

CASE INSIGHT 18.1

Milaap is a social enterprise in Bengaluru, India that raises low cost capital for the working poor through its online platform. We speak to Alister D'Monte on the use of social media at the organization.



Alister D'Monte for Milaap

Milaap is a social enterprise with a difference. We provide finances to the poor and impoverished by raising loans through our website. Therefore, we do not accept contributions or donations but rather raise money as micro loans for the working poor for providing basic

needs such as vocational training, water, sanitation, solar energy, and enterprise development. Visitors to our website can choose a borrower, use their credit/debit card, and lend from as little as ₹1000 (\$25).

With nearly 2.5 billion people in the world using the Internet and millions connected to social media, it has become important for a social enterprise like ours to join in. We've realized that social media is playing a big role alongside other marketing efforts—primarily because our target audience spends considerable time on Facebook and Twitter. Social media has turned out to be an excellent way to engage our potential lenders. We share our fundraising campaigns through our Facebook and Twitter networks. Our social media presence has grown over the years and currently our Facebook page has more than 18,000 Likes and our Twitter page has more than 1,300 followers.

On Twitter we speak to our followers and share with other peeps (people on Twitter) about other topics such as education and the environment, rather than just posting about Milaap. We also create and share 'stories of impact' on our YouTube channel where people can learn in 2 minutes the impact of the loans made through our website to our borrowers. When these videos are shared,



Raising low cost capital through Facebook
Courtesy: Milaap

thousands of people see what Milaap is all about. So far, we have shared over 40 videos that have been viewed by 18,000 people.

Our 'adopt an entrepreneur' is one initiative that became very popular with our lenders. Launched on Independence Day in 2012, the aim of the initiative was to fund 30 rural entrepreneurs in 2 weeks. We shared it through social media and followed up with personal emails and newsletters to our supporters and subscribers. Our Facebook page showcased three lenders and their progress (the extent to which they funded the entrepreneurs). We constantly updated and encouraged our community to go for the challenge. Integral to the 'Adopt an Entrepreneur' initiative was the concept of 'Tweet-a-thon' where we asked people to stop talking and 'start acting'. The response was great and the hashtag #STSA was trending on Twitter on that particular day. We received hundreds of responses for this initiative and it kept trending on Twitter. We shared the idea with people that this is one of the things they could do to help an entrepreneur expand her/his small business. The initiative worked out to be a great success. Later we created a 'thank you' video for our supporters.

Such initiatives have helped Milaap develop our social network and relationships within the community and in doing so helped hundreds of poor from around the country to start a living of their own.

What other digital marketing activities or initiatives can Milaap undertake to further its mission of helping the poor raise funds? Give reasons for your answer.