

Public Relations strategies in Social Media:

Campaigning for social change in the education sector

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Abstract

In this paper we will discuss the use of social media when campaigning for social change in the education sector, through the analysis of the PR strategy in use: the collection of real testimonials and the development of storytelling, as contents that enhance affinity and engagement towards social change. In order to do this analysis, we developed two case studies that discuss the social campaigns of two NGOs in the educational sector, developed via social media: «#LeonorDejaLaEscuela» by *Fundación Secretariado Gitano* in Spain, from 2015, and «#Amigo-Bagos-Douro» by *Bagos de Ouro* in Portugal, from 2017. The first one was implemented mainly on Twitter, one of the most well-known social network in use today, and the other one used WhatsApp, the most popular mobile messenger, as means for campaigning to broaden education access. This study looked to answer the following research question: what is the role of social media in nonprofit organizations PR strategies? This equation expressed two scientific objectives: (1st) to deepen the knowledge on the ability of social media to produce communicative interaction; and (2nd) to (re)frame Public Relations within communication for development strategies. The analysis demonstrates that social media have greatly contributed to the way Public Relations strategies within the third sector are conducted. Social media can have a key role in nonprofit communication: to lobby for social causes, to create alliances, to raise money, to mobilize volunteers, to engage traditional media and community relations, or to advocate for policy reform.

Keywords: Public Relations, Social Media, Nonprofit Organizations, Education Campaigns, Social Development and Change