Pew Research Center found that "adults who connect with the arts through social media are much more engaged" with the institution, for example: "35% of all adults …visited a museum in the last 12 months; among those who follow a museum on a social networking site, the figure is more than double at 82%" (27). Individuals who follow an organization on social media are more likely to attend events hosted by the organization. A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center also found that most arts nonprofits responded that social media led to: "1. Increased attendance at events; 2. More ticket sales; 3. Increased public awareness of the organization; [and] 4. An ability to support fundraising efforts" (33).

The use of social media is also a trend in fundraising and will continue to play an important role with new generations. Not only are audiences inspired by content on social media, they are also inspired to donate:

> 62% of donors worldwide prefer to give online; 27% of donors worldwide cite social media as the communication tool that inspired them the most often to give; [and] 72% of millennials prefer to give online and they are most often inspired to give by social media. ("2016 Global" 4)

The number of social media users will continue to grow, far outpacing the reach of traditional marketing efforts. And yet, arts nonprofits continue to underutilize the social media platforms' power to engage, capture and solicit potential audience members, "for every 1,000 email subscribers, nonprofits have 355 *Facebook* fans, 132 *Twitter* followers, and 19 *Instagram* followers" ("2016 Global" 6). It is critical that arts nonprofits grow these numbers to remain relevant in an increasingly digital, visual, and fast paced world—cultural branding will help them do that.

<u>Implementation Challenges</u>

Implementing a robust social media campaign while using cultural branding principles is complicated. Arts nonprofits' social media use is determined by several factors, each with its own obstacles, including: strategy, capacity, governance, and environment (Nah and Saxton 295). A social media presence requires an organization to make material, human, and technological investments; among arts nonprofits with limited capacity, there is understandable hesitation in pursuing these investments.

There is also a concern that social media will allow negative public relations or "unfiltered public criticism" to be easily accessible, tarnishing the organization's name (Thomson et al. 4). In 2013, the Pew Research Center found that the "most common response about negative outcomes [of social media] related to unfiltered public criticism of the organization" (36). Arts nonprofits are reluctant to lose control over their brand image. However, this is already happening in the social media realm. The key is to manage bad press and complaints, through acknowledgement and active management of disgruntled users. Social media allows negative press to be circulated easily. This is an issue that will probably never go away. An organization's social media can be the target of negativity, a repository for frustrated and upset customers to unload for thousands, if not millions, of other users to see. These aspects of social media can be disruptive and dangerous if neglected. The reaction of the organization will have an impact on whether the negativity spirals out of control or is corralled, directed, and transformed. An apology, a message of empathy, or a positive action to correct the situation of a disgruntled user can go a long way in resolving the issue on social media. Audience feedback is instantaneous and course correction can be swift and efficient. Effective

policies or guidelines must be put in place to guide response to these kinds of situations. Consistency is important as it instills a sense of trust in the organization: the organization made a mistake, but as evidenced on social media it took steps to fix it. The steps an organization takes or does not take to reach out and appease users will reflect positively or negatively on that organization.

Arts nonprofits are beholden to their donors and board members, and some of these individuals may be reticent to align with an issue on social media or may not understand the importance of social media. With older generations quickly becoming more and more enamored with social media, it is only a matter of time before they give their support for this important communication tool. Fear of choosing a side and aligning with an issue is justified; issues are often tension points that polarize society. To balance aligning with an authentic issue directly correlated to the mission with the avoidance of excessive politicizing of the organization will be difficult.

Another hurdle is the difficulty of securing funding to support social media activities (Thomson et al. 5). It is challenging to find funding for operational activities in general. Social media, however, provides an opportunity to put a distinctly different spin on this request. Rather than focusing on social media as a communication and marketing tool, the organization should instead focus on the community building and outreach aspect of social media. Organizations may have better luck securing funding or grants if foundations understand that social media allows the organization to connect with its community, invite its community in, and even helps the nonprofit to better understand its community.

Arts nonprofits can use cultural branding to achieve success with social media engagement but an organizational shift is required for there to be progress. Arts nonprofits need to invest resources to successfully use cultural branding principles and navigate social media. Arts nonprofits do not typically assign enough staff or budget to the effort despite the perceived value of social media (Leroux Miller 18). In 2016, nonprofit marketing and communications staff worried most about: "staff and training restrictions; budget and financial restrictions; time constraints; competing priorities; lack of strategy or a plan; organization integration and growth; technology constraints; burnout and unrealistic workload" (22). There is a pattern to the elements that concern the marketing and communications staff of arts nonprofits. In addition, there is "not a clear trend in management structures" of the arts nonprofit marketing and communications departments and arts nonprofits struggle to implement a framework of management for successful social media implementation (22). While social media is a free platform, there are organizational costs: "…the use of social media is not [completely] cost-free—organizations with successful social media efforts must devote resources in terms of time and money—and larger organizations are better able to afford the investment" (Nah and Saxton 298). Smaller arts nonprofits are already struggling to meet operational needs, and social media is an added drain on both financial and staff resources.

Management structure is a critical component of cultural branding and social media success. There may be disconnect between management and staff regarding social media content and application. Younger staff may perceive social media as exciting while older staff are typically more comfortable with traditional marketing efforts. Clear

communication lines are critical for implementing and crafting social media content, and it is concerning that "only 40% of communication directors describe the working relationship with their [Executive Director] as excellent" (Leroux Miller 3). It is critical that the Executive Director is on board with developing cultural branding initiatives on social media. There will be times when there may be uncomfortable pushback from the community or questions from donors. In addition, social media must be integrated with the rest of the marketing process (Constantinides 43). It cannot exist alone or be completely disconnected from other marketing initiatives. Cultural branding and social media rely on authenticity, and inconsistent messaging will only undermine efforts to engage individuals.

Equally important is support from the Board. Board support is not as out of reach as one would imagine, typically "larger boards are more likely to have a social media 'champion' present, which prior research suggests is strongly connected to IT adoption" (Nah and Saxton 300). A larger nonprofit with more board members will typically have more stakeholders and consequently a dependency on external stakeholders. This greatly increases their likeliness to use social media and their appreciation of social media. Board members tend to be older, however as previously discussed there is an upward trend of usage among older generations, that even surpasses Millennial usage. However, smaller nonprofits or a more traditional board may be hesitant to invest in social media.

Unfortunately, there is little to no staff or time dedicated to social media. Social media is considered expendable against other more pressing day-to-day items. The majority, 76%, of arts nonprofits have staff who oversee social media in addition to other organizational responsibilities; "only 27% of these social media using arts organizations

say that they have a staff member whose position is dedicated to social media management" (Thomson et al. 28). In a Pew Research Center survey, 74% of arts nonprofits felt that it was very true or somewhat true that they did not have the staff or resources to use social media effectively (39). A 2016 survey of nonprofit marketers and communicators found that their top five problems were: "too many competing priorities; urgent tasks take precedence over important ones; too many interruptions during the work day; lack of coordination of co-workers; [and] lack of clear process and procedures" (Leroux Miller 18). In addition, there is a high turnover of nonprofit communications and marketing staff; a 2016 survey found that there is a 50-50 chance communications staff will leave in two years (3). This staff is also underpaid; arts nonprofits pay their communication staff ten percent or more below the average salary of other nonprofits. This suggests that communications and marketing are undervalued by arts nonprofits (27). It may be for this reason that over fifty percent of nonprofit communicators do not continue in the profession (3). The time-consuming and changing nature of social media, makes "social media marketing, in practice, …too complex to be managed and executed exclusively by a single individual or even department" (Felix et al. 124). Arts nonprofits must invest in staff for social media to maintain a legitimate presence and use this powerful communication tool to their advantage.

Most arts nonprofits already have a website or digital presence and "…preexisting web capabilities might constitute resources that organizations can mobilize in pursuit of additional web-based goals" (Nah and Saxton 299). Arts nonprofits clearly understand there is a need for website maintenance, "…76% of those social media using groups reported they have fulltime paid staffers tending the sites" (Thomson et al. 28). There

may be reticence to invest in a website, but "there is in fact growing evidence that internet and website capabilities constitute critical organizational capabilities for the successful strategic use of information technology" (Nah and Saxton 299). In fact, website reach can be a window into the organization's "communication competency" (299). A website is a must for the 21st century organization and it is critical for social media: "…most of the strategic objectives of social media marketing require the presence of an impeccable company website: functional, efficient, trustworthy, organizationally integrated and consumer oriented" (Constantinides 43).

In addition to these operational hurdles, there are several challenging steps and best practices that need to be taken to develop, implement, and maintain cultural branding. Holt outlines the following as critical elements for determining brand alignment. First, examine major societal categories such as class, gender, and ethnicity (Holt, *How Brands* 212). These societal categories will often have tensions associated with each. Second, the focus should not be on trends or entertainment (212). These are fleeting fancies that will not have longevity. The goal is to embrace societal tensions that seem to be a reoccurring issue. Third, the brand is an "historical actor," meaning it is important to acknowledge the history of the brand. Embracing a cultural movement that is completely different from the brand will not be believable and could do harm to the brand (212). Staying informed is critical for responsiveness to potential societal tensions and issues as they relate to the nonprofit mission. Pinpointing social tensions and issues can be elusive, requiring significant amounts of time for research and knowledge of current events. An arts nonprofit may be able to discover tensions by following other entities and individuals on social media that embrace the same principles and concepts as

described in their mission and vision. It is also a best practice to remain aware of potential community concerns by following other community groups, civic groups, and even the local government. Fourth, always maintain a holistic view of people (212). Every movement, social construct and identity has multiple layers and facets. Some myths can be distilled into simple stories but underneath this layer of simplicity is a history of complex characters and tensions that led to that moment. Finally, be empathetic, "the most successful authors of [brands] have empathetic antennae that connect with the critical identity issues that animate the lives of people they encounter" (212). Arts nonprofits are fortunate because they typically have access to individuals who are able to distill societal issues with empathy. Artists are often empathetic when they create artworks, plays and music that speak to people or respond to a period of time. Creative Directors may also be a resource, as they are often in tune with artists and their audiences, and are often visionary and forward-thinking.

The mission should always be the deciding factor for content creation and engagement with others on social media. Content can be organic through a single post, as conversations shift on social media or it can be purposeful—shedding light on a particular relevant issue through a campaign. In all cases, it should always be related to the mission and it should be quality posts that aspire to original content. Social media posts should be graphically compelling. Goals of nonprofit communicators should always be brand awareness and engagement of the community; this should be reflected in the content that is posted on social media (Leroux Miller 3). Creating original content with compelling visuals requires significant time and effort, as well as staff collaboration. Arts nonprofits must attempt to post more often, social media is a conversation and new

content stimulates interest. Followers will forget about the arts nonprofit's presence if it disappears from their feed for weeks at a time. This is not an impossible goal. Currently, 21% of nonprofits post to *Facebook* "multiple times a day" and 31% of nonprofits post to *Facebook* daily (Leroux Miller 3). Implementing cultural branding principles on social media will be difficult for arts nonprofits but it is not impossible. It is an opportunity for the arts nonprofit sector to embrace a new form of branding that may change for the better how their content on social media is perceived, increasing engagement, and number of followers.

Conclusion

Arts nonprofits that implement cultural branding principles will be successful in engaging the public through social media, leading to a stronger relationship with their current audience and exposure to previously unreached audience sectors supporting viability in an increasingly competitive entertainment environment. Technology and social media are now forever integral to how we interact and will continue to shape our society. Arts nonprofits recognize the value of social media, while underinvesting in the departments that oversee this powerful communication tool. Arts nonprofits are not alone in struggling to implement successful social media campaigns. Social media debunks traditional marketing efforts. It embraces the fundamental and complicated elements of human nature emphasizing identity relevance. It is an organic amalgamation of shifting conversations, making it difficult to manipulate. It is personal, emotional and also easily filtered. Content that is not relevant to the identity and interests of the user is skipped over for more exciting content. Cultural branding encourages brands to align with potential issues or tension points in society in order to develop relevant content. Arts nonprofits possess a distinct set of unique qualities that will allow them to embrace this modern form of branding with success. By using a mission-issue to drive content creation, arts nonprofits can tap into societal tensions and issues—seamlessly enter the conversation, insert themselves into crowdcultures, and potentially attract a following.

In an increasingly competitive and connected entertainment environment, arts nonprofits must embrace social media to maintain their current audience members and attract new ones. Social media and the Internet will continue to blur the line between physical and virtual entertainment in our society. It is critical that arts nonprofits develop

a legitimate voice in the online conversation. Arts nonprofits must invest in their communications and marketing departments. Without the proper resources, staff will not be able to implement cultural branding principles to their full potential. The challenges of implementing cultural branding will require complete dedication to the best practices needed to successfully engage new audience members.

Social media is a tool and not a means unto its own end. At this moment, most nonprofits use social media for social media's sake, rather than as a vehicle for achieving goals. Current social media content from arts nonprofits does not have a sustained impact. Arts nonprofits feel they need to catch up and they do not know how to do it. In fact, all they must do is to use what they already have, their mission, to create an emotional connection and an authentic link to trending movements and issues on social media.

APPENDIX I: LIST OF TOP NONPROFITS ON SOCIAL MEDIA IN 2016

Rank	Organization	Facebook	Twitter
1.00	National Geographic Society	40.6M Likes	11.5M Followers
2.00	Ted Talks	9M Likes	7.3M Followers
3.00	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	6M Likes	5.4M Followers
4.00	National Public Radio - NPR	4.8M Likes	5.9M Followers
5.00	WikiLeaks	3.1M Likes	3M Followers
6.00	Public Broadcasting Service	2.6M Likes	2.2M Followers
7.00	Human Rights Watch (HRW)	2.1M Likes	2.8M Followers
8.00	Museum of Modern Art	1.9M Likes	2.5M Followers
9.00	People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)	4M Likes	642K Followers
10.00	World Bank PNGO Project	1.9M Likes	1.7M Followers
11.00	Do Something	2.2M Likes	797K Followers
12.00	Metropolitan Museum of Art	1.6M Likes	1.1M Followers
13.00	Save the Children	1.5M Likes	1.4M Followers
14.00	Human Rights Campaign	2.3M Likes	589K Followers
15.00	Livestrong	1.6M Likes	1M Followers
16.00	World Wildlife Fund	1.9M Likes	689K Followers
17.00	UN Commission on Human Rights/UN Human Rights Council (Geneva)	1.4M Likes	1.4M Followers
18.00	Gates Foundation	1.2M Likes	1.7M Followers
19.00	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	1.1M Likes	2M Followers
20.00	Humane Society of the United States	2.5M Likes	370K Followers
21.00	ONE	1.1M Likes	909K Followers
22.00	Cleveland Clinic Foundation	1.5M Likes	556K Followers
23.00	Amnesty International	1.1M Likes	744K Followers
24.00	St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital	1.9M Likes	399K Followers
25.00	Operation Blessing International Relief	2M Likes	346K Followers

Rank	Organization	Facebook	Twitter
26.00	Invisible Children	3M Likes	248K Followers
27.00	Amnesty International USA	793K Likes	1.8M Followers
28.00	American Red Cross	725K Likes	2.6M Followers
29.00	Mayo Foundation	833K Likes	1.3M Followers
30.00	Doctors Without Borders	1.2M Likes	534K Followers
31.00	American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)	1.5M Likes	310K Followers
32.00	American Cancer Society	1.1M Likes	635K Followers
33.00	World Food Program USA	750K Likes	1.2M Followers
34.00	World Vision USA	1.1M Likes	569K Followers
35.00	Stand Up To Cancer (Entertainment Industry Foundation)	1.3M Likes	275K Followers
36.00	Nature Conservancy	850K Likes	513K Followers
37.00	National Wildlife Federation	1.1M Likes	401K Followers
38.00	Smithsonian Institute	452K Likes	2.3M Followers
39.00	Green Peace	475K Likes	1.5M Followers
40.00	American Museum of Natural History	903K Likes	282K Followers
41.00	Susan G Komen Breast Cancer Foundation	2M Likes	118K Followers
42.00	Samaritan's Purse	1.2M Likes	163K Followers
43.00	Focus on the Family	2.6M Likes	84.3K Followers
44.00	In Touch Ministries	1.2M Likes	160K Followers
45.00	Oceana	752K Likes	241K Followers
46.00	Our Daily Bread Ministries (RBC Ministries)	2.5M Likes	75.7K Followers
47.00	Make-A-Wish	811K Likes	202K Followers
48.00	AARP	1.4M Likes	99.9K Followers
49.00	Billy Graham Evangelistic Association	2.2M Likes	77.7K Followers
50.00	American Heart Association	813K Likes	201K Followers
51.00	ACLU	668K Likes	257K Followers
52.00	CARE	406K Likes	657K Followers
53.00	Charity: Water	331K Likes	1.5M Followers
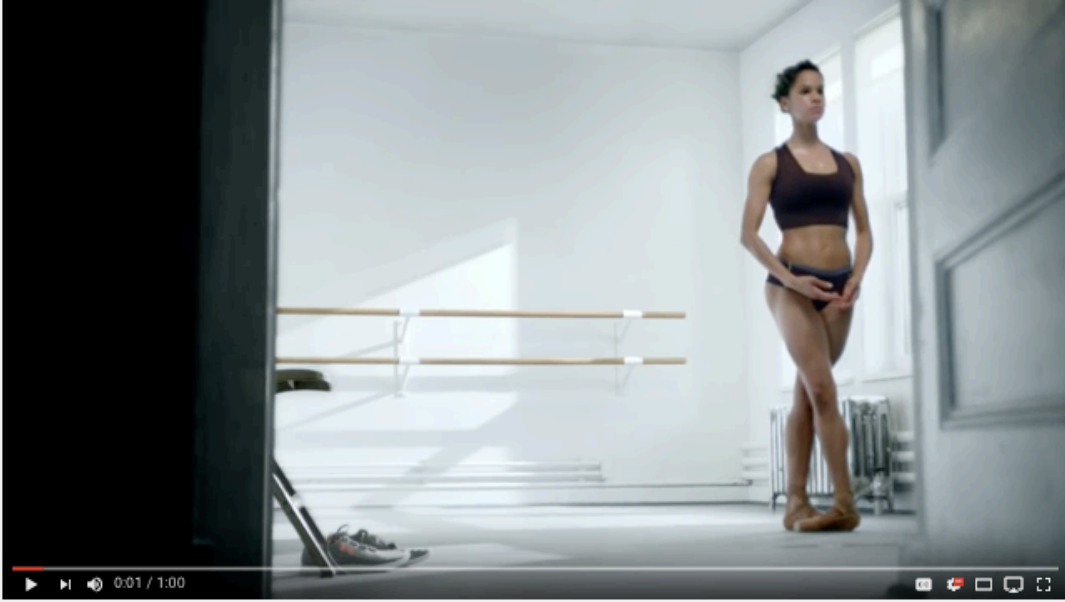
Rank	Organization	Facebook	Twitter
54.00	USO	845K Likes	129K Followers
55.00	Rotary Foundation of Rotary International	452K Likes	303K Followers
56.00	Natural Resources Defense Council	564K Likes	195K Followers
57.00	New York Public Library	244K Likes	1.4M Followers
58.00	Sierra Club	521K Likes	190K Followers
59.00	Feeding America	569K Likes	168K Followers
60.00	National Audubon Society	778K Likes	96.1K Followers
61.00	American Diabetes Association	657K Likes	105K Followers
62.00	Kiva	281K Likes	571K Followers
63.00	Planned Parenthood Federation of America	406K Likes	205K Followers
64.00	Sea Shepherd Conservatory Society	385K Likes	238K Followers
65.00	Safe Kids Worldwide	1.1M Likes	60.2K Followers
66.00	Compassion International	383K Likes	217K Followers
67.00	Special Olympics	749K Likes	82.1K Followers
68.00	Alzheimer's Association	697K Likes	81.1K Followers
69.00	Habitat for Humanity	491K Likes	111K Followers
70.00	Council on Foreign Relations	317K Likes	277K Followers
71.00	Creative Commons	228K Likes	602K Followers
72.00	Art Institute of Chicago	408K Likes	141K Followers
73.00	Friends of the National Zoo	427K Likes	125K Followers
74.00	Metropolitan Opera	362K Likes	184K Followers
75.00	National Parks Conservation Association	382K Likes	148K Followers
76.00	The Center for Strategic and International Studies	343K Likes	175K Followers
77.00	The Trevor Project	315K Likes	220K Followers
78.00	Monterey Bay Aquarium	575K Likes	78.6K Followers
79.00	Defenders of Wildlife	629K Likes	67.7K Followers
80.00	LPGA (Ladies Professional Golf Association)	395K Likes	106K Followers
81.00	Zoological Society of San Diego	552K Likes	77.9K Followers
82.00	Disabled American Veterans	1.3M Likes	41.1K Followers

Rank	Organization	Facebook	Twitter
83.00	Girl Effect	330K Likes	172K Followers
84.00	Farm Sanctuary	466K Likes	80.9K Followers
85.00	March of Dimes	619K Likes	58.1K Followers
86.00	The Zakat Foundation of America	691K Likes	52.3K Followers
87.00	Oxfam International	152K Likes	750K Followers
88.00	Columbus Zoo and Aquarium	346K Likes	92.1K Followers
89.00	Walk Free	6.2M Likes	24.8K Followers
90.00	Girl Scouts of the USA	406K Likes	61.7K Followers
91.00	International Fund for Animal Welfare	535K Likes	53.8K Followers
92.00	Women for Women International	318K Likes	88.9K Followers
93.00	Children's Hospital (Boston)	744K Likes	40.7K Followers
94.00	Conservation International Foundation	256K Likes	108K Followers
95.00	Museum of Fine Arts, Boston	272K Likes	98.5K Followers
96.00	Teach for America	234K Likes	137K Followers
97.00	North Shore Animal League America	653K Likes	41.6K Followers
98.00	Boy Scouts of America	374K Likes	59.4K Followers
99.00	International Rescue Committee	261K Likes	92.6K Followers
100.00	National FFA Foundation	337K Likes	62K Followers

Source:

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APPENDIX II: UNDER ARMOUR "I WILL WHAT I WANT" EXHIBIT

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covergirl Follow

56,503 views · 22w

covergirl Next up: @nuralailalov! Her feelings on being a part of COVERGIRL's #SoLashy fam? "Ecstatic." So thrilled to have this genuine beauty as one of the faces of #LashEquality: bold, sexy lashes for all. 💜

view all 145 comments

aiman_a So beautiful ❤️

calli.carpa @the_miyyahproject @melanin_queen96

calli.carpa @theellenshow

rachaelmaroc ❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️

uroosaax Yaaaaaaass @hafsaaaa_h

bijansei FINALLY 🙌🙌🙌🙌 Diverse beauty! This is huge! I'm so proud of Covegirl 👏 👏

hafsaaaa_h @uroosaax 😍😍😍😍

velvetyvibes She's so gorgeous 🤩

♡ Add a comment... ○○○

Image text: I never thought I'd see women like me represented
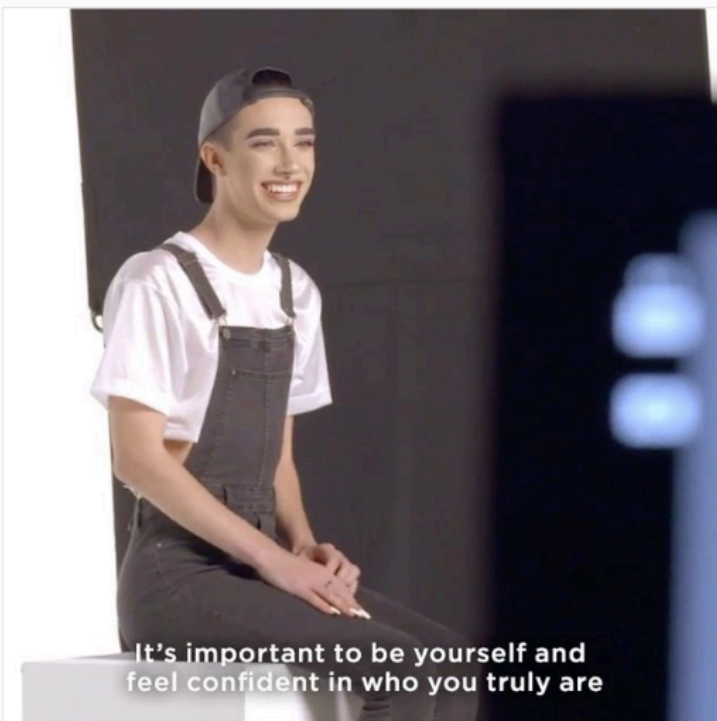
covergirl Follow

98,408 views · 22w

covergirl Celebrating #LashEquality by putting a spotlight on each member of our #SoLashy fam. First up? New COVERGIRL @jamescharles. His take on being authentic: "just being you and being happy with you." #PREACH! 💜

view all 85 comments

eli.bbyyy @livia.monroe

josie.crone95 *coverBoy

maddyyshaw @lorenziggs

maybe_fierce I love this!

jiimenezzzz Why are you all so negative grow up ! Act like your age already #1 anyone can wear whatever they want or do anything they want with THERE BODY it shouldn't effect you unless you spend hours obsessing over him #2 he does makeup better than have of you women ever will don't be mad lol #3 cover girl cover boy its there company

♡ Add a comment... ○○○

Image text: It's important to be yourself and feel confident in who you truly are

66
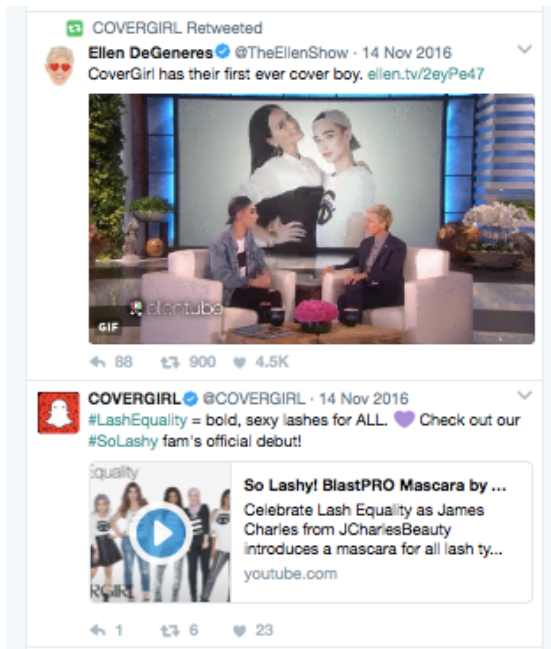
Sources:

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@COVERGIRL. "Now on the @todayshow: my girl @Nuralailalov talking diverse beauty, #SoLashy, and being a COVERGIRL!" *Twitter*, 16 Jan. 2017, 5:49 am, https://twitter.com/COVERGIRL/status/820991326229405698.

WICKED The Musical

Kinky Boots: "Just Pee"

Kinky Boots: Just Pee (Where You Wanna Pee)

kinkybootsbway

Subscribe 9,218

216,867 views

+ Add to   Share   ••• More   3,453   1,596

Published on Jun 3, 2016

Cyndi Lauper and Harvey Fierstein join the cast of Kinky Boots on Broadway for a bathroom break. You change the world when you change your mind.

KINKY BOOTS is the unforgettable Broadway sensation with music by Tony® and Grammy®-winning pop icon CYNDI LAUPER. It's a feel-good celebration

SHOW MORE

COMMENTS • 1,159

#DayofFacts (February 17, 2017) Social Media Campaign

The Field Museum Video

Example Postings from the #DayofFacts Storify

Phila Museum of Art
@philamuseum

#HenryOssawaTanner's painting was the 1st work by an African American to enter a major American museum. #DayofFacts ow.ly/wER530953WO
10:00 AM - 17 Feb 2017

43   90

Discovery Museum
@Discovery_Mus

An Illustrated Celebration of Trailblazing Women in #Science (via @brainpickings) ow.ly/fPM7306ewXn #dayoffacts
9:40 AM - 17 Feb 2017 · Newcastle Upon Tyne, England

9   5

Georgia MuseumofArt
@GMOA

Artist Willem de Kooning was an illegal immigrant. Find out about art by immigrants in our collection: bit.ly/2kLNWT9. #dayoffacts
8:07 AM - 17 Feb 2017

14   31

Getty Hub
@GettyHub

A single field trip to an art museum can increase students' ability to think critically about art bit.ly/2kD7Fm2 #DayofFacts
9:11 AM - 17 Feb 2017

264   420

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