**Communication Channels**

**Social Media**

Let’s look briefly at why exploiting social media more effectively is so important for us to consider.

The *2014 Social Media Marketing Industry Report* by Social Media Examiner surveyed 2800 marketers to analyse the impact of social media on their marketing efforts. Although mainly based on US marketers, the findings are still enlightening. When asked about the benefits of social media, 92% of marketers indicated that their social media efforts increased exposure, 80% indicated that it increased traffic to their website, 72% indicated that it developed loyal fans and 66% indicated that it generated leads. Other benefits were marketplace insights, improved search rankings, growth of business partnerships, reduced marketing expenses and improved sales.

The top platforms used by marketers in 2014 were Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, blogging, Google+ and Pinterest.

Commonly used content in social media marketing includes original written content (94%), curation of other people’s content (73%), original visual assets (infographics, memes, etc.) (60%), original videos (60%) and original audio content (podcasts) (22%). Original written content and original visual assets and videos were rated “the most important”, but as these are also among the ones requiring the most time, planning and confidence to produce, they often increase only after some months (or years) of experience with social media.

**Facebook**

The demographics data below (from 29/05/2015 [www.fananalyzer.co.uk](http://www.fananalyzer.co.uk)) shows the age range of users who access Facebook from the UK. We also know that 51.34% of UK Facebook users are women and 48.66% are men. So the age range of 25-65 years of age we want to attract most, and the gender we are most likely to attract, are both well represented on Facebook.

It presents an ideal tool for generating awareness, building a fan community and recruiting active volunteers from the general public.

**LinkedIn**

A LinkedIn search returns 255,249 people with Skilled Volunteering interests and 202,746 with Board Service interests in the UK. A search on both combined returns 319,596 people in the UK.

If we split these by years of experience or by seniority level, we get a sense of the likely age groups most active on LinkedIn. From young professionals to experienced experts, we can be sure that the age groups and skill levels and “admin” skill types we most would like to recruit from are active on LinkedIn.

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| **UK LinkedIn User with Volunteering/Board Service Interest** | **Years of Experience** |
| 16,822 | Less than a year |
| 39,111 | 1 to 2 years |
| 63,235 | 3 to 5 years |
| 73,187 | 6 to 10 years |
| 120,522 | More than 10 years |

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| **UK LinkedIn Users with Volunteering/Board Service Interest** | **Seniority Level** |
| 34,349 | Director |
| 18,220 | Owner |
| 14,730 | VP |
| 11,499 | Students & Interns |
| 9,174 | CXO |
| 3,707 | Partner |
| 2,071 | Volunteer |

With its main function as a networking and recruitment platform, it offers an ideal tool for researching likely candidates for highly-skilled volunteer or trustee roles. With its publishing and groups functions, it provides another great platform on which to build a network of interested followers.

**Twitter**

Twitter is the most demanding of the platforms. The short-lived nature of tweets and the high activity expectations of followers mean this platform requires frequent daily tweeting in order to be “heard” and to maintain a loyal following. It is a key communication tool for national and international charities and a great channel for promoting awareness and fundraising campaigns (i.e. exploiting the power of the hashtag).

However, given the very local nature of our work and, more importantly, given our existing time pressures, other networks should take priority in 2015 for NB.

**Pinterest**

Pinterest is a great way to share products and practical information (e.g. step-by-step tutorials) in visual form. It is the most long-lived network in the sense that pins have very long lives, with repins by new users still happening long after the original publish date. So it is ideal for evergreen content (e.g. content that doesn’t date). Although it is increasingly used by all sorts of companies and organisations, it is still dominated by crafters, DIYers, home-makers and beauty seekers.

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| Topics relevant to NB could be for example: * Tutorials for DIY biodiversity projects such as bee / insect / bird / hedgehog hotels
* Bouquets from flowers you are allowed to pick in the wild
* Visual ID of plants you are *not* allowed to pick in the wild
* Marketing Tips for conservation groups
* Etc.
 |

Pinterest is another quite time intensive platform and is not as good a fit with NB’s recruitment objective than Facebook or LinkedIn.

**YouTube**

YouTube is a great way to share video of events, interviews and “How To” tutorials. It is another long-lived network where videos gather a following over time. However a lot of organisations don’t have a clear video strategy in place, using it as just a place-holder for random, low-quality videos and/or run out of steam a few months in when they realise the time needed to produce high-quality videos consistently. Also, with the rise of native video in Facebook, YouTube is losing some of its appeal.

I would recommend we use Pinterest and YouTube to inspire our own ideas and do produce visuals and videos as part of our marketing strategy, but that we host them on our website and promote them via Facebook and LinkedIn as appropriate, rather than creating our own Pinterest boards and YouTube channels.

**Google+**

Having a Google+ account and posting unique content for this account can help with Search Engine Optimization (SEO) for your organisation, but is not as popular a network for our key audiences. I would recommend not to consider Google+ just yet, but to monitor SEO needs for our website and keep an eye on marketing/audience developments with Google+ for the future.

**Blogging**

Once we create more visual and written content, longer pieces could lend themselves to a blogging format. As we are using WordPress, our website is already equipped to handle this type of content. Regularity and frequency of blog posts is again a factor for success, but the website can in itself work as a repository for long-form content to which you drive Facebook and LinkedIn users for further information, without expecting a lot of people to sign-up to a regular blog.

The type of content we produce (e.g. evergreen vs seasonal/news-related/opinion pieces, etc.) will determine whether simply adding new pages to the website or a blog will be the better solution.

**In summary, Facebook and LinkedIn are currently the best fit with NB’s volunteer recruitment objective for 2015,** and it is better for us to concentrate on 2 networks and do these well, rather than stretch ourselves too thin. We can always explore other networks like Twitter, Pinterest, Youtube, Google+ in a year’s time, once we have established success and efficient habits on Facebook and LinkedIn.

**Press & Radio**

The 2014 Social Media Marketing Industry Report also indicates other forms of marketing, with Press Releases (51%) being in the top 4, after Email (85%), Search Engine Optimization (65%), and Event Marketing (i.e. speaking and networking) (60%).

**The Breeze Radio**

**Here are the many ways** [The Breeze Radio](http://www.thebreeze.com/northhants/community/basingstoke/) **can help promote charities:**

* **Community Billboard online: charities can promote their organisation, local events and campaigns, and volunteer roles for free.**
* **On-air features about your cause and events (where possible).**
* If events are of particular interest (e.g. news-worthy / human story angle), the news team can be contacted to pitch it for more coverage.
* Your cause, event, news or organisation may also be chosen to be covered on their Facebook and Twitter accounts.
* If your event is big enough and fits with their editorial plans, journalists may attend your events and cover live on Twitter and Facebook as well as air a follow-up commentary on the next show.

The radio is in search of interesting stories and is willing to help the community, so the main thing to gain their support is to adhere to selection criteria and deadlines as advertised on their website.

**The Gazette**

**Here are the many ways** [The Gazette](http://www.basingstokegazette.co.uk) **can help promote charities:**

* Online and in print Events listings in [What’s On](http://www.basingstokegazette.co.uk/leisure/) section
* Online and in print [News](http://www.basingstokegazette.co.uk/news/), [Community](http://www.basingstokegazette.co.uk/communitynews/), [Campaigns](http://www.basingstokegazette.co.uk/news/campaigns/), [Green Town](http://www.basingstokegazette.co.uk/news/green/) and [Q&A](http://www.basingstokegazette.co.uk/news/qanda/) items allow for many different angles and stories over the year.
* Your cause, event, news or organisation may also be chosen to be covered on their Facebook and Twitter accounts.
* If your event is big enough and fits with their editorial plans, journalists may attend your events and cover live on Twitter and Facebook as well as write a follow-up article for the next issue.

The paper is in search of interesting stories and is willing to help the community, so the main thing to gain their support is, as with the radio, to adhere to selection criteria and deadlines as advertised on their website.

***Top Tip:*** *In order to be PR-ready, be Hashtag-ready, even if you do not have your own Twitter account. That means picking a clear and easy hashtag per event or campaign (one which isn’t already in us) and including it in all your promotions and communications. This means it will be easy for others to promote your event and for you to track news mentions.*

**BVA Volunteer Centre**

The BVA Volunteer Centre can help with:

Individual Volunteering

* Promoting volunteer roles on BVA website & BVA Volunteer Centre Facebook.
* Listing roles on Do-It (which in turn makes them display on LinkedIn).
* Promote roles to walk-in volunteers in one-to-one consultations.
* Promote roles at volunteering events they attend in Basingstoke and Deane (Careers Fairs, Information Days, Volunteer Awareness Day, Job Clubs and Job Centre Training sessions).

Corporate Volunteering

* Promote your team projects and skills projects to local companies who wish to achieve their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) objectives.
* Help you pitch and make connections with companies at Meet & Match events.

Volunteer Recruitment and Management Training

* Attracting Volunteers
* Retaining, Valuing and Supporting Volunteers