



THE IMPACT OF **EMPATHY & IMMERSIVE MEDIA** IN FUNDRAISING

A case study and communications plan for charity: water.

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To my wonderful family, thank you for all of your love and support.

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ABSTRACT

Nonprofit organizations and fundraising go hand in hand, and with 1.5 million nonprofits in the US alone (Statista, 2022) these various “do-good” organizations will soon be competing for donor funds (Davis & Moscato, 2018) if they aren’t already. Like other businesses, nonprofits search for low-cost, high-reward options for marketing, improving messaging, and raising awareness, particularly through digital marketing (Yoo & Drumwright, 2017). Many nonprofit organizations have found remarkable success in fundraising campaigns by implementing immersive media. Understanding the core uses of this technology is paramount in crafting a strategy to execute a successful fundraising campaign. This capstone project has three main objectives. First, to synthesize current research in an effort to understand why VR can be such a powerful tool in evoking an empathetic response. Secondly, by researching the nonprofit charity: water and its development of the 360° film “The Source” as a case study, this paper will discuss the successes of its implementation and ways to improve its use in the future. And finally, a detailed communications plan will be presented as a practical implementation of this project’s research.

“We may be first in a lot of things like technology, but we are behind in empathy.”

- JAVIER BARDEM



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INTRODUCTION

Oculus released [this](#) (Meta Quest, 2021) commercial in 2021, comically portraying two individuals forging a friendship by interacting in Oculus Virtual Reality (VR) headsets, without realizing that the newly befriended was, in fact, their next-door neighbor. Throughout the commercial, scenes would alternate between the two playing games together, clearly having a fun time, then cut to them standing silently next to each other on the elevator. Followed by a scene of them working together through VR, cut to a scene of them having a tense interaction in a hallway. At one point, they even yell at their neighbor through the wall to “keep it down,” not realizing that they are yelling at each other. They even commiserate in their disdain for their neighbor while playing a game with said neighbor. While this commercial is certainly amusing, it also presents an intriguing concept that is foundational to this project. Could VR provide an opportunity for users to find common ground and/or express empathy?

There have been a few advertising campaigns that have aimed at this idea of empathy and that we have more in common than that which separates us. Take for instance, [this](#) (TV2, 2018) ad from TV2 (Norwegian television channel) called “All That We Share”. Or maybe you’ve seen [this](#) (Whittier, 2017) ad that Heineken produced called “Worlds Apart”. While the approach is different, these ads aim to show how we can find connections by finding common ground and showing empathy toward others. To that end, could VR also provide its users with an opportunity to as the adage goes, “Walk a mile in someone else’s shoes”?

THIS PAPER HAS THREE MAIN OBJECTIVES:

1. To synthesize current research in an effort to understand why VR can be such a powerful tool in evoking an empathetic response
2. Present a case study using charity: water and its VR experience “The Source”
3. Deliver a detailed communications plan as a practical implementation of the research and resources presented in this paper.

THE RESEARCH

IN THIS SECTION:

- Theoretical Framework
- Considerations for Empathy
- Understanding Empathy
- The Background of Empathy
- Defining Empathy
- The Problem with Empathy

Theoretical Framework

Joan Tronto's work on the ethics of care has been foundational to many scholars and her definition of care theory states "... that caring be viewed as a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible" (Tronto, 1993, p.16). Tronto notes that the word "species" was an intentional choice, inferring that the obligation of care is not simply a theoretical moral issue, but a responsibility that each individual should strive to carry.

Tronto's (1993) work on the theory of care breaks care into 4 phases:

1. Caring about – involves being aware and/or paying attention to the need.
2. Caring for – when someone assumes responsibility to meet a need.
3. Caregiving – is when the actual material meeting of the need is accomplished.
4. Care receiving – this would involve the response of the individual receiving care.

Schwarzenbach's (1996) paper titled "On Civic Friendship" builds upon care theory and argues that there is a place, and more importantly, a need, for the development of "friendships" within societal and political contexts. Pointing to issues of social importance (i.e., economic disparities, violence, religious and racial tensions, and rising rates of homelessness, drug abuse, and illiteracy) she shows the need for some type of intervention in the United States society and culture. Since this article's publication, many of those issues of social importance

direly need to be addressed and have only grown in prominence. While some (Engster, 2005) would argue that including friendship in the theory of care overly complicates the concept, Schwarzenbach’s goal was not to prove or show how everyone could become close friends. Rather she argues for a broader view of friendship as a unifying exercise toward mutual benefit and goodwill. This broader perspective aligns closely with the concept and definitions of empathy and common ground discussed later in this project.

There is an interesting dynamic explored within the theory of care that is important to acknowledge within the context of this project. Tronto (1998) notes that care can be “fraught with conflict” (p. 17). Tronto states that there can be a conflict between two individuals (i.e., Caretaker and irate patient), between two equals (i.e., Partners trying to care for a child), where there is a power dynamic (i.e., boss and subordinate), and even personal conflict (i.e., weighing the time, energy, or even cost to giving care). Recently, the context of caring for others could bring an individual into conflict with an entire societal system. Throughout 2020 many individuals were inspired to take part in Black Lives Matter marches all over the United States in an act of solidarity and care for black Americans who are facing oppression. This act of care brought individuals into conflict with opposing individuals and, at times, their own government. While that may be extreme, it is still a timely and poignant example. Tronto notes that while conflict may be unavoidable through the process of care, coming to a resolution in and of itself is part of the act of caring.

While the main emphasis of care theory is focused on care for others, there is another element that focuses on self-care, recognizing that someone who doesn’t care for themselves will limit their abilities to help others. While self-care is an important aspect to care theory, it is beyond the scope and focus of this project. The theory of care provides a generally accepted framework to view an individual’s responsibility to care for another, a core concept of this project.

Considerations for Empathy

In Hannah Read’s (2021) “Empathy and Common Ground,” she recounts the story of Ann Atwater and C.P. Ellis (a story recently adapted into the 2019 film “Best of Enemies). In the 1970’s many issues divided the public into adversarial groups. Possibly none more than the desegregation of public schools, a well-documented polarizing issue of that era. Atwater and Ellis were tasked to co-chair a committee with the assignment of



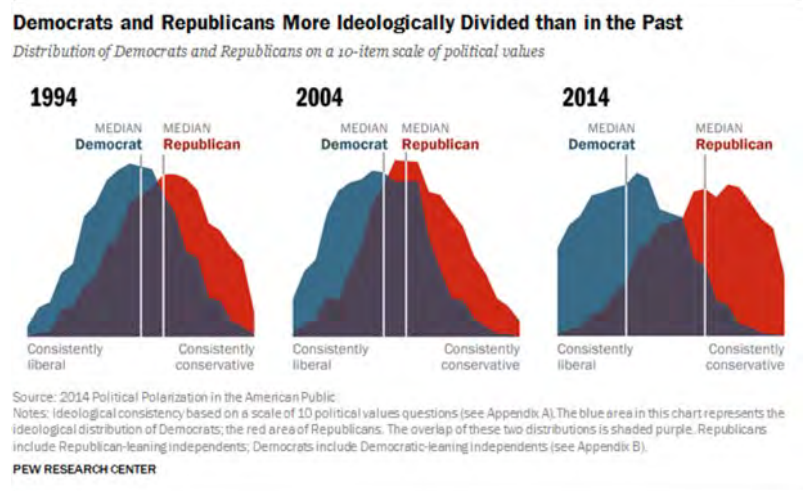
Atwater & Ellis circa 1960. (Activist Ann Atwater, 2020)

addressing issues with the desegregation of schools in Durham, NC. If not a daunting enough task already, Atwater (a black mother and prominent leader of the local civil rights movement) and Ellis (a white father and head of the KKK in Durham) were seemingly opposite and opposed in every way.

To Reed's (2021) point, the two diametrically opposed individuals were not only able to find a way to work together as co-chairs, but share experiences, find common ground, and eventually become lifelong friends. Their friendship was so impactful that Ellis quit and publicly renounced the KKK. Reed argues that Atwater and Ellis's response to each other and any positive outcomes of their experience are a direct result of empathy and finding common ground.

Understanding Empathy

In the United States, there is a growing sense of division and polarization (Wojcieszak & Kim, 2016). Legacy media and academic research have extensively covered this divide, and this shift has extended into most areas of the average American's life (Chon, 2014). This sense of division in the United States remains a prominent issue with the general opinion and the data both pointing to a growing gap between opposing groups and ideals (Pew Research Center, 2014).



(Pew Research Center, 2014)

It was perhaps with this in mind that President Barack Obama identified an “empathy deficit” as the cause of many of the issues in American politics (Cameron et al., 2019, p.1) and culture (Pew Research Center, 2019).

“The world doesn’t just revolve around you. There’s a lot of talk in this country about the federal deficit. But I think we should talk more about our empathy deficit — the ability to put ourselves in someone else’s shoes; to see the world through those who are different from us — the child who’s hungry, the laid-off steelworker, the immigrant woman cleaning your dorm room.”

-Barack Obama

Americans aren't just divided along political lines. Recently there have been many issues facing American culture that seem to divide people into separate camps (i.e., masking and vaccinations, the southern border crisis, abortion access, LGBTQ rights, racial tensions, gun control, and many others). Taking just these examples into consideration, it's no wonder that most people feel like the United States is divided more than ever (Chon, N., 2014).

Generally speaking, empathy is considered an important skill for navigating everyday life (Cameron et al., 2019), and studies have shown that empathy, particularly in a small group setting, can be a major contributing factor to bridging a gap between two polarized groups (e.g., Batson et al., 2009; Esterling et al., 2021; Gastil et al., 2008; Wojcieszak, 2012). Empathy is also considered a fundamental dimension of human development and supports pro-social behavior (Barbot & Kaufman, 2020).

Some would argue that empathy is most effective between two people, one on one, and Reed (2021) suggests that the way empathy is expressed is through finding common ground (a set of shared beliefs, attitudes, values, and experiences). She argues that common ground is crucial in every positive relationship ranging from casual acquaintances to friends and even closest loved ones. Reed contends that empathy can help us find common ground, either by creating it or uncovering it when individuals choose to go through the empathic experience.

Background

The study of empathy isn't a uniquely modern conception. Davis (1983) notes that the study of empathy dates as far back as 1759. Davis explains that the early studies of empathy come to a similar conclusion, that empathy is expressed in two distinct ways: an intellectual reaction on the one hand (simply understanding the other person's perspective), and a more emotional reaction on the other (feeling what the other person feels). Empathy was viewed almost exclusively as either a cognitive choice or a visceral reaction. However, Davis' research expands on this idea noting that empathy was not exclusively intellectual or emotional and that these two separate empathetic categories might work more hand in hand than originally theorized.

Davis developed a method for measuring these four characteristics called The Interpersonal Reactivity Index, expanding the concept of empathy into 4 measurable categories. Davis explains that empathy could be viewed as "a set of constructs" instead of the previously accepted two-sided concept showing that empathy is likely an array of the emotion or responses of empathy, rather than a switch on or off in a cognitive or emotional state. Cameron et al. (2019) build on Davis' work and explain that while these varying facets of empathy are separable, they also overlap and often coactivate in many situations.

Davis' (1983) study gives a comprehensive look into the key factors of empathy, the role empathy plays in an individual's life, and shows an important shift in the perspective and study of empathy. Many other studies have based their research on Davis' foundational work

(e.g., Cameron et al., 2019; Simas et al., 2020; Read, H. 2021; Wojcieszak & Kim, 2016).

Scholars of varied disciplines - including but not limited to psychology (Gentile, et al., 2019) economics (Singer & Fehr, 2005) theology (Doehring, 2018) philosophy and ethics (Songhorian, 2019), and neuroscience (Stevens & Taber, 2021) - have discussed the implications, importance, morality, and perhaps risks of empathy. Decety and Cowell (2014) note the prominent role empathy plays in popular culture as well as academia. “References to morality and empathy appear more and more often in the popular press, political campaigns, and in the study of a wide range of topics, including medical care, psychopathy, justice, engagement with art, and so much more” (p. 526).

Defining Empathy

Empathy is such a broad topic, and the studies of it are so extensive that even the definitions of empathy vary. Stevens & Taber (2021) note this same challenge: “A consistent definition of empathy does not yet exist in the literature, often containing overlapping concepts of sympathy, emotional contagion, and compassion” (p. 1). One doesn’t have to study the concept of empathy for long to find conflicting arguments (both for and against) and overlapping definitions.

Many have suggested that empathy falls on a spectrum of responses ranging anywhere from apathy to sympathy, compassion, and/or empathy. Sympathy and compassion are frequently used synonymously with empathy; however, their common uses and definitions vary. If a concrete definition of empathy is unavailable within its current context, then having a common understanding moving forward is crucial.

While many offer definitions of empathy for consideration, many of them fall short for one key reason, a failure to account for any action taken by the individual expressing empathy. It is because of the varied, and often contradictory definitions of empathy that I humbly offer the following definition of empathy for the context of this project. Empathy is an individual’s willingness to listen, learn and feel, to understand another’s feelings and perspectives, and to use that understanding to guide future actions.

The Problem with Empathy

Empathy is not necessarily considered a universally accepted remedy or solution. Various studies argue that empathy has little to no use under its current overly broad definition (Decety & Cowell, 2014) or that empathy creates an opposite divisive effect (Simas et al., 2020).

Studies have shown that when an individual encounters a large problem an effect called “psychic numbing” can occur (Slovic & Västfjäll, 2015). Psychic numbing can refer to an effect when individuals can mentally “turn off” when faced with a problem that seems so large and daunting. This numbing effect has also been compared to compassion fatigue, and the

concern is that if these trends continue, society will passively witness many other hardships and atrocities (Slovic & Västfjäll, 2015).

Research also shows that there are emotional and/or cognitive costs to empathy. Stevens & Taber (2021) explore a model of an empathetic process where there are multiple opportunities for an individual to opt out of an empathetic response (or as previously discussed “switch off”) and instead focus on self-protective behaviors. Research would also suggest that on top of an emotional and/or cognitive cost, there may be other costs, such as an individual’s time, material donations, or in some cases financial contributions (Cameron et al., 2019). With this expense, there may be more resistance or even complete avoidance of empathy. Cameron et al.’s (2019) thorough and sometimes complex studies contend, that people generally preferred to avoid empathy. This presents one of the major roadblocks in the case for empathy: an individual’s willingness to exercise empathy. Evidence would suggest that people “robustly and strongly preferred to avoid empathizing with *strangers*” [emphasis added] (Cameron et al., 2019, p.972).

However, Babbie (1988) notes that often there are individuals who despite feeling “powerless to affect such problems, sometimes [they] step forward and take action” (p. 37). Babbie offers examples of individuals stepping in to help with a problem they may not completely solve. Examples included a wide array ranging from Martin Luther King Jr’s fight for equality, all the way to an anecdote of an individual picking up a glass bottle in a public park. Babbie notes “it became clear that taking personal responsibility for public problems is a source of profound satisfaction” (p. 37). Perhaps in this tension, between an overwhelming problem and an individual choosing some form of action, is where empathy could make a lasting difference.

WHY IMMERSIVE MEDIA?

BACKGROUND

Immersive media is such a broad term, that often varied terms and definitions are used interchangeably. For clarity's sake, let's spend some time understanding the different types of immersive experiences.

Extended reality (XR) is a generally accepted umbrella term that encompasses immersive media. Under that umbrella, experiences are divided into further categories depending on the level of immersion and/or the type of device used for the experience.

Screen-Based & Virtual Worlds – Most often accessed through a computer, users can access virtual content. Examples of this type of content would be a virtual world like Second Life, Roblox, or immersive web content (similar to NY Times immersive pages). While screen-based experiences offer the lowest levels of immersion, they have one significant advantage, the highest level of accessibility. It's important to note that some virtual worlds can be experienced through VR (see below) as well.

Augmented Reality (AR) – AR is a digital overlay where through the device digital content appears in the user's environment. AR is typically used on mobile devices. Many individuals have used AR and not even realized it. AR has become incredibly popular through social media applications like Instagram and

Snapchat through the use of "filters" where the user's face is digitally changed in some way. Retailers like Ikea and Amazon have also developed AR tools to allow users to place digital versions of products in their rooms to inspect how they would look. Like screen-based experiences, AR is lower on the scale of immersion but highly accessible and very engaging for the user. This is by far the most widely used method of XR with 110.1 million users expected in the U.S. by the end of 2023 (eMarketer, 2021).

Mixed Reality (MR) – Mixed reality, like AR, can overlay digital content into the user's space but with a much higher level of realism and interaction. For example, one MR game will scan the user's environment for walls and then project robots breaking and crawling through the wall (it's not as terrifying as it sounds, promise). Because MR experiences are aware of objects in the user's area, digital objects can interact with real-world objects (like hiding behind a wall or ducking behind a table). Mixed reality requires specialized equipment like Microsoft's HoloLens or Magic

LEVELS OF IMMERSION

LOW

HIGH



SCREEN
BASED



AUGMENTED
REALITY (AR)



MIXED
REALITY (MR)



VIRTUAL
REALITY (VR)

Leap's headset. MR introduces a new level of immersion, however, the headsets are quite expensive, and therefore less accessible to the average user.

Virtual Reality (VR) – Virtual reality is a digital environment that completely replaces the user's environment. Popular VR experiences include Horizon Worlds (from Meta) and the game "Beat Saber". VR offers the highest level of immersion because once the user is in the headset, they only see the digital environment presented in the headset. With advances in spatial audio, these experiences have become quite impressive. VR also offers other experiences like 360° video, which have become increasingly popular. While VR also requires specialized equipment (like MR), it has become more widely available, due in part to more affordable options being available. Meta Quest 2 headsets are currently selling for approximately \$400 (a fraction of the cost of a HoloLens 2 at \$3,500). In the US alone, this market has grown to 50.2 million in 2022 and is projected to reach 65.9 million by the end of 2023 (Alsop, 2022).

VR A Empathy Machine

During [this 2016 TED talk](#) (TED, 2015) Chris Milk stated that VR can be an "empathy machine" and there is plenty of research to corroborate that claim (Barbot & Kaufman, 2020; Doyle, 2020, Wang et al., 2022). Milk produced a 360° film titled "Clouds Over Sidra". In cooperation with the United Nations, the video was used as the focal point in a fundraising campaign benefiting Syrian refugees. While using VR headsets participants not only heard Sidra's story but experienced what it was like in her home and school, where she played and slept (Milk, 2016). Kang (2016) reported that during one fundraising effort, 80% of individuals who watched the film donated.





Similarly, in 2015 charity: water produced “The Source”, a 360° video, that used VR headsets during its annual gala fundraising event (charity: water, 2016). Participants followed the story of 13-year-old Selam. You see her home, her school, and where she collects water for her family. You learn her mother died years ago, shifting many family responsibilities to her, often forcing her to choose between those responsibilities and her education. Later in the video participants see a well installed, and the joy that sweeps over the entire village when water springs up from the ground. At this single event charity: water raised 2.4 million dollars. More info about this experience can be found in the following case study.

Many organizations are seeing tremendous success in fundraising campaigns using VR. This is due in part, to VR being a powerful storytelling tool that can help raise awareness

and empathy. Recent studies have shown that VR can prompt a user into “perspective taking” or understanding something from someone else’s point of view. VR can literally (albeit virtually) provide the user with the opportunity to experience someone else’s point of view. This has shown to be effective in changing the users point of view of the world or other individuals (Barbot & Kaufman, 2020).

VR: Being There Without Being There

VR provides its users with the opportunity to experience places that would normally be unavailable to them. For instance, there are currently immersive experiences that allow users to tour exhibits from museums, or travel to some of the most beautiful, yet remote places on Earth, all from the comfort of their homes. In this context, it is easy to understand why these 360° videos are so effective in telling

a story and getting participants to care and/or donate.

The technological affordances provided by VR also allow users to participate in perspective-taking, a technique that has proven to be effective in reducing stereotypes and negative attitudes through the process of individuals imagining the world from another person's point of view (Wang et al., 2022). Seeing, hearing, and interacting from the perspective of another person have all shown great promise in changing people's viewpoints (Barbot & Kaufman, 2020).

But it is understandable that some will be skeptical. How could a "video game" really help change someone's perspective, let alone evoke an empathetic response? It is well documented that VR can simulate a feeling of "being there" in real environments or virtual worlds allowing users to easily experience perspective-taking (Wang et al., 2022). The key to understanding how VR could help someone express empathy is understanding how VR makes the user feel like they are actually present in a real space. Because VR provides sensory information to the user, it blurs the lines between the physical and virtual worlds (Wang et al., 2022).

Understanding how VR makes the user "feel like they are there" is key to also understanding how the user could engage in perspective-taking, a key factor in expressing empathy. While many studies list many contributing factors to users "feeling there", there are four contributing factors that seem particularly pivotal. They are immersion, presence, engagement, and embodiment.

Immersion

VR communicates with your brain differently than simply looking at a screen. When you look at your phone, your brain views it much the same way it does a picture. VR uses two key techniques to trick your brain into thinking what you are seeing in a headset is actually your perspective (Vox, 2021).

The first way VR does this is through stereopsis, or how each of your eyes sees an object from a slightly different angle, and this is largely how humans perceive depth. Many headsets use two different screens, one in front of each eye, to simulate the same experience, providing depth to the perspective of the user.

The second technique is head-tracking. By using cameras in the headsets as sensors, when the user moves their head around, the perspective in the headset adjusts accordingly, further helping to convince the user's brain that what they are seeing is in fact their perspective.

These two techniques combined with some spatial audio, can create experiences that users feel are quite real. Some would think that a cartoon-looking experience wouldn't fool them, however, according to Heeter (1992) the quality of the image isn't the most important factor in VR experiences. Heeter found that responsiveness to users' movement is more important than image quality.

Presence

Barbot and Kaufman define presence as "...a state of dissociation from reality in which the

(user) feels the subjective experience of existing in the digital environment” (2020, p.2). This idea of presence being established in VR has been critical for many studies and certainly helps the user with that feeling of actually “being there,” even if “there” is completely virtual. This concept is explored in Carrie Heeter’s (1992) paper “Being There: The Subjective Experience of Presence.” Heeter’s study shows that in VR participants can establish presence in 3 key ways: personal, social, and environmental, which make all the difference in an individual feeling like they were actually there.

Engagement

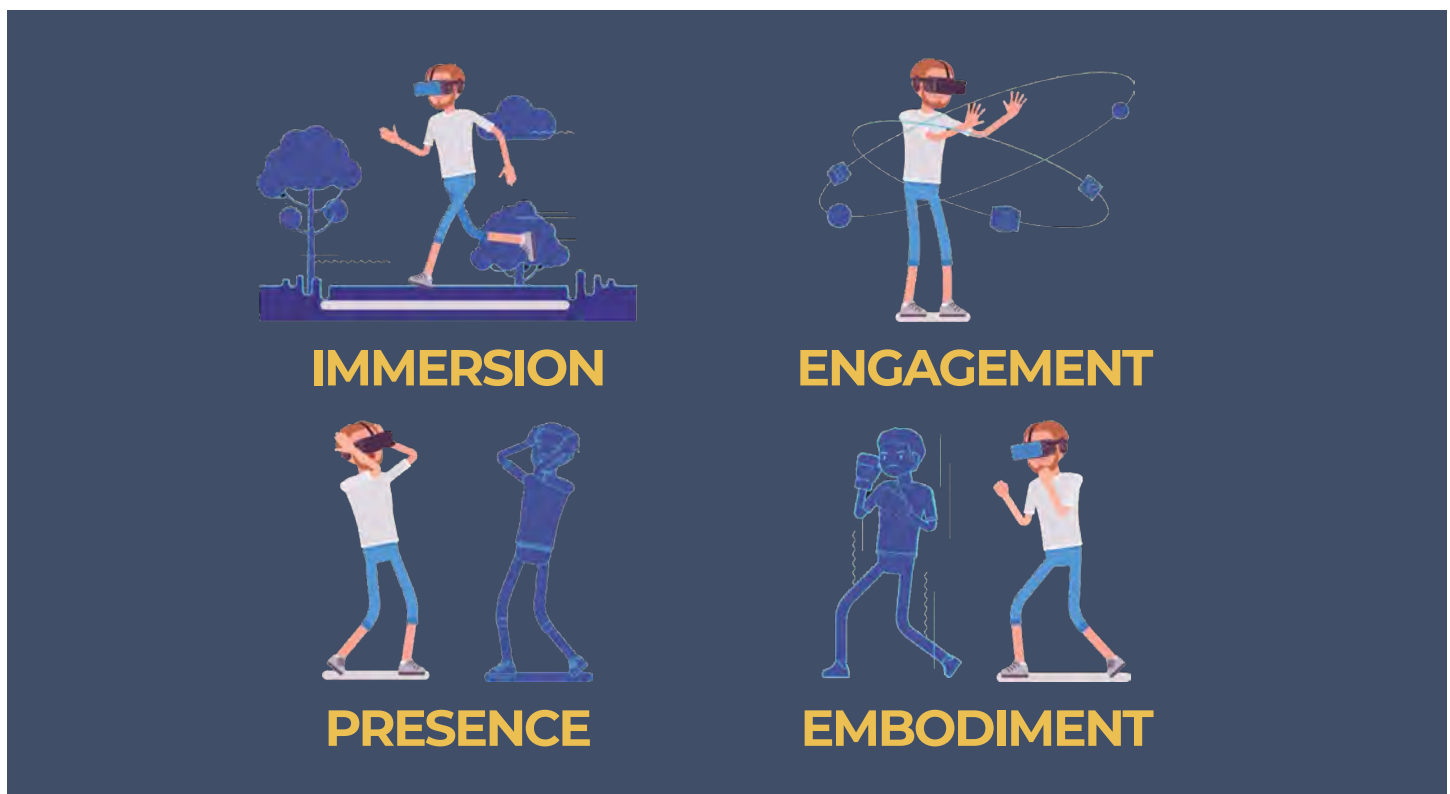
VR can produce engagement from the user in ways other media can’t replicate. VR experiences, much like the “Skies over Sidra” film, are emotionally arousing and provide an opportunity for the user to engage with humanitarian issues (Gillespie, 2020) that they may have otherwise missed or not

engaged with. The benefit of using VR is that it can “shake the consumer out of world weary apathy by unlocking new dimensions of affective engagement” (Gillespie, 2020, p. 11).

Amnesty International also used a 360° video to show the aftermath of an attack in Syria. The goal was to use the video played in VR headsets to raise awareness and funds to help bring aid to the area. While the specific numbers haven’t been made readily available, one Amnesty International official was quoted as saying that “the early results have surpassed our expectations” (Gillespie, 2020).

Embodiment

Presence and engagement working in tandem can elicit embodiment from a user (Barbot & Kaufman, 2020), where the user will perceive the virtual body being their own. This is particularly important for understanding the connection between VR and empathy



because it presents an opportunity for the user to engage with “perspective taking” literally from the subject’s (or another’s) perspective.

BeAnotherLab is an award-winning collective with work that is similarly focused on empathy and perspective-taking. They aim to provide “...transformative encounters between communities in conflict” (Doyle, 2020, p. 191) by utilizing VR experiences. They have been collecting stories from around the globe, recorded from a first-person perspective to create what they call the “Library of Ourselves.” The collective describes the library as a “highly adaptable Creative Commons system that bridges cognitive science and virtual reality techniques to create empathic-driven experiences” (p.195). These stories are then used in VR experiences for users to participate in perspective-taking or explore the well-known proverb of walking a mile in someone else’s shoes.

The BeAnotherLab team is also utilizing virtual reality to try and develop, as Milk (2015) stated, a true “empathy machine”. By taking full advantage of VR experiences, perspective-taking, and embodiment, they can place a user in another person’s body, making them see the world through their eyes. “While changing gender, age, race, or origin we potentially change somebody’s perspective and view on

the ‘others’ and on themselves” (Doyle, 2020, p.195)

The Intersection of VR and Empathy

VR presents a unique interchange between immersion, emotion, and action (Gillespie, 2020). As previously discussed empathy requires emotion and action. Combined with VR’s ability to immerse the user in an experience, users can practice empathy, perspective-taking, or other pro-social behaviors. Studies have shown that an added benefit to these experiences is that the results last long beyond the individual experience (Barbot & Kaufman, 2020). Various studies have shown that perspective-taking through immersion led users to an increase in empathy, and an increase in positive evaluations of an issue, as well as users donating more of their time and money to help with any given issue (Wang et al., 2022). It has also been shown that empathy derived from a VR experience will transfer beyond that experience and/or subject, to a more generalized target. For example, if a user’s VR experience was aimed at increasing their empathy toward the unhoused population, their level of empathy increases toward all individuals facing that issue, not just the subjects of the experience (Wang et al., 2022).



(BeAnotherLab, n.d.)

CASE STUDY

BACKGROUND

In 2015 UNICEF launched a campaign focused on raising awareness of the Syrian refugee crisis (Kang, 2016). In Korea, UNICEF used VR as its primary communications tool for a fundraiser benefiting Syrian refugees. This is the previously mentioned video that Chris Milk produced then dubbed VR as an “empathy machine.”

Using 360° video participants using a VR headset were immersed and told the story of Sidra, a school-aged girl living in a Syrian refugee camp. The video “Clouds Over Sidra” (Milk, 2016) was originally produced for the United Nations and directed by Chris Milk. Participants not only heard Sidra’s story but experienced what it was like in her home, and school, where she played and slept (TED, 2015). Once the video concluded Kang (2016) reported that 80% of individuals who experienced the VR campaign donated.

UNICEF is far from the only organization employing VR as a communications and fundraising tool. For years coordinated efforts from the American Cancer Society, Team Fox, and Live and Learn Kenya have used virtual worlds to raise awareness, inform publics, and raise funds (Davis & Moscato, 2018). The American Cancer Society is well known for its “Relay for Life” fundraisers, which happen in 27 different countries, representing 3000 unique communities (Relay for Life, n.d.a.). Davis and Moscato (2018) report that in 2014, Relay for Life events hosted in Second Life (Second Life is a 360° immersive environment where users interface through avatars) represented the 17th largest relay event in the world. In the 2022 Second Life Relay for Life, participants raised \$453,035 (Relay for Life, n.d.b.).

CHARITY: WATER’S ANNUAL GALA

In 2015, at charity: water’s annual fundraising gala, guests were served appetizers and cocktails, and had an exclusive tour of the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Temple of Dendur exhibit, concluding with a trip to a small Ethiopian village, virtually. Much like the “Clouds Over Sidra” video, charity: water produced a 360° video called “The Source”

(charity: water, 2016). Participants followed the story of 13-year-old Selam. You see her home, her school, and where she collects water for her family. You learn her mother died years ago, shifting many family responsibilities to those, often forcing her to choose between her responsibilities and her education. Later in the video participants see a well installed, and the joy that sweeps over the entire village when

GALA FUNDRAISER



THE VENUE

The fundraising event was hosted at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Temple of Dendur exhibit.



THE HEADSET

The Samsung Gear VR headsets used a mobile phone as the screen. This device was released in Nov. of 2015 and charity: water used it at its event Dec. of 2015.



THE PARTICIPANTS

Participants watching the 360° film "The Source" produced by charity: water.

water springs up from the ground. At this single event charity: water raised \$2,262,310, an increase of \$702,353 from the previous year (KPMG LLP, 2016).

BROOKFIELD PLACE - NYC

Near charity: water's former HQ (now a fully remote company), Brookfield Place is a mall on the waterfront of the Hudson River. This mall is popular with locals and tourists alike and was the location of a charity: water display following the 2015 gala event. In 2016 They set up approximately 15 stations for individuals to participate in the VR experience "The Source". The goal of this event primarily was to raise awareness and empathy surrounding this issue (Landmark Ventures, 2016). By securing funding beforehand they were able to offer the participants the ability to "unlock" \$30 (how much it takes to give one person clean water) by simply watching the film. Harrison reported that for the entire 3 weeks of the campaign, the display had a wait time of 30 to 60 minutes, which resulted in 12,494 activations. The activations combined with donations given by participants resulted in a total of \$390,000

raised for water projects (Landmark Ventures, 2016).

INDIVIDUAL INVESTOR

Scott Harrison while speaking at an event about using VR as a fundraiser tells a story of an individual who after googling "good charities" found charity: water. This individual initially donated \$200,000 to charity: water and was subsequently invited to come to charity: water's office to be thanked for his generous donation. After meeting the staff and touring the facility he spent a few minutes with Harrison and then was invited to watch "The Source" through a VR headset. After watching the video, he began to weep and said, "I haven't done enough" and on the spot wrote another check for another \$400,000 (Landmark Ventures, 2016).

FUNDRAISING WITH VR – THE FULL PERSPECTIVE

Using VR as a fundraising tool charity: water was able to bring in millions of dollars and raise awareness for its brand. As VR becomes more and more available to the mass market, understanding how to best use this technology could be incredibly beneficial for organizations

looking to connect with their donor base, fundraise, or increase brand awareness.

Charity: water's use of VR in 2015 was not only cutting edge for its time but enabled them to raise substantial funds. Charity: water's goal was to raise awareness, compassion, and of course funds. By those metrics, these campaigns were certainly successful. Having over 12 thousand individuals waiting 30+ minutes to participate in a VR experience and raising over 3.49 million dollars would certainly seem to check all those boxes. However, there is still room for improvement in charity: water's implementation of VR technology.

Realizing that the technology employed in 2015 can't be compared to what we now know of VR and all of its vast capabilities, charity: water's use of this technology seems to be somewhat limited. With advances in the technology of VR, as well as its accessibility to more of the mass market (Barnard, 2022) there are many opportunities for charity: water to reengage in the medium, both for fundraising and raising brand awareness.

While VR provides the user with the opportunity to see and hear from a unique perspective,

perhaps even more profound is the user's ability to establish presence, or feeling like you are actually there. Heeter (1992) found that in VR participants establish presence in 3 key ways (personal, social, and environmental) which make an individual feel like they were actually there, even if "there doesn't physically exist. "Albeit virtual, there is a sense of realized experience in an environment that parallels physical world experience but with access to any person, anywhere in the physical world and at any time" (Davis & Moscato, 2018, p. 276) In this context it is easy to understand why these 360° videos and/or VR experiences are so effective in telling a story and getting participants to care and/or donate.

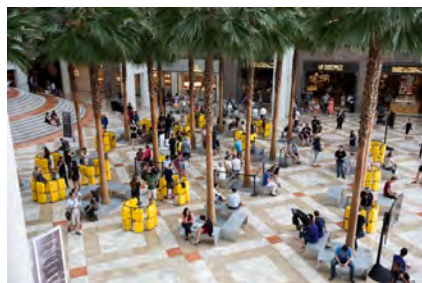
But there is far more to be gained from participants' VR experiences than a simple donation (Davis & Moscato, 2018). Moving a step further from social presence (or the feeling of other people being around) Davis and Moscato (2018) share that individuals establish social capital in these VR experiences which gives room for much deeper connections. They define social capital as "the features of social life—including norms, trust, and networks—that bring participants together to create

MALL EXHIBIT



THE VENUE

The Brookfield Mall in Battery Park NYC.



THE EXHIBIT

charity: water set up 15 stations where participants could unlock \$30 by watching "The Source."



A PARTICIPANT

For the entire month long exhibit there was a wait time of 30 - 60 minutes, resulting in 12,494 activations, and \$390,000.

more effective actions and outcomes” (p. 272). Through their study, Davis and Moscato (2018) found that participation in a VR fundraising event on Second Life led individuals to not only donate but also receive information and support, which led to a “community facilitating rich human experiences” (p. 283). Some participants have even gone on to expand their support beyond the virtual world and volunteered at real-world events (Davis & Moscato, 2018).

MOVING FORWARD WITH VR IN FUNDRAISING

Charity: water’s previous VR experiences told compelling stories at large group events. Yet

the participant’s experience was ultimately an individual experience, that happens around other people. Meaning, a bunch of individuals watched a video at the same time and there wasn’t a way for one participant to interact with another participant at the same time until they took the headset off.

It would seem that charity: water sits in a unique position to leverage its experience and past success in VR with its strong supporter base, brand loyalty, and user-created campaigns to take full advantage of not only the potential funds raised but creating another outlet for their impassioned community to come together, spread the word and help bring an end to the global water crisis.



Photo credit: charity: water

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is estimated that 785 million people don't have access to clean water (WHO & UNICEF, 2019), and dirty water kills more people every year than all forms of violence, including war (Charity: water, n.d.a). **Charity: water was founded with one goal in mind: ending the global water crisis (Charity: water, n.d.c.).**



SCOTT HARRISON
CEO & FOUNDER



Photo credit: charity: water

In 2006 charity: water was founded by Scott Harrison after he saw the negative effects and health complications of dirty water firsthand. Sixteen years later and with the help of more than 1 million supporters worldwide, charity: water has raised over \$740 million and funded over 120,000 water projects in 29 countries. These projects will provide 16.8 million people with clean, safe drinking water. 2021 was their first \$100 million year which led to 27,159 water projects being funded and 1,985,086 people will have access to clean water (charity: water, 2021).

MISSION & VALUES

CHARITY: WATER'S MISSION STATEMENT

Charity: Water's mission is to "Help bring clean and safe water to every person on the planet." (Charity: water, n.d.c.). Their mission is simple to understand and incredibly challenging to accomplish. Charity: water has set itself apart as a leading nonprofit, not only in the fight to end the global water crisis but also in how it is managed.

CHARITY: WATER'S VALUES

Since the very first project charity: water has operated with these three promises (charity: water, n.d.d.):

"WE PROVE EVERY PROJECT"

Photos and GPS coordinates are provided with every project to show the impact of these projects and the funds donated to them (Charity: water, n.d.c.). Through the website, individuals can find an interactive map showing pictures and locations of every project. Charity: water also received a five-million-dollar grant from Google to develop real-time water sensors. These sensors provide real-time data of the use and health of each water well, giving both charity: water staff and donors the ability to check in on projects around the globe (Charity: water, n.d.f).

"WE'RE AN OPEN BOOK"

Charity: water views transparency as one of its core values and consistently receives the highest grades available for accountability and transparency (charity: water, n.d.d.). Charity: water has consistently received honors from the Better Business Bureau, Guide Star, Charity Watch, and other similar organizations. Each year a "year in review" report is posted to show statistics and impact from the previous year and actual financials are posted as well, showing each line item and where every dollar is spent.

"100% GOES TO THE FIELD"

Since the very first project, charity: water has operated with a 100% model, meaning that 100% of public donations received go directly to projects in developing countries. Private donors give to cover operating expenses and salaries to ensure that 100% of other donations can go to exactly what they are supposed to. Charity: water takes this one step further by refunding credit card fees (Charity: water, n.d.e.). For instance, if someone donates \$100, and because of fees charity: water only receives \$97, charity: water adds back the difference so the full \$100 goes to funding a water project.

These three promises establish charity: water as a responsible, well-equipped expert in solving the global water crisis. With the 100% model and value of transparency charity: water gains a lot of credit from those skeptical of nonprofits. According to Harrison, 42% of people don't trust charities (Landmark Ventures, 2016), and yet charity: water's values have enabled it to build trust with its patrons.

"...year after year, our commitment to transparency inspires support from passionate donors, enthusiastic fundraisers, long-standing brand partners, and loyal volunteers who believe—like we do—that clean water truly changes everything." (Charity: water, n.d.e., para 2)

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

IN THIS SECTION:

- charity: water's Platform
- SWOT Analysis
- Competitive Analysis
- Target Audience

INTRODUCTION

Charity: water has been able to raise awareness and funds at rates that other nonprofits would love to have just a fraction of. What makes the charity: water case so interesting is that for the first 10 years of operation, they had no budget for marketing (Landmark Ventures, 2016). They exclusively relied on individuals to spread the word. They strategically use their social media accounts to distinguish themselves from other nonprofits by highlighting projects around the globe and making their donors the heroes of their feeds. Because of this highly engaged and loyal following, charity: water has been able to keep its marketing budget at a fraction of the total annual budget.

CHARITY: WATER'S PLATFORM

WEBSITE

Charity: water's website has great user interaction. According to similarweb charitywater.org gains 229.9 K visits a month (similarweb, n.d.). With a clear call to action on the main page, there is no doubt that they want to encourage donations. However, visitors will quickly be immersed in powerful imagery, proof of projects all over the globe, and moving stories of people whose lives have been forever changed because of donations.

Heimans and Timms (2018) in their book "New Power" present a method to not only engage audiences but also encourage participation. By analyzing how the "ALS Ice Bucket Challenge" was able to create a high level of participation and action toward a common goal, Heimans and Timms developed the "A.C.E" model. It states that for an idea to spread it must be actionable, connected, and extensible (or customizable) and they argue that many successful communications strategies have followed this design principle (Heimans & Timms, 2018). Charity: water is no exception. The call to action is clear for charity: water: end the global water crisis. And as we'll see, charity: water's user-generated fundraising campaigns are very connected and customizable.

Charity: water has made significant progress with very adaptable user-generated fundraising campaigns. There is a whole web page with step-by-step instructions on how to start a fundraising campaign, giving some incredible examples of what other people have done. Including swimming across the San Francisco Bay, offering private concerts, jumping in cold water, hosting garage sales, and one individual offered to shave his beard when the goal was reached. Others have offered birthdays and even wedding registries to fund projects. Where instead of asking for gifts, they ask for friends and family to donate to their campaign. There is even a web page for children who wish to get involved. Charity: water has had thousands of user-generated campaigns providing great content and opportunities for other people to engage with charity: water's brand and mission, most importantly, calling them to action. These campaigns have been highly effective in raising awareness and funds for projects around the globe.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Charity: water currently uses Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Snapchat, and TikTok. They were the first nonprofit to gain over a million followers on Twitter (Landmark Ventures, 2016), and all of these platforms provide great content for users to share and help spread the mission and vision of charity: water. The content is high quality and hits a balanced tone of urgent need and hopeful intervention to help solve the global water crisis.

MOBILE GAME

In March of 2022 charity: water released a mobile game called "This is a True Story" aimed at raising awareness (particularly with children) of the global water crisis and showing what some individuals must endure to get water. This educational Role-Playing Game is inspired by true stories collected from the communities charity: water serves. Players learn of the challenges, complexities, and dangers that 771 million people face daily.

THE VR EXPERIENCES

As previously stated, in 2015 charity: water implemented a VR experience that while being quite successful was used in a limited capacity. The VR experience was primarily used at its annual fundraising gala, and during a month-long exhibit at Brookfield Place Mall. Despite its limited use, the VR experience was able to help bring in 2.8 million dollars.

Charity: water used Samsung Gear VR headsets for their VR experiences. The Gear VR headsets were one of the first units that relied on a cell phone as the main screen and had sensors for tracking user movement. The Samsung Gear VR headsets were released commercially in November 2015 (Barnard, 2022) for \$99 (PCMag, 2015), and Charity water first introduced using those headsets that same year, showing how eager charity: water was to implement this newly available technology.

SWOT ANALYSIS



STRENGTHS

Clear Mission & Values

Charity: water's mission and values are clear, strongly supporting its goal. That clarity quickly develops trust with charity: water's key publics, particularly potential donors.

Innovative Fundraising Campaigns

Charity: water has always been willing to leverage new media and technologies to help raise its awareness. Since charity: water was founded, it has been able to embrace Twitter and leverage the unique platform with profound success. Charity: water was the first nonprofit to gain over one million followers, and they had Twitter accounts for their drill trucks that would notify followers where they were and when they started working on a project overseas (Landmark Ventures, 2016). As previously mentioned, charity: water has provided a highly adaptable format for individuals to launch incredibly successful fundraising campaigns.

Passionate Staff

Both current and former employees speak highly of their experiences working for charity: water. On charity: water's careers website it's clear that they work hard to cultivate a positive culture and value establishing a work/life balance.

Engaged Donor Base

Charity: water is privileged to have a very engaged donor base. Through cooperative partnerships, individual contributions and/or campaigns, and legacy giving charity: water is able to raise funds that many other nonprofits would be thrilled to have only a fraction of.

Fully Remote Company

With the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic in 2020, charity: water like many other companies shifted to a remote work environment. As Covid restrictions have continued to lift many companies have returned to hybrid or fully in-person work environments. charity: water has reaffirmed its commitment to remaining a remote company. This allows charity: water to recruit the best employees from anywhere in the United States and has significantly lowered its operating costs.



WEAKNESSES

Dependent on Donations

Charity: water, like most nonprofit organizations, is funded through donations. For charity: water this situation is exacerbated because of its value "100% goes to the field". With 100% of publicly donated funding going to projects, charity: water must separately fundraise for its

operating expenses. Meaning that charity: water must constantly fundraise for two distinct aspects of its business.

Working with Global Local Partners

While this very well could be listed as an opportunity (it boosts the local economy with jobs and provides key insights into the projects), it's important to recognize that by working through local organizations, there are still elements of risk.

First, even with local organizations going through a vetting process, do they truly hold the same values as charity: water? Also, by working through local organizations, ethical dilemmas may arise, for instance, the potential for bribes or tribal biases affecting access to water or well projects.

Secondly, the ongoing success of a well would be largely dependent on locals maintaining and protecting the well. This is something that charity: water works hard to accomplish, but the process remains largely out of its control.

OPPORTUNITIES

Raise Public's Awareness of a Critical Need

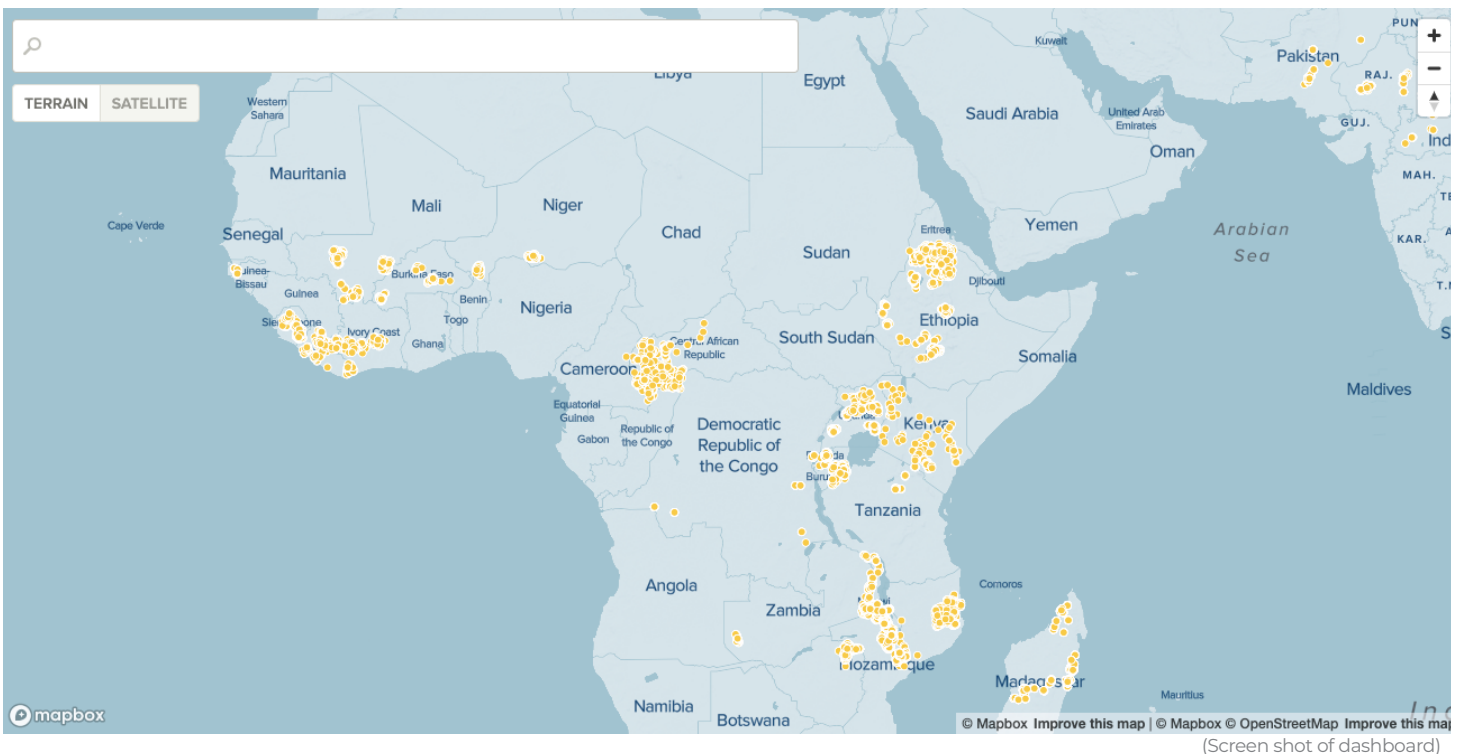
Charity: water sits uniquely positioned as a leader in the field to not only raise awareness of the issue but directly address the need over a long period of time. By continuing to grow awareness of the issue, charity: water can also raise awareness of its brand, and thereby increase its fundraising and its impact globally.

Continuing to Leverage New & Immerging Media

Charity: water has always been willing to leverage new media and technology to bolster its fundraising efforts. Since the launch of charity: water's initial VR experience the technology has not only improved but become more affordable. By taking full advantage of the media it's already produced, charity: water could continue to increase its brand awareness and fundraising by reaching an audience completely missed by other nonprofits.

Continue to Develop New Technology

Charity: water was awarded a grant from Google to develop water sensors that can securely and quickly be installed in wells to help monitor their uses and effectiveness. Because of technological advances, these well sensors have batteries that last 10 years and they connect to a cloud computing platform that spans 200 countries. Because charity: water can monitor these wells, technicians can be deployed if there is an issue or repairs need to be made. There is a dashboard available to the public to see exactly where a well has been installed, how much water has been pumped, how long the sensor has been installed, and how long since the sensor last transmitted data. Development and implementation of this technology not



(Screen shot of dashboard)

only helps charity: water accomplish its mission, it helps charity: water fulfill its value of proving every project.

Develop Impactful Relationships

Charity: water can use its reputation and proven track record to develop key relationships with policymakers and government officials (both domestic and global) to address and raise awareness of the root issues and causes of water scarcity, and advocate for policies to help address this issue.

THREATS

Economic Concerns

As the world continues to emerge from the global pandemic, the looming threat of inflation and/or a recession will make many businesses and individuals hesitant to donate until they feel more financially stable. Another complicating economic factor is the rising cost of goods and/or shipping those goods to project sites.

Crowded market

On one hand, it is wonderful that charity: water isn't the only nonprofit set on helping people get lifesaving clean water. However, as previously mentioned nonprofits are already competing for funds from donors, and in an overly crowded market, it can be tough for charity: water to distinguish itself from other similar nonprofits. This situation is also made worse by many other nonprofits adopting values that used to be unique to charity: water. Some of its direct competitors have adopted the 100% model and extreme transparency, lessening charity: water's ability to distinguish itself from other nonprofits.

Instability in Project Countries

When working on a global scale, particularly in developing nations, the economic and political climate can change almost instantly. This instability could threaten past and current projects and leaves charity: water exposed to these unpredictable changes.

Climate Change

A key factor to charity: water's success is finding aquifers underground, making water that was once unavailable, accessible for a community. According to a U.S. Geological Survey (Gurdak et al., 2009) aquifers will likely be affected by climate change. As the globe continues to try and adjust to combat climate change, charity: water may need to adjust its plans, or find new sources of water for its projects.

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

Charity: water is in a unique position, being that there are plenty of nonprofit organizations similarly focused on clean water access. More individuals having access to clean water is certainly a win, but clean water could be provided by any one of these other organizations. Completing a competitive analysis for charity: water is less about identifying "competition" and more about identifying its unique position in a crowded market.

CROWDED MARKET

When charity: water first launched, its values of 100% going to the field and radical transparency set it apart from every other nonprofit. However, recently other nonprofit organizations have begun to adopt similar if not identical values. While this may be viewed as forward progress for the industry, it further illustrates the importance of charity: water identifying where it can distinguish itself.

Many of the organizations use similar if not the exact same talking points, and one, in particular, was even using yellow jerry cans (charity: water's main icon) as a part of a campaign. What used to distinguish charity: water from every other organization has become quite common.

SOCIAL MEDIA COMPARISON

8 of the organizations can be found on the majority of social media platforms with two having little to no social media presence. This further demonstrates that the market is crowded and that finding a differentiator may be challenging, but well worth the effort and investment. Further research would be beneficial to understand the strategies implemented by these organizations on social media and compare them with charity: water current strategies. However, that is outside the scope of this project.

WEBSITE CONTENT ANALYSIS

All ten compared organizations have a website, which isn't surprising. Just about every business has one, and it is one of the most common tools used as a means of communication. A comparative content analysis (Appendix A) was completed to find if or how charity: water could distinguish itself from these other organizations.

Many of the origination's web site share similar (and in some cases identical) features and layouts. They all use powerful images and videos. They all have a clear call to action (donate) on the main page. While some go into detail about their areas of focus and programs, it is clear that each tries to demonstrate its impact with different statistics and figures.

Charity: water's website also does these same things. It looks good and functions well, but there is nothing that would differentiate itself from the other nonprofit's websites. This could be a potential area of great benefit for charity: water to expand its efforts to achieve some separation in this crowded market.

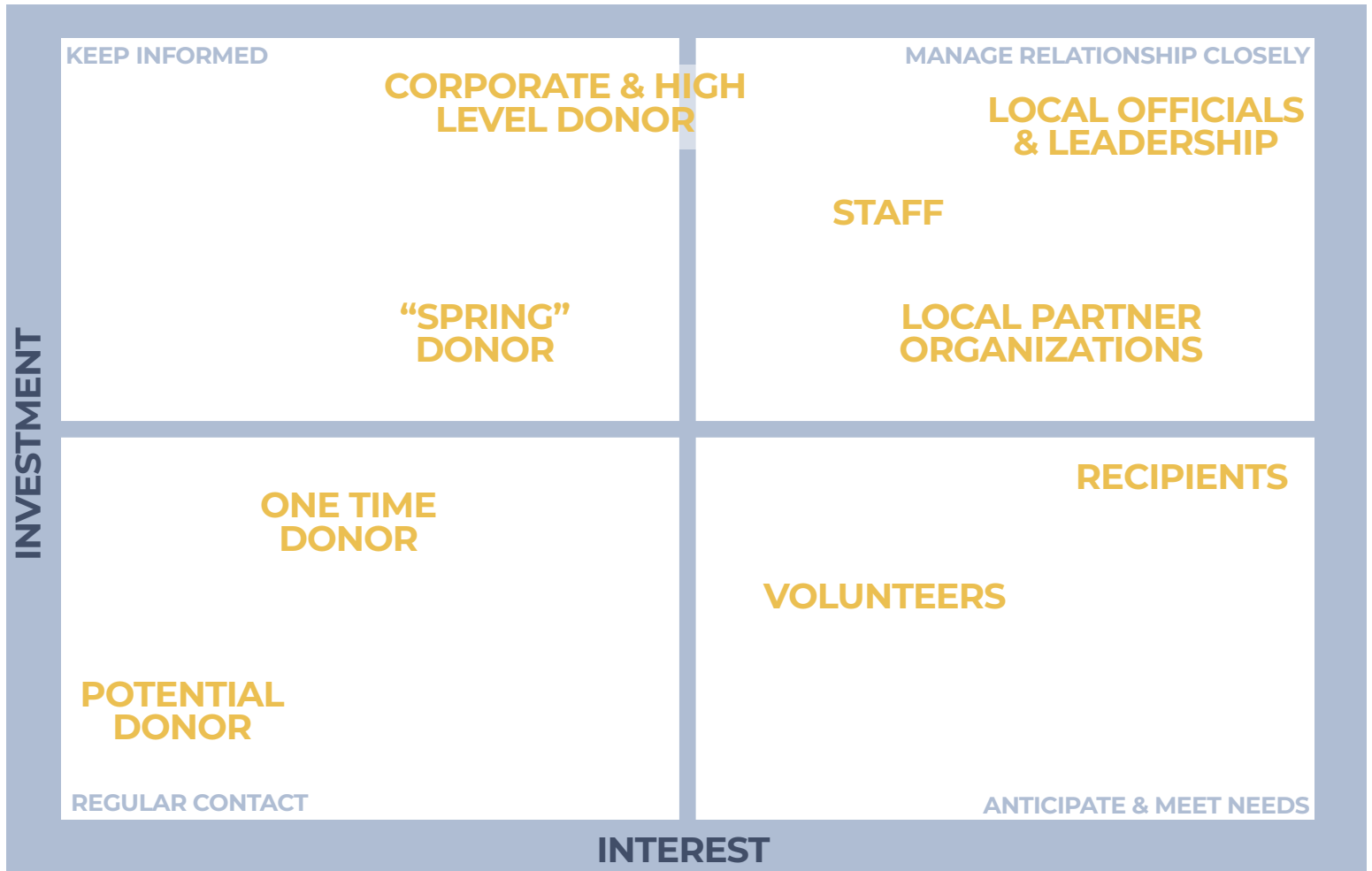
Criteria	charity: water	Water.org	H2O for Life	Drop in the Bucket	Splash	Water Aid	Neverthirst	Thirst Project	Water for People
Website	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mission	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Values	✓				✓				✓
100% Model	✓						✓*	✓	
Work with Locals	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓
Charity Navigator	92%	96%	n/a	n/a	93%	91%	94%	80%	91%
Social Media	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
VR	✓								
Mobile Game	✓								

CHARITY: WATER'S UNIQUE POSITION

Despite other nonprofits aligning their values more similarly to charity: water's, the similar websites, and the "borrowing" of icons, it became clear that charity: water still has a distinctive position in this overcrowded market. Charity: water has already begun to operate in some unique areas, mainly the previously mentioned mobile game and 360° video. Charity: water should leverage these unique platforms to connect with audiences missed by other nonprofits while continuing to refine and develop its web and social media presence.

STAKEHOLDER MAP

Developing a stakeholder map helps not only identify who the key stakeholders are but clarifies how to manage communications with those key publics. Because charity: water operates on a global scale, there is a wide range of publics for it to take into consideration. There are internal, external, local, and global stakeholders, with those categories often intermingling.



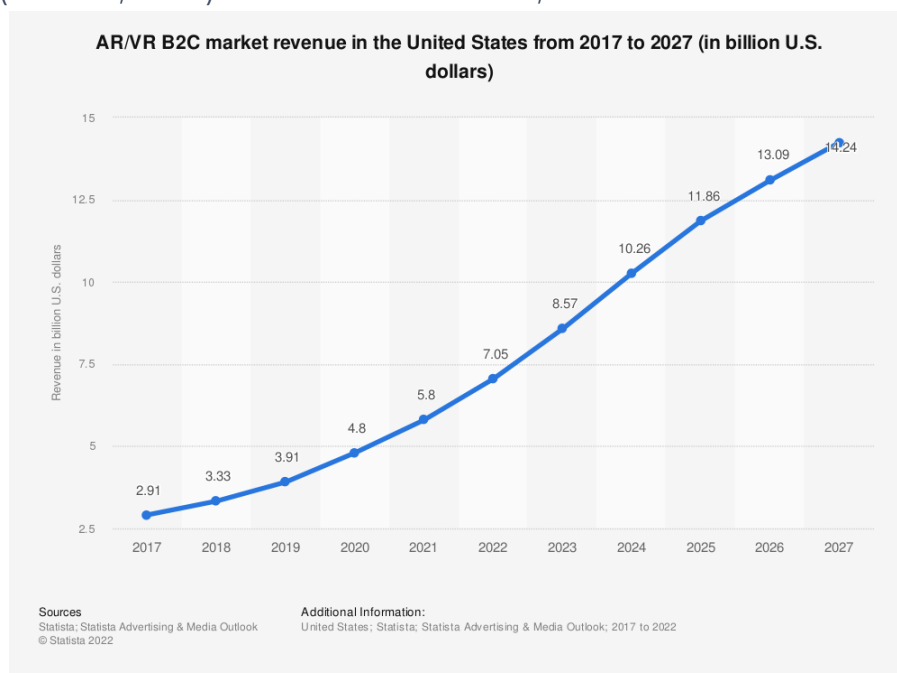
This communications plan is directed towards those who could increase their investment and/or interest, specifically potential donors and one-time donors. However, there could be an increase in both interest and investment with many of the stakeholders identified.

THE OPPORTUNITY IN IMMERSIVE MEDIA

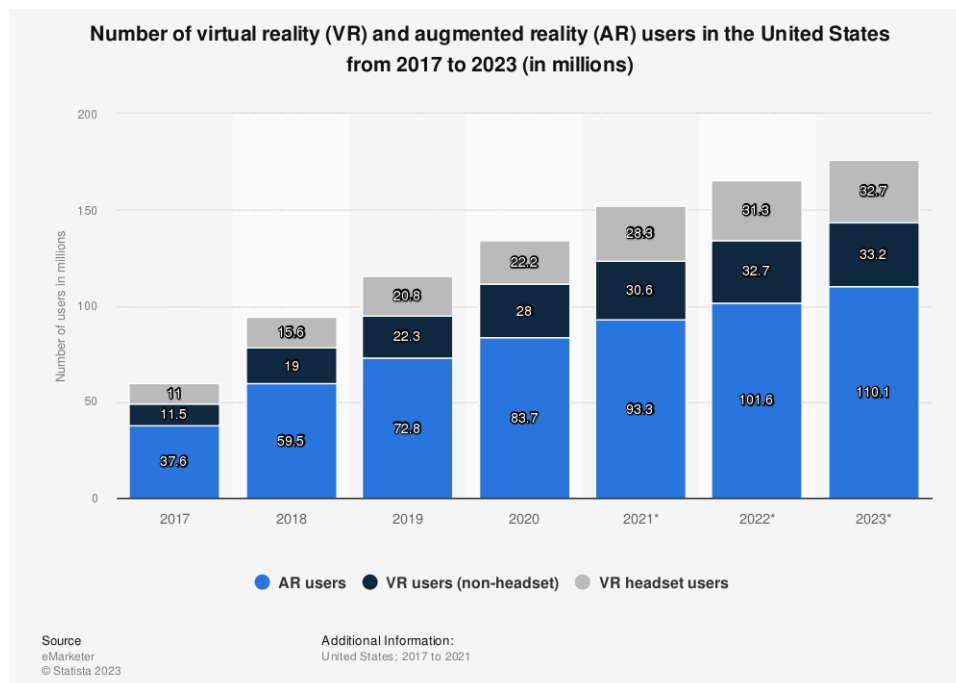
Nonprofit organizations and fundraising go hand in hand, and with 1.5 million nonprofits in the US alone (Statista, 2022) these various “do-good” organizations will soon be competing for donor funds (Davis & Moscato, 2018) if they aren’t already. Like other businesses, nonprofits search for low-cost, high-reward options for marketing, improving messaging, and raising awareness, particularly through digital marketing (Yoo & Drumwright, 2017).

Revenue from Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) has grown from 2.9 billion in 2017 and is currently valued at 8.5 billion, and is projected to reach 14.2 billion by 2027 (Alsop, 2022). There is a huge opportunity for nonprofits to fundraise in these spaces, yes because of the financial projections, but more importantly, because few other nonprofits are operating in this market.

The market for Virtual Reality (VR) is growing at a mammoth scale, with 171 million current VR users worldwide (Kolmar, 2023). In the United States, the number of VR users has increased to



(Statista, 2022)



(Statista, 2021)

50.2 million in 2022, up from 22.5 million in 2017. And it won't stop there, the projected number of users for 2023 is 65.9 million users (Kolmar, 2023). That growth is projected to bring in revenues of nearly 4.5 billion dollars by 2027 and is currently estimated at 3 billion for 2023 (Alsop, 2022)

While there is certainly much room for potential in VR, the AR market is by far more widely accepted in today's market. Many consumers have used AR and have not even realized it. It has become more common for individuals to use mobile devices to preview products from Amazon or Ikea in their living rooms. One report shows that in 2020 there were 22.2 million VR (headset) users and 83.7 million AR users, which is projected to grow to 110.1 million by the end of 2023 (eMarketer, 2021).

The competitive analysis revealed that no other nonprofits surveyed for this project are using AR or VR as a communications tool. There is tremendous opportunity in these markets and if charity: water was to expand into AR/VR it would be the only water-focused nonprofit operating in this space. More than that, charity: water already sits uniquely positioned to reach a key demographic.

Current user data suggests that the largest age group (23%) of VR users range from 25–34 years old (Kolmar, 2023.). That same age range is also charity: water's largest demographic at nearly 30% of its user base (similarweb, nd.). Charity: water's current communications strategy clearly resonates with this age demographic, and finding a way to expand its communications to VR would greatly benefit charity: water.

CAMPAIGN GOAL & OBJECTIVES

THE GOAL

To leverage charity: water's existing media and platforms in new ways to establish charity: water as the leading nonprofit addressing the global water crisis, operating in immersive platforms.



Photo credit: charity: water



THE OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 1: RAISE FUNDS FOR CHARITY: WATER

Charity: water, like most nonprofits, is dependent on donations. With its model of 100% going to the field charity: water faces the unique challenge of needing to raise funds for its overseas projects and its operating expenses. Bottom line, finding ways to increase donations helps charity: water achieve its goal.

KEY RESULTS

- Increase 1st-time donations by 1,000 individuals
- Increase overall donations by \$100,000
- Convert 10% of VR users to donors

OBJECTIVE 2: EXPAND CHARITY: WATER'S AUDIENCE

Charity: water has established itself as a leading expert in this field and has a business model that distinguishes itself from the majority of other nonprofits addressing this issue. And yet, many are largely unaware of the extreme nature of the water crisis and/or charity: water and the work it does. By raising awareness of the issue, and charity: water's approach to address the crisis, more individuals will not only become aware of the need but also choose to intervene and donate. While not definitively proving an increase in awareness, web traffic and views are excellent indicators of an increase of awareness.

KEY RESULTS

- Direct 50,000 unique visits to new web content
- Increase traffic on charity: water's donation web pages by 10%
- Grow an initial VR audience of 4,000 users

CAMPAIGN THEME

“Believing is seeing. It’s much more effective than the old notion that seeing is believing.”
- Terrence E. Deal

YOU’VE GOT TO SEE THIS!

It is well-studied and documented that trust greatly influences purchase and/or donation intention. This, in part, is one reason why influencer marketing has become popular and effective. A trusted third-party voice can speak directly to consumers about the product/experience. Other studies have further explored the development of trust to show how incredibly effective and influential word of mouth (albeit virtually) can be in garnering trust (Feng et al., 2017). This shows that while influencer marketing can be impactful, there is tremendous benefit in having individuals’ real-life relationships share their experiences. This plan aims to grow charity: water’s audience through those very connections.

This is something that charity: water has leveraged for quite some time. As previously mentioned, charity: water was one of the first nonprofits to get over a million followers on Twitter. Scott Harrison attributes this to charity: water’s strategy of making its community the “hero” of the work it does (Landmark Ventures, 2016).

Through the following tactics of this plan, charity: water will develop high-quality immersive digital content that will not only help it stand out from its competition but

resonate with its current audience. By taking full advantage of sharing features (like share buttons on web pages and sharing features on social media platforms) charity: water can activate its current audience (like it has done so well in the past) to not only help share these experiences but to quite literally have them show people.

We’ve all heard a story wrapped up with the phrase “I wish you could have seen it!” or while showing a video had someone say, “You’ve got to see this!” This campaign, aims to do exactly that, show people the amazing impact that happens through the work that charity: water does. Taking thousands of people to a project site isn’t practical, and would be incredibly expensive. But on the other hand, there is nothing quite like being there. Hearing the sounds, feeling the heat, and tasting the dust, is truly a life-changing experience. While we may not be able to duplicate the heat or the dust, we can still help individuals have a unique experience where they can see the smiles on people’s faces, watch the water spring from the ground, and hear the songs people sing in celebration. We can’t physically take everyone there, but virtually we can.

STRATEGY & TACTICS

A QUICK NOTE

Under the following tactics, there will be similar information listed, including timelines, budgets, and evaluations for each tactic. That information will then be gathered to create comprehensive examples of each in the preceding sections.

A few things to note:

- The full budget can be found in Appendix C
- Salaries were compiled from [here](#) (Aquent, n.d.) by

averaging the median salary (50%) from the top 3 markets in the US. To help account for agency overhead the following formula was applied to each role. # of estimated hours x hourly rate x 20%.

- For a more accurate reflection of project cost, charity: water can establish which roles can be filled in-house and then update with its own specific team member's salaries.
- This budget should provide charity: water with an estimate to start conversations with creative agencies. However it should be kept in mind that there are many factors which could affect the budget like location, experience, etc.
- Because of charity: water's unique business structure, items like employee labor and business cost would be separate from donations that go directly to the field. However, to show ROI for these tactics, the cost of production will be compared to potential donations.
- The timelines on the tactic level will be listed in weeks and months, then later put into a Gantt chart over a year and a half. The full timeline can be found in Appendix D.
- As these new experiences and platforms are released it would be incredibly beneficial for charity: water to use all of its other platforms and social media accounts to spread the word about these projects. Creating a coordinated effort would maximize these projects' reach and would greatly contribute to this communications plan's objectives. about these projects. Creating a coordinated effort would maximize these projects' reach and would greatly contribute to this communications plan's objectives.

STRATEGY 1 - WEB BASED EXPERIENCES

The competitive analysis revealed that most of the compared websites were nearly identical or at the very least frequently "borrowed" similar ideas and concepts. Creating unique web-based experiences would help charity: water to distinguish itself from other nonprofit organizations and establish a distinctive web presence that many nonprofits would be hard-pressed to replicate.

Web-based immersive content also provides another significant advantage. While VR headsets have become more affordable and very popular, the cost is still the number one hindrance listed by individuals looking to purchase VR equipment (Kolmar, 2023). By creating web-based content users can access immersive content with computers and/or mobile devices, making these experiences significantly more accessible to a much larger audience.

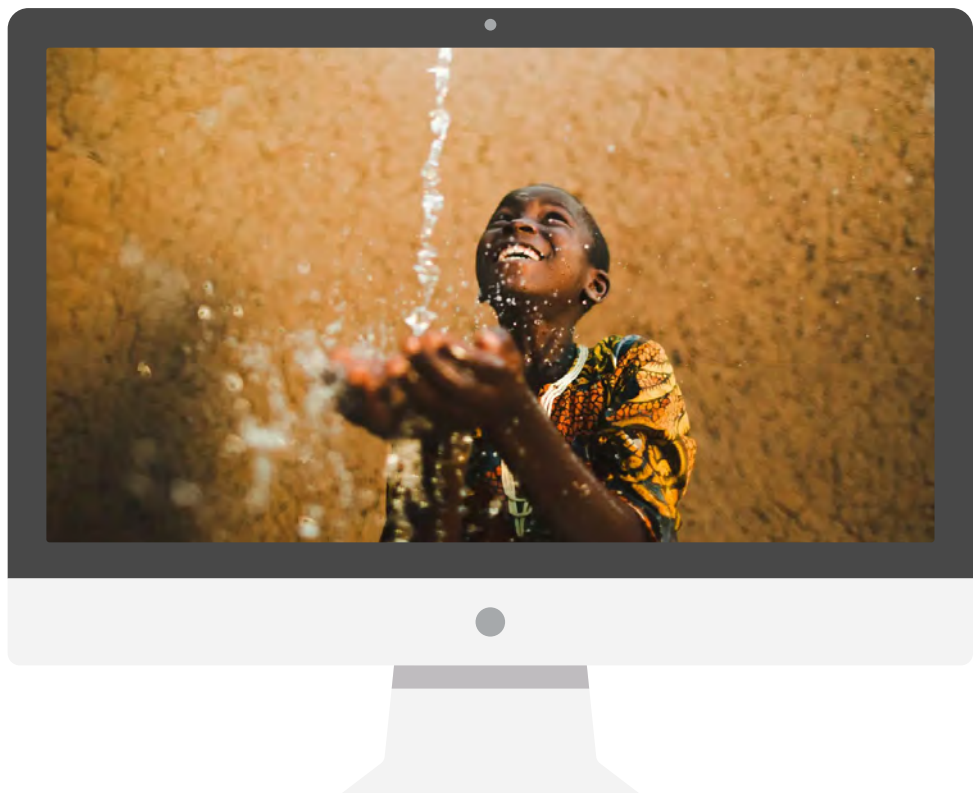
TACTIC 1 - IMMERSIVE WEB PAGES

Developing interactive web pages (examples below) give readers more than an amazing visual of what they are reading about. These pages have been proven to gain a lot of attention and are very sharable in our hyper-connected world. Leveraging charity: water's person-first messaging and beautiful imagery in an interactive/immersive web experience would help raise awareness of the global water crisis, and charity: water (objective 1) and could also help individuals feel compelled to donate (objective 2). A major benefit of web-based experiences is that it eliminates the need for expensive equipment to interact with the content.

It's recommended that every few months charity: water releases a new web-based experience to engage with its audiences and raise awareness. Publishing these experiences every other month (or so) would allow charity: water to continue to produce new and exciting content at a reasonable rate while still having time and resources to dedicate to all of its other digital needs and platforms.

Here are some recommended tactics to develop with examples that charity: water could produce:

1. Using photos and videos that charity: water has already collected, building a web experience similar to [this](#) (Corum et al., 2019) where individuals can digitally explore a village and see how a well installation impacts the lives of its inhabitants.
2. Charity: water can produce a story similar to [this](#) (Popovich et al., 2022) detailing just how unhealthy the untreated water is for the individuals it's trying to help.
3. Creating a webpage like [this](#) (Parshina-Kottas et



al., 2019) could show (generally speaking of course) how charity: water would enact a plan that doesn't just affect one community, but a country. Charity: water had done extensive research on where they can provide water. Interactive maps could show aquifers, and how with these new resources, thousands of lives are changed, all from a global perspective.

4. Charity: water could give a “behind the scenes” look at how it tackles a water well project from start to finish, highlighting staff and their unique roles, and just how much it takes to take a project from start to finish.

5. An in-depth 3-D look at the water sensors developed with the grant from Google. An exploded view could show internal components, a video could show a sensor being installed, and it could show how the data provided is used by the charity: water team.

BUDGET

Role	# of Hours	Rate	Cost	Notes
Web Developer	20	\$60.42	1,450.08	
Graphic Designer	20	\$39.06	937.44	
3D Modeler	10	\$51.30	615.60	
Video Editor	5	\$38.02	228.12	
Production Assistant	10	\$21.00	252.00	
<i>Sub Total</i>			3,483.24	(individual page)
<i>Tactic Sub Total</i>			17,416.20	(for all 5)

Other budgetary factors would include web hosting (which charity: water already has) and staff cost time for promoting experiences on charity: water’s other platforms.

TIMELINE

Each of these web page examples would follow a similar scheduling pattern.

- 2 weeks to compile any digital resources charity: water has for the project
- 3 weeks to build the experience
- 1 week to test functionality
- 2 weeks to release and track initial performance (tracking performance would continue beyond the initial two weeks)

EVALUATION

The goal, and thereby evaluation, of this strategy, would be twofold. First, to generate web traffic for these unique experiences and/or charity: water’s home page. Secondly, to increase fundraising. By having prompts at the end of these experiences, Google analytics would provide key information like unique visits and click-through rates. The goal would be to generate 20,000 visits to each unique immersive web page, which would increase its web traffic by 100,000 visits

after all 5 experiences have launched. Secondly, by tracking click-through rates the goal would be to have 10% (2,000 per web page) donate, and another 10% click on another call to action like “more info”. By directing those who click “more info” to a unique information page, analytics could then track how many of those then clicked donate.

Over the scope of 5 web experiences being released over a calendar year it would equate to:

20,000 visits x 5 web experiences = 100,000 visits

- 10% (10,000) click on donate directly
- 10% (10,000) click on “more info” with 30% of those eventually donating
- = 13,000 donations (13% from the original 100,000)
- If 13% were to donate at the suggested \$40 = \$520,000
- If they donated \$20 = \$260,000

METRICS AND MEASURES

- Web traffic
- Click through rate
- Page views
- Traffic Source
- Shares/Likes/Comments (platform dependent)

KEY QUESTIONS

- Are these immersive web pages creating meaningful web traffic?
- Are these immersive web pages generating funds for projects?

TACTIC 2 - AR EXPERIENCES

As previously mentioned, with so much of the consumer market already familiar with AR there is a great opportunity for charity: water to create a few experiences that would help raise awareness of its brand and the global water crisis. Because of advances in AR technology, charity: water could release web-based AR experiences. These web-based experiences allow individuals to use their phones, eliminating the need for an expensive headset or the need to download an application. This could allow users to explore key icons for charity: water and learn more about its projects around the globe.

Two initial AR objects are recommended, a digital well and the iconic yellow jerry can. Each could have “call out” statistics that help users learn more about the water crisis and how charity: water is addressing it. Participants can drop a jerry can on their dinner table or a well in their living room. After the participant has explored the model, a prompt of “see it in action” will direct the user to a video or images of these objects in use around the globe. Users then would be invited to donate.

BUDGET

Role	# of Hours	Rate	Cost	Notes
Web Developer	20	\$60.42	1,450.08	
Graphic Designer	20	\$39.06	937.44	
3D Modeler	20	\$51.30	1,231.20	
Production Assistant	10	\$21.00	252.00	
<i>Sub Total</i>			3,870.72	(individual experience)
<i>Tactic Sub Total</i>			7,741.44	(for both)

Other budgetary factors would include web hosting (which charity: water already has) and staff cost time for promoting experiences on charity: water’s other platforms.

TIMELINE

- 2 weeks to develop AR jerry can
- 6 weeks to develop AR water well
- 1 week to test the functionality of experiences
- Launch experience and track progress for three months

EVALUATION

Because these would be unique web-based experiences, tracking the analytics of these two experiences would be critical to understanding this tactic’s success. Charity: water should track scans/views, click-through rates, and donations from these experiences.

For the two AR experiences, the goal is 15,000 views in total

- A click-through rate of 20% = 3,000
- With 10% expected to donate = 300 individuals donating
- Donations at the suggested \$40 = \$12,000
- If they only donated \$20 = \$6,000

METRICS AND MEASURES

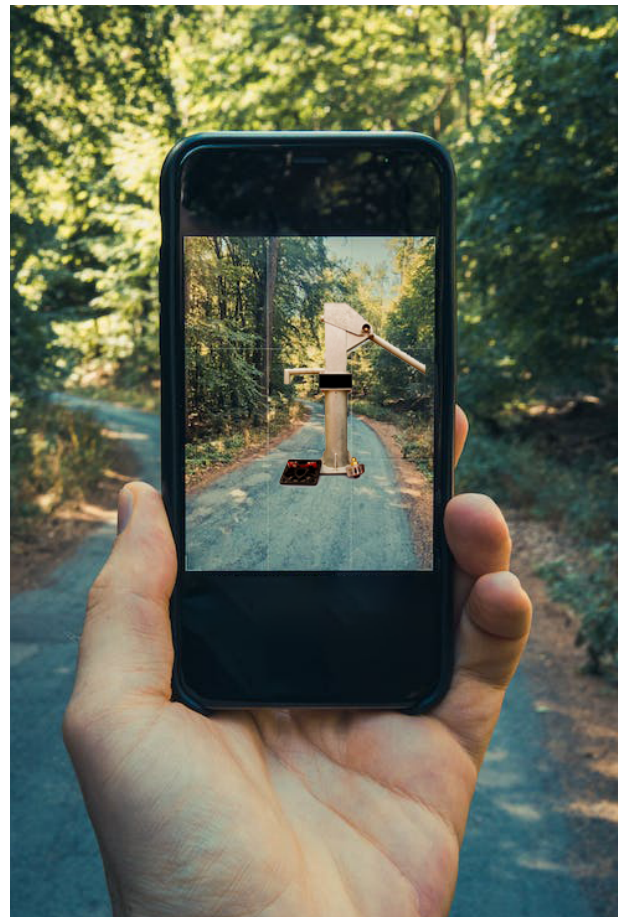
- Web traffic
- Click through rate
- Page views
- Traffic Source
- Shares/Likes/Comments (platform dependent)

KEY QUESTIONS

- Are these AR experiences creating meaningful traffic to the point of donation?
- Are these AR experiences generating the expected funds?



AR example - charity: water jerry can



AR example mock up

STRATEGY 2 - VR EXPERIENCES

These next tactics aim to build and expand charity: water’s audience, specifically through VR. Keep in mind there is a large user segment, untapped by any of the nonprofit organizations studied. By using media that charity: water has already produced it will be able to enter the VR market, raise awareness, and fundraise quickly and cost-effectively. By gathering data on these preliminary VR experiences, ROI will be established to help charity: water feel comfortable and confident in developing a full-scale VR experience.

TACTIC 3 - FOUNDATIONAL VR EXPERIENCE

By utilizing the 360° video that charity: water has already produced, there is an opportunity to expand the use of that project and make it available to a whole new audience. When charity: water first introduced this project, VR headsets were just becoming available to the consumer market. Because of those limitations charity: water would have to gather a crowd to show them this video. Now, there is a large segment of VR users who have headsets. Meaning that charity: water could redistribute this film and reach a large audience, without having to gather them first, or accumulate a lot of expensive equipment.

A small amount of filming and editing could help tailor the experience to these new users. After the film, they would be greeted by Scott Harrison (charity: water founder) on location showing a recent project and asking participants to donate. The filming of this new segment could be added to another trip Mr. Harrison is already taking to Africa, keeping costs down and saving another trip across the globe.

Developing a simple VR application would allow current users to view this compelling video, and then could, like at the gala fundraiser, be invited to donate. This would help establish a built-in audience, so when charity: water is ready to launch a full VR experience a simple update of the app (and with that, notifications to VR users about the update) will give a huge head start.

Charity: water in the past has teamed up with streamers to raise funds for charity: water. Its “stream for clean” would be a prime opportunity to launch this experience and get immediate buy-in and feedback from a passionate, and knowledgeable group.

BUDGET

Role	# of Hours	Rate	Cost	Notes
App Developer	20	\$67.34	1,616.16	
Graphic Designer	5	\$39.06	234.36	
Videographer	10	\$37.33	447.96	
Video Editor	10	\$38.02	456.24	
Production Assistant	5	\$21.00	126.00	
<i>Tactic Sub Total</i>			2,880.72	

Other costs to consider would include access to the applications needed to develop this experience, but I would imagine that either charity: water already has access to this technology or the creative firm it hires would.

TIMELINE

- 1 day of filming the new ending on location
- 1 month to develop experience specifically for VR headsets
- 1 week to test the functionality of the experience
- Launch experience and measure results for 3 months

EVALUATION

The goal is to initially have 3,000 app downloads. Making the application free in the marketplace will certainly help with that. This would establish a solid audience for the eventual application update in Tactic 5.

- App downloads – the goal is 3,000
- Monitor time spent in the app – the goal is 80% or more watch the entire video to see the call to action at the end
- 10% of users donate through VR = 300
- Donations at the suggested \$40 = \$12,000
- If they only donated \$20 = \$6,000

METRICS AND MEASURES

- App downloads
- Time spent in the app
- Click through rate
- Donations generated through experience
- Shares/Likes/Comments (platform dependent)

KEY QUESTIONS

- Is the VR application being downloaded?
- Are individuals watching the entire film?
- Are users donating through the VR platform?

**Note about this tactic - while researching charity: water's previous events "stream for clean" and "hack a thon" there was mention of developing a VR landing page similar to this, even using the 360° video. This, to my knowledge, was never made publicly available and was discovered after developing the majority of this tactic. This discovery further demonstrates how charity: water may already be positioned to launch a VR experience. If this experience is already developed that would save a considerable amount in staff time, making this tactic (and others) even more affordable.*

TACTIC 4 - ACCESSIBLE VR EXPERIENCE

55% of individuals list cost as their main hesitation or obstacle for entering into VR (Kolmar, 2023). Finding a way to lower the price point would help expand the target audience beyond current VR headset users. There are a few incredibly affordable options that could creatively be used to help users gain access to this content. Something like Google cardboard (which can be custom printed for around \$2 each) which uses a phone as the main screen. This could provide an opportunity for charity: water to expand its presence in the VR market while increasing its fundraising efforts.



Charity:water has a way of fundraising in unique ways that flip the script for nonprofit fundraising (i.e. unlocking a donation through the VR experience at Brookfield Place). Similarly for this tactic, charity: water could engage with its current audience to expand its audience and raise funds. By securing a donation ahead of time, charity: water could order custom-printed cardboard headsets, then, in conjunction with “Giving Tuesday” charity: water would “give” out these cardboard headsets that utilize smart phones. Individuals could “order” the headset online and the “payment” would be to promise to have 3 or more friends watch the video. By securing funding for this tactic before its launch, charity: water would continue to demonstrate its value of “100% goes to the field”.

Using the 360° video that charity: water already produced, a QR code on the side of the cardboard headset would direct the user to load the video and phone into the cardboard headset, then they can enjoy the film.

After the initial launch of the accessible VR experience, more headsets could be made available for sale in charity: water’s online store, with proceeds funding projects.

BUDGET

Role	# of Hours	Rate	Cost	Notes
App Developer	20	\$67.34	1,616.16	Just converting Tactic 3 to new platform
Web Developer	20	\$60.42	1,450.08	
<i>Labor Sub Total</i>			3,066.24	
Production Costs				
Custom printed headsets			\$10,000	(5,000 at \$2)
Shipping			\$15,000	(~ \$3 per headset)
<i>Sub Total</i>			25,000.00	donated
<i>Tactic Sub Total</i>			28,066.24	w/prod. cost
			3,066.24	w/out prod. cost

TIMELINE

- Secure funding for production costs early in the year
- 2 weeks to custom design and order headsets
- 1 month to develop experience, film extra ending, and edit video (should already have the extra video ready to go from tactic 3).
- 1 week to test the functionality of the experience
- Launch experience and measure results for 3 months

EVALUATION

The success of this tactic hinges on setting the tone before the launch of the tactic. The end consumer must understand that the point is to share about charity: water, the issue they are addressing, and encouraging their friends to donate. The goal is to have all 5,000 headsets ordered on or during the week of Giving Tuesday and to use charity: water's passionate donor base to help spread the word.

- QR code scans = if all 5,000 share with at least 3 friends = 15,000 views
- With 10% expected to donate = 1,500 donating
- Donations at the suggested \$40 = \$60,000
- If they only donated \$20 = \$30,000
- Because of donors' support, no materials to cover
- Resulting in a net of approximately \$29,430 to \$59,430 (if factoring in the production cost of headsets these numbers would fluctuate)
- Tracking QR code scans and the number of views should provide solid data on participants' use of the experience and point towards awareness of charity: water

METRICS AND MEASURES

- Pre-orders
- QR Code Scans
- Time spent in the app



- Click through rate
- Donations generated through experience
- Shares/Likes/Comments (platform dependent)

KEY QUESTIONS

- Are individuals who “ordered” cardboard headsets truly sharing the experience? Should see more QR scans/views than # of headsets ordered.
- Are individuals donating after engaging with the VR experience?

NEXT STEP - DEVELOPMENT OF FULL VR EXPERIENCE

This communications plan relies heavily on charity: water’s extensive library of compelling digital content. In executing the previous two tactics charity: water can expand its audience and bolster fundraising efforts. With this new audience, charity: water should consider deploying its own completely new VR experience.

Because direct access to charity: water’s database of current donors was unavailable, before starting this tactic it’s recommended that charity: water send out a survey to its current donors. The goal of this survey is to establish how many of its current donors own a VR headset and gauge the general level of interest its current audience has in a VR experience.

The information collected from the survey, along with the proven ROI from the previous VR tactics should arm charity: water with concrete evidence to confidently begin developing a full VR experience. And thus continuing to expand its audience and its fundraising efforts through this custom VR experience.

TACTIC 5 - FULL VR EXPERIENCE

Once the viability of these VR experiences is shown, charity: water can develop a brand new, full VR experience transporting participants to a virtual village, where they would be invited to explore the village and find an iconic item, charity: water’s yellow jerry can. A narrator would invite the participants to pick up the jerry can and then explain how heavy it would be if it was full, how far people have to walk for water, and how long it takes. The participant would then be invited to take the jerry can to a cement pad where a well has been prepared for assembly. Next, participants would be invited to help assemble the well. Following instructions, participants would be informed how much water would flow through this well and how it would change people’s lives. When they install the sensor, they’ll learn



Screen shot of a VR example scene

how people can track the well and how locals will keep the well flowing for generations. Once the well is built, participants can operate the well filling the jerry can they brought over. Once the jerry can is full, a 360° video will play showing how real villages have been transformed because of a water well. This is where VR can show the participants what it is really like. They will see the villagers smile, jump and dance. They will hear them sing and celebrate. After the video, participants would be invited to keep exploring and, of course, to donate.

BUDGET

Role	# of Hours	Rate	Cost	Notes
App Developer	80	\$67.34	6,464.64	
3D Modeler	80	\$51.30	4,924.80	
Graphic Designer	20	\$39.06	937.44	
Video Editor	10	\$38.02	456.24	
Production Assistant	10	\$21.00	252.00	
<i>Tactic Sub Total</i>			13,035.12	

Other costs to consider would include access to the applications needed to develop this experience, but I would imagine that either charity: water already has access to this technology or the creative firm it hires would.

TIMELINE

- 2 months to develop a full VR experience specifically for VR headsets
 - 2 weeks to test the functionality of the experience
- Launch experience and measure results for 6 months

EVALUATION

The goal with the previous VR tactic was to initially have 3,000 app downloads to establish a solid audience for the eventual release of this experience. The goal would be to increase this audience by 5,000 making it a total of 8,000 downloads between the two tactics.

It is important to note that charity: water will be benefitting not only from the increase in donations and awareness, but will be the first and only nonprofit addressing the global water crisis operating in this platform. With 50.2 million VR users in the United State, the goal of 8,000 total downloads is only .001593625% of the VR market in the US. So, while 8,000 downloads is no “small” number, comparatively, there is by far more room for growth. Even 1% of the total US VR market would yield substantial results.

- App downloads – the goal is 5,000 new downloads
- Monitor time spent in the app – with the new experience are individuals spending more time? Completing the experience?
- If only 10% of users donate through VR = 800 (total between new and old downloads)
- Donations at the suggested \$40 = \$32,000

- If they only donated \$20 = \$16,000

METRICS AND MEASURES

- App updates
- New app downloads
- Time spent in the app
- Click through rate
- Donations generated through experience
- Shares/Likes/Comments (platform dependent)

KEY QUESTIONS

- Is the VR application being downloaded and/or updated?
- Are users donating through the VR platform?

POTENTIAL BRAND PARTNERSHIP

As previously mentioned, the cost is a major obstacle for many to enter into VR. Fortunately, charity: water has many impactful brand partnerships that contribute to the work charity: water does. By creating another brand partnership with Zap Box, charity: water could provide an extremely affordable headset option, with easy access to its VR content.

Zap Box was launched to make VR experiences affordable for everyone. Their most recent release operates much more similarly to a traditional VR



Photo credit: Zapbox

experience with a headset and two controllers. While still using a mobile phone as the primary screen, users strap on a headset and can engage with VR content. Each headset costs ~ \$60, which is remarkable, considering most VR headsets cost ~ \$400 or more. Through this potential partnership, charity: water-branded boxes and headsets could be made available at a fraction of the cost. Recently Zap Box also announced the release of an SDK (standard development kit) for Unity (a leading software for making VR experiences), making it even easier for the original charity: water content to be converted for this unique implementation.

*It is important to note that with this platform the phone is the screen and processor which means there would be significant graphical limitations compared to a typical VR headset. Charity: water would need to decide early in the process which display it would prefer to use or commit to two separate experiences.



OTHER CONSIDERATION - MOBILE GAME ADJUSTMENT

In March of 2022 charity: water released a mobile game called “This is a True Story” aimed at raising awareness of the global water crisis and showing what some individuals must endure to get water. Charity: water compiled real-life stories from individuals it has helped to shape the challenges and story of the game.

While outside the scope of this project, charity: water could consider expanding the use of its mobile game. The competitive analysis shows that no other nonprofits addressing the global water crisis have a mobile game.

“This is a Real Story” currently has no option for the user to donate while playing the game. With minor changes, this same app could be used to help bolster fundraising efforts with adults.

To complete the final project for the class UX Design, “This is a Real Story” was researched and suggestions were made as to how to implement some changes. As a bonus, that project can be found [here](#).



Screen shot of “This is a Real Story”

EVALUATION

The preceding tactics have focused on meeting the goal and objectives of this communications plan by delineating clear and direct steps to launch accessible immersive content online and through various immersive platforms. It is recommended that each tactic be evaluated individually in 3-month intervals from launch, using the metrics and measures presented with each tactic. Other data points could prove to be invaluable information like staff feedback, public perception, and other sources that would give more depth to the metrics and measures presented with each tactic.

An overall assessment should be performed at 6 and 12 months to ensure the communications plan as a whole is making progress towards meeting the goal and objectives. This can be found in Appendix E. The evaluation plan will provide feedback so charity: water can make adjustments quickly, maximizing the effectiveness of this campaign and taking full advantage of each fundraising opportunity.

CONCLUSION

It is estimated that 785 million people lack access to clean and safe drinking water (WHO & UNICEF, 2019). While charity: water and other nonprofits try to address this important issue, it can feel, to say the least, a daunting undertaking considering that there are so many, with such a critical need.

As previously mentioned some studies have shown that when an individual encounters a large problem an effect called “psychic numbing” can cause the individual to “turn off” when faced with a problem that seems so large and daunting (Slovic & Västfjäll, 2015). And yet, Babbie (1988) notes that often there are individuals who despite feeling “powerless to affect such problems, sometimes [they] step forward and take action” (p. 37) and that “it became clear that taking personal responsibility for public problems is a source of profound satisfaction” (p. 37). Perhaps in this tension, between this overwhelming global crisis and each of us choosing some form of action is where we could see a significant and lasting difference.

Charity: water has a stellar reputation as a highly respected nonprofit organization, leading the way in addressing the global water crisis. Its mission and values have earned the trust of even the most skeptical potential donor. While it has accomplished so much, the rest of the market has begun to adjust, making what used to set charity: water apart, far more common. While this is a benefit to the industry, and those who would be served by these nonprofits, charity: water will greatly benefit by continuing to distinguish itself.

With VR headsets becoming more widely available, and the production cost of immersive experiences becoming more affordable, there is tremendous potential for using these platforms as a fundraising tool. The audience in immersive environments, particularly AR and VR is virtually untapped by most nonprofit organizations. Research has shown that this market which has seen growth on an epic scale will only continue to grow.

By leveraging charity: water’s previous 360° video and other digital media, it could be the first to make a concerted effort to have a presence in this vast audience. Because of charity: water’s experience with VR, it sits in a unique position to be the front runner in this digital medium, at a

fraction of the cost that other nonprofits would need to spend to enter this market.

This communications plan lays out a strategy to not only appeal to a wide audience but also grow a strong platform within VR, AR, and web-based immersive experiences. With this plan, on top of releasing VR experiences, charity: water can expect to see an increase in web traffic (pointing to an increase in awareness) and donations. As well as the development of a VR-based audience. If these tactics were to generate the expected web traffic and donations it would be a substantial ROI for charity: water. But the exciting part is, these numbers are just a fraction of what's possible.

For instance, by implementing the VR tactics, charity water would grow an anticipated VR audience of 8,000 individuals. That is .0159% of the current VR market in the US alone. There is a huge untapped market where there is little to no nonprofit competition.

If that wasn't enough, let's look at the financial potential. Throughout these tactics, an industry standard of 10% of participants are expected to donate (on avg. \$30) which would equal nearly half a million dollars (\$427,942). But one of the truly exciting aspects of fundraising through VR is the potential for higher participation. As previously mentioned, Kang (2016) reported that the UNICEF VR fundraising experience had a participation rate as high as 80%. That would equate to \$3,423,536. Now obviously no one can guarantee an 80% participation rate, but it does show the massive potential of this platform.

Charity: water has a proven track record of being a trustworthy leader addressing the water crisis, that is willing to leverage technology to its fullest potential. And in immersive platforms, there is a ton, almost limitless, potential. Through this plan, charity: water could continue its amazing work, changing the lives of so many, at an even larger scale.

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14

APPENDICES

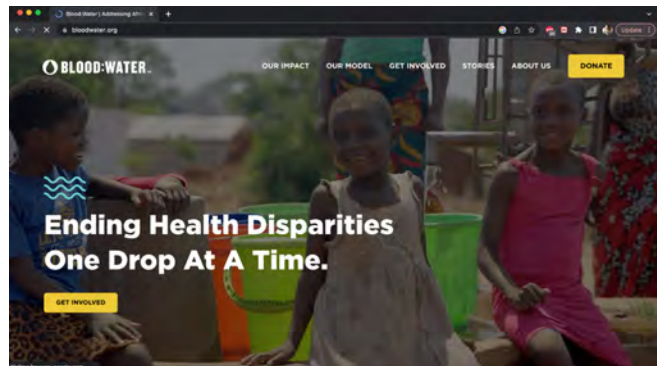


APPENDIX A - WEBSITE CONTENT ANALYSIS

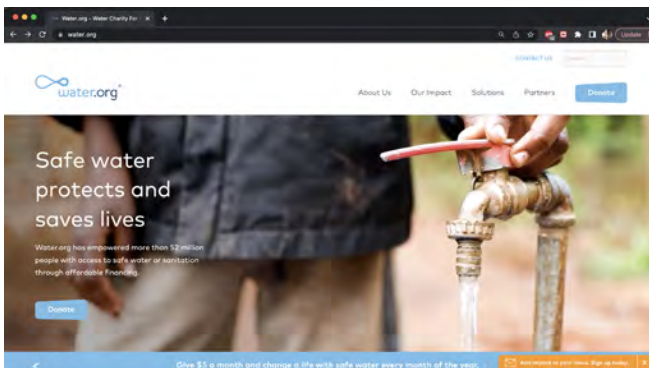
Screen shots from some of the organizations webpages collected for this analysis.



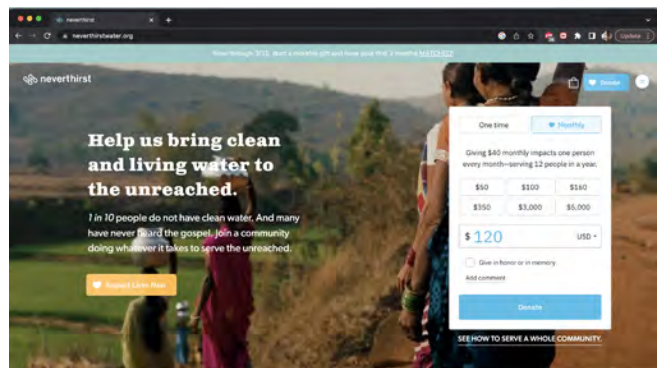
charity: water



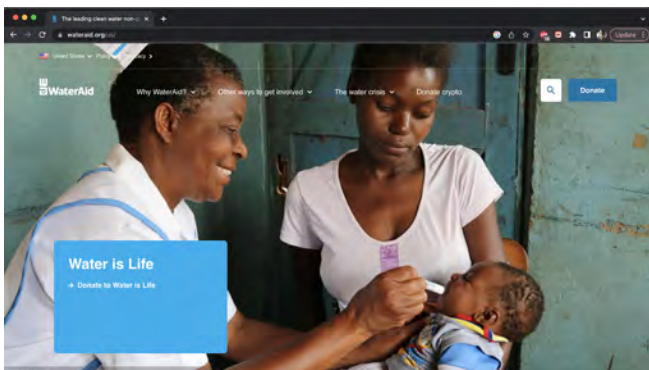
Blood Water



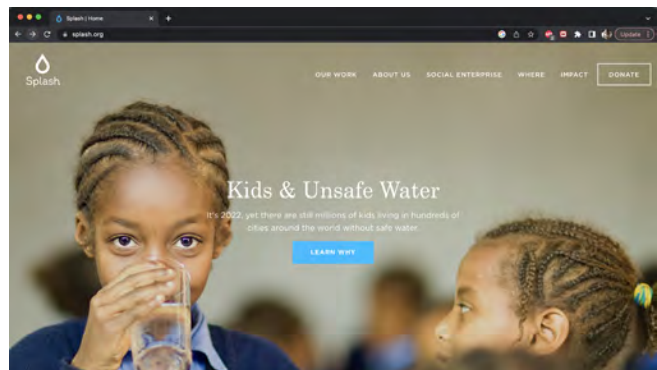
water.org



Neverthirst



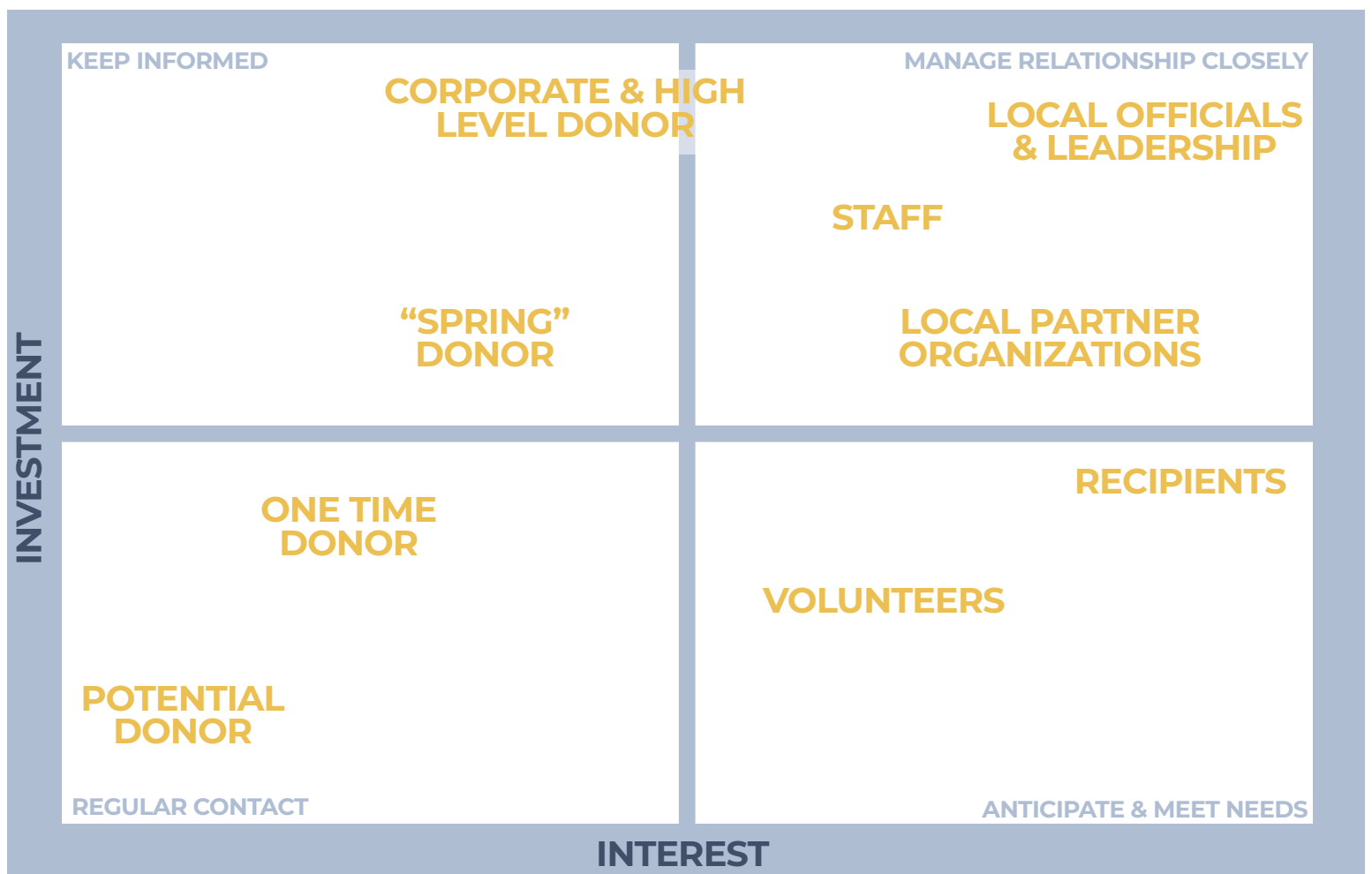
WaterAid



Splash

	charity: water	water.org	H2O for Life	Drop in the Bucket	Splash
link	https://www.charitywater.org/	https://water.org/	https://www.h2oforlifeschools.org/	https://dropinthebucket.org/	https://splash.org/
Mission	To bring clean and safe drinking water to people in developing countries.	Not made abundantly clear but along the same vein as these others, focuses on water and impact.	H2O for Life activates youth to help solve the global water crisis	To eliminate poverty through access to clean water and education	Splash is a social justice organization committed to the poor, an international development agency disciplined around urban economies, a social enterprise dedicated to putting ourselves out of business, and a safe water company focused on children.
Values	100% goes to field, open book (transparency) prove every project	not listed	not listed	not listed	People, quality, honesty, Joy, Mistakes
100% model?	yes	no	no	no	no
Self reported impact	120, 784 water projects funded in 29 countries serving 16,835,671	52M lives in 11 countries	1,131 water, sanitation and hygiene education projects completed at schools. 511, 624 International students who now have access to water at school	Most recent financials reported on its website are from 2018 - Income 779,639 v. 734,039 outflow	2,391 sites, 997,980 kids
Programs & main efforts					
Work w/ local partne	Yes	Yes	not mentioned	not mentioned	not mentioned
Charity Navigator	92	96	n/a	Not Rated	93
Notes:		Celebrity founder	Specifically works with youth/schools and projects go to schools in developing nations		
Platforms					
Web	x	x	x	x	x
Twitter	x	x		x	
Instagram	x	x		x	
Facebook	x	x	x	x	
Youtube	x	x	x		
LinkedIn	x	x		x	
Snapchat	x				
Tiktok	x	x		x	
Mobilegame	x				

APPENDIX B - STAKEHOLDER MAP



APPENDIX C - BUDGET & SALARY RESEARCH

You can download the budget and salary research excel document [here](#).

Salary Research				
Role	Annual	Month	Hourly	Avg.
Graphic Design				
Group 1	\$85,000.00	\$7,083.33	\$44.27	
Group 2	\$75,000.00	\$6,250.00	\$39.06	
Group 3	\$65,000.00	\$5,416.67	\$33.85	\$39.06
Videographer (Production Artist)				
Group 1	\$85,000.00	\$7,083.33	\$44.27	
Group 2	\$65,000.00	\$5,416.67	\$33.85	
Group 3	\$65,000.00	\$5,416.67	\$33.85	\$37.33
Video Editor				
Group 1	\$79,000.00	\$6,583.33	\$41.15	
Group 2	\$75,000.00	\$6,250.00	\$39.06	
Group 3	\$65,000.00	\$5,416.67	\$33.85	\$38.02
3D Modeler/Artist (Digital Producer)				
Group 1	\$123,000.00	\$10,250.00	\$64.06	
Group 2	\$92,500.00	\$7,708.33	\$48.18	
Group 3	\$80,000.00	\$6,666.67	\$41.67	\$51.30
Web Developer (Full Stack Developer)				
Group 1	\$120,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$62.50	
Group 2	\$122,500.00	\$10,208.33	\$63.80	
Group 3	\$105,500.00	\$8,791.67	\$54.95	\$60.42
App Developer (UX Designer)				
Group 1	\$145,400.00	\$12,116.67	\$75.73	
Group 2	\$125,000.00	\$10,416.67	\$65.10	
Group 3	\$117,500.00	\$9,791.67	\$61.20	\$67.34
Production Assistant				
Salary.com				\$21

Notes:

Groups 1-3 rates are from Aquent's Salary Guide

Data pulled from the median range (50% of reported salaries)

Budget

Tactic 1 - Web Based Immersive Pages						
Role	# of Hours	Rate	Cost	Notes		
Web Developer	20	\$60.42	1,450.08			
Graphic Designer	20	\$39.06	937.44			
3D Modeler	10	\$51.30	615.60			
Video Editor	5	\$38.02	228.12			
Production Assistant	10	\$21.00	252.00			
<i>Sub Total</i>			3,483.24	(individual page)	Proj. Donations	Net
<i>Tactic Sub Total</i>			17,416.20	(for all 5)	\$390,000	\$372,583.80
Tactic 2 - AR Experiences						
Role	# of Hours	Rate	Cost	Notes		
Web Developer	20	\$60.42	1,450.08			
Graphic Designer	20	\$39.06	937.44			
3D Modeler	20	\$51.30	1,231.20			
Production Assistant	10	\$21.00	252.00			
<i>Sub Total</i>			3,870.72	(individual experience)	Proj. Donations	Net
<i>Tactic Sub Total</i>			7,741.44	(for both)	\$9,000	\$1,258.56
Tactic 3 - Foundational VR Experience						
Role	# of Hours	Rate	Cost	Notes		
App Developer	20	\$67.34	1,616.16			
Graphic Designer	5	\$39.06	234.36			
Videographer	10	\$37.33	447.96			
Video Editor	10	\$38.02	456.24			
Production Assistant	5	\$21.00	126.00			
<i>Tactic Sub Total</i>			2,880.72		Proj. Donations	Net
					\$9,000	\$6,119.28
Tactic 4 - Accessible VR Experience						
Role	# of Hours	Rate	Cost	Notes		
App Developer	20	\$67.34	1,616.16	Just converting Tactic 3 to new platform		
Web Developer	20	\$60.42	1,450.08			
<i>Labor Sub Total</i>			3,066.24			
Production Costs						
Custom printed headsets			\$10,000	(5,000 at \$2)		
Shipping			\$15,000	(~ \$3 per headset)		
<i>Sub Total</i>			25,000.00	donated	Proj. Donations	Net
<i>Tactic Sub Total</i>			28,066.24	w/prod. cost	\$44,186	\$16,119.76
			3,066.24	w/out prod. cost	\$44,186	\$41,119.76

Tactic 5 - Full VR Experience						
Role	# of Hours	Rate	Cost	Notes		
App Developer	80	\$67.34	6,464.64			
3D Modeler	80	\$51.30	4,924.80			
Graphic Designer	20	\$39.06	937.44			
Video Editor	10	\$38.02	456.24			
Production Assistant	10	\$21.00	252.00			
					Proj. Donations	Net
<i>Tactic Sub Total</i>			13,035.12		\$24,000	\$10,964.88
			Cost		Proj. Donations	Net
Totals			69,139.72		\$476,186	\$407,046.28

Notes:

*In the book each tactic gives a range of donations based off of \$40 and \$20. Projected donations for each tactic is the average Formula for hourly rate w/ agency cost

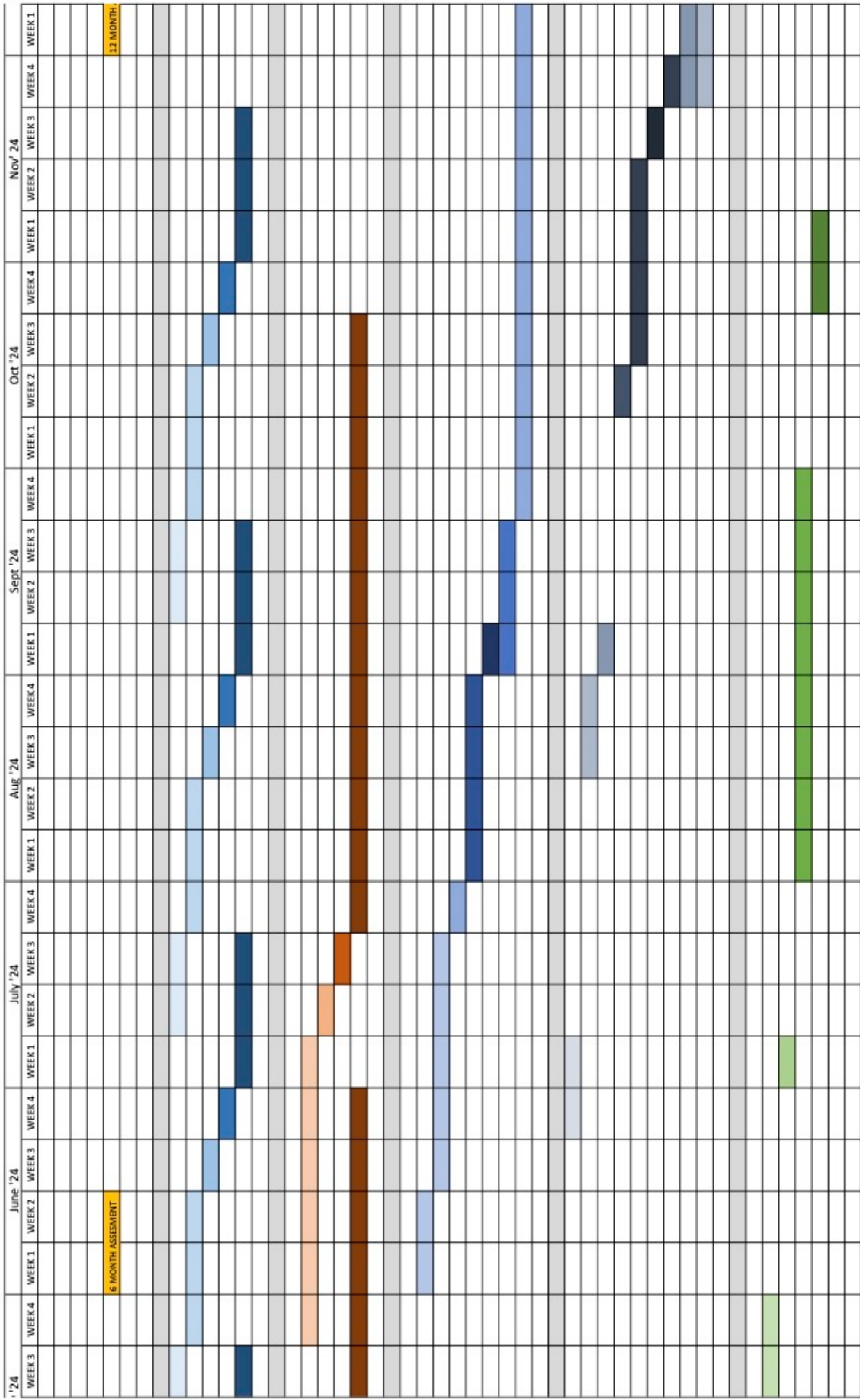
$$\# \text{ of projected hours} \times \text{hourly rate} \times 20\% \text{ (avg. agency cost)} = \text{cost}$$

APPENDIX D - TIMELINE/GANTT CHART

You can download the Gantt chart excel document [here](#).

charity: water Gantt Chart	Dec '23				Jan '24				Feb '24				Mar '24				April '24				May	
	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 1	WEEK 2		
Onboarding																						
Present to charity: water																						
charity: water begins to prep																						
Comms plan begin																						
Assessments																						
Tactics																						
T1 - Web Based Immersive Experiences																						
Research & Compile Digital Resources																						
Build experience																						
Test functionality																						
Launch Web Page																						
Track Progress/Assess Effectiveness																						
T2 - Web Based AR Experiences																						
Develop AR Jerry Can																						
Develop AR Water Well																						
Test Functionality																						
Launch Experience																						
Track Progress/Assess Effectiveness																						
T3 - Foundational VR Experience																						
Film New Ending At Project Site																						
Edit 360 Video For New Platform																						
Develop App																						
Test Functionality																						
Submit For App Store																						
Launch Experience																						
Run Targeted Ads																						
Track Progress/Assess Effectiveness																						
T4 - Accessible VR Experience																						
Secure funding for materials																						
Custom Design for cardboard headsets																						
Order Headsets																						
Convert Video																						
Develop Experience																						
Test Functionality																						
Launch Experience																						
Ship pre-orders																						
Track Progress/Assess Effectiveness																						
T5 - Development of Full VR Experience																						
Publish RFP For App Development Team																						
Interview/Vet Studios																						
Finalize Contract																						
Develop Experience																						
Test Functionality																						
Launch Experience																						
Track Progress/Assess Effectiveness																						





APPENDIX E - EVALUATION

6 and 12-month evaluation

With each tactic, there are evaluation metrics listed to gauge the effectiveness of each tactic. However, this section aims to provide a broader reflection and a template to guide conversations around the overall effectiveness of this communications plan.

BASIC EVALUATION

Is this communications plan:

- helpful to charity: water?
- making significant progress towards achieving its goals and objectives?
- a cost-effective use of charity: water's budget?
- an effective use of charity: water's staff time?

EVALUATION OF TACTICS

- Sending a survey sent to donors and identified users of the immersive experiences would help gauge the effectiveness of the campaign. i.e. Are people actually using the experiences?
- Are the experiences actually generating new donations/donors?
- Compare tactic timeline with actual execution of tactics. Were there any major delays or underestimated timeline demands? What adjustments need to be made in the future?
- Since the start of the campaign, has there been an increase in web traffic? Have people been visiting/downloading the immersive experiences?
- Are people actually donating through these experiences?

EVALUATION OF STAFF TIME

- Do any of the timelines place an unfair burden on any charity: water staff?
- Are contracted providers completing projects on time, on budget, and to a quality acceptable to charity: water?
- Since the start of the campaign, have there been any unforeseen demands on charity: water's staff time?
- Is anyone consistently working outside the scope of their job description?

EVALUATION OF EXPENSE

- Are the tactics being completed on or under budget?
- Do any of the budgetary goals need to be adjusted?
- Is there any actual or perceived ROI from these tactics?

BIO

ABOUT JAKE

Jake lives in the Eugene/Springfield area with his lovely wife and two kids. He enjoys roasting coffee, playing guitar, and spending time with his friends and family.

He spent the last 10 years working with a local nonprofit in Springfield, OR. When the pandemic saw an end to his previous career, the Strategic Communications Master's program was a great opportunity to blend his experience, skills, and interests, while continuing his education and starting a new career path. He wants his work to have a lasting impact in his community and/or the world.



Jake & his family

I am incredibly grateful for my experience in the Strategic Communications program. A large portion of my coursework has focused on empathy and how we express it toward other people, particularly those who we would view as opposed to us. Now more than ever I am convinced that empathy will be the key for all of us to, as Tronto states, “repair our ‘world’ so that we can live in it as well as possible.”

Jake Savelich





JACOB SAVELICH

SOJC, University of Oregon

Capstone Project

June 7th, 2023