



Like, Comment, and Share: Boosting Engagement for Transit Justice



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Background

- Transit justice has become an increasing concern with the transit sector producing 60% of Seattle's total GHG emissions.
- Social media has become an increasingly important tool in online nonprofit communication.
- However, nonprofits typically struggle with communication strategy, especially with the rise of newer platforms.
- Transit-centered nonprofits must assess and reconstruct their social media communication methods.

Research Question

What features of an online account can transit-centered nonprofits implement to improve communication and engagement on social media?

Internship and Methods



- Interned with Seattle Subway Foundation.
- Developed content for the newly established Seattle Subway TikTok account (See Fig. 1).
- Developed and administered an online survey to current Seattle Subway supporters.
- Conducted a literature review on social media communication.

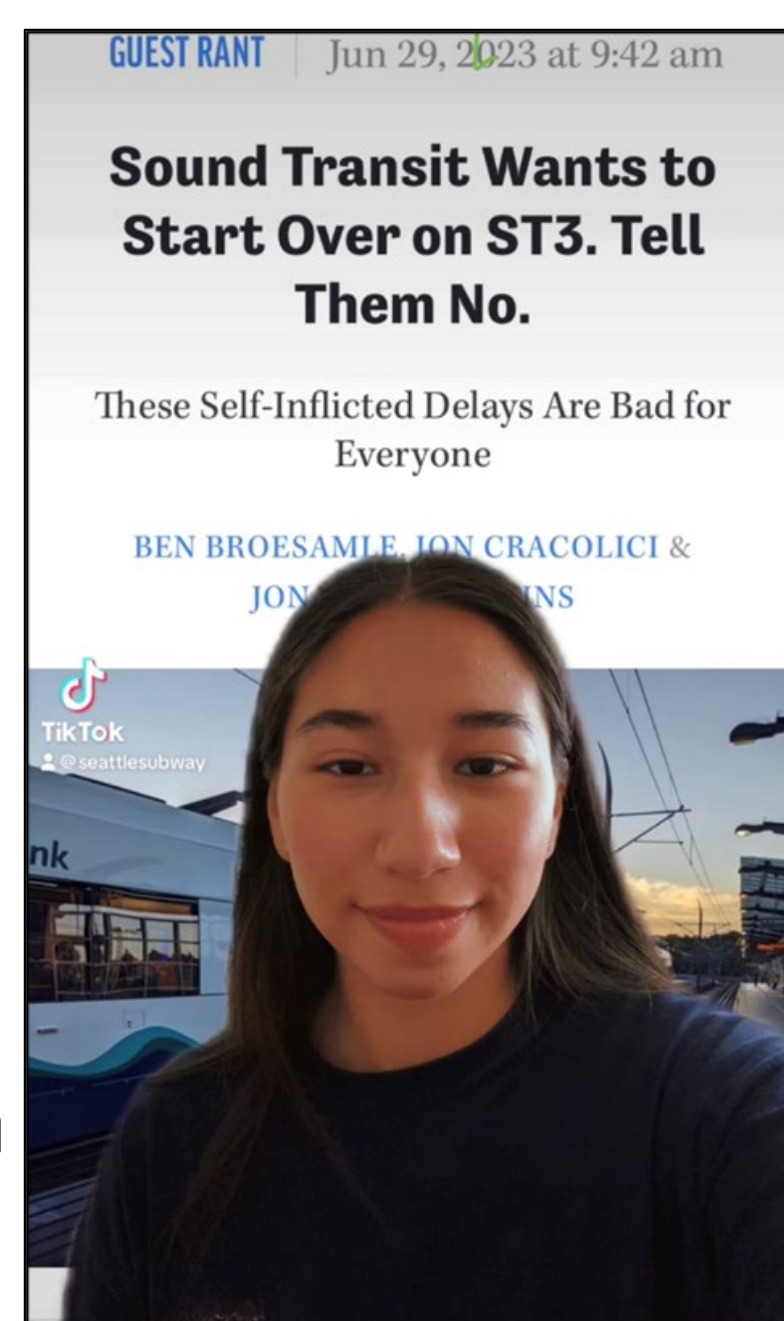


Figure 1. Content I created during my internship with Seattle Subway Foundation, currently posted on TikTok.

Results: Key Features

In order to develop an effective communication strategy, a transit-centered nonprofit should:



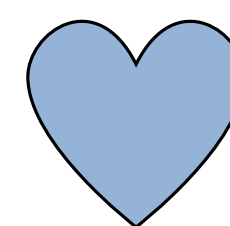
Establish organizational identity by stating core values and goals, otherwise known as “the mission” on account bio and in the content.



Prioritize transparency

- Implement two-way communication
 - Be accessible to audience for questions concerning the organization's identity, posts, and actions

“Asked me to sign, made signing petition seem thoughtless.”
– Seattle Subway Survey Respondent



Appeal to Pathos:

- Comedic trends on the platform (See Fig. 2)
- Humanize transit justice issues (See Fig. 3)

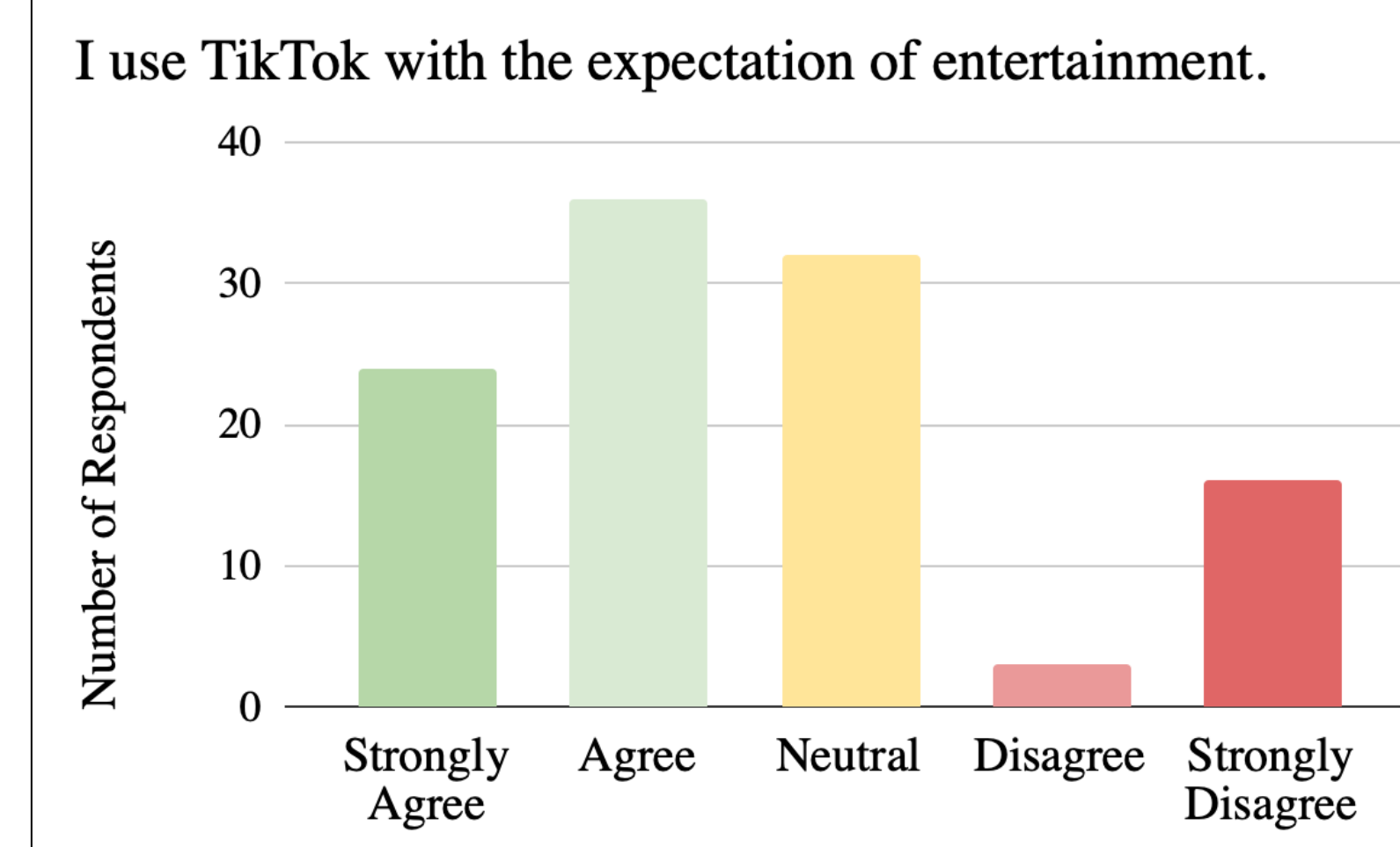


Figure 2. Survey responses on Likert scale resulting describing the high agreeance of using TikTok for entertainment purposes.

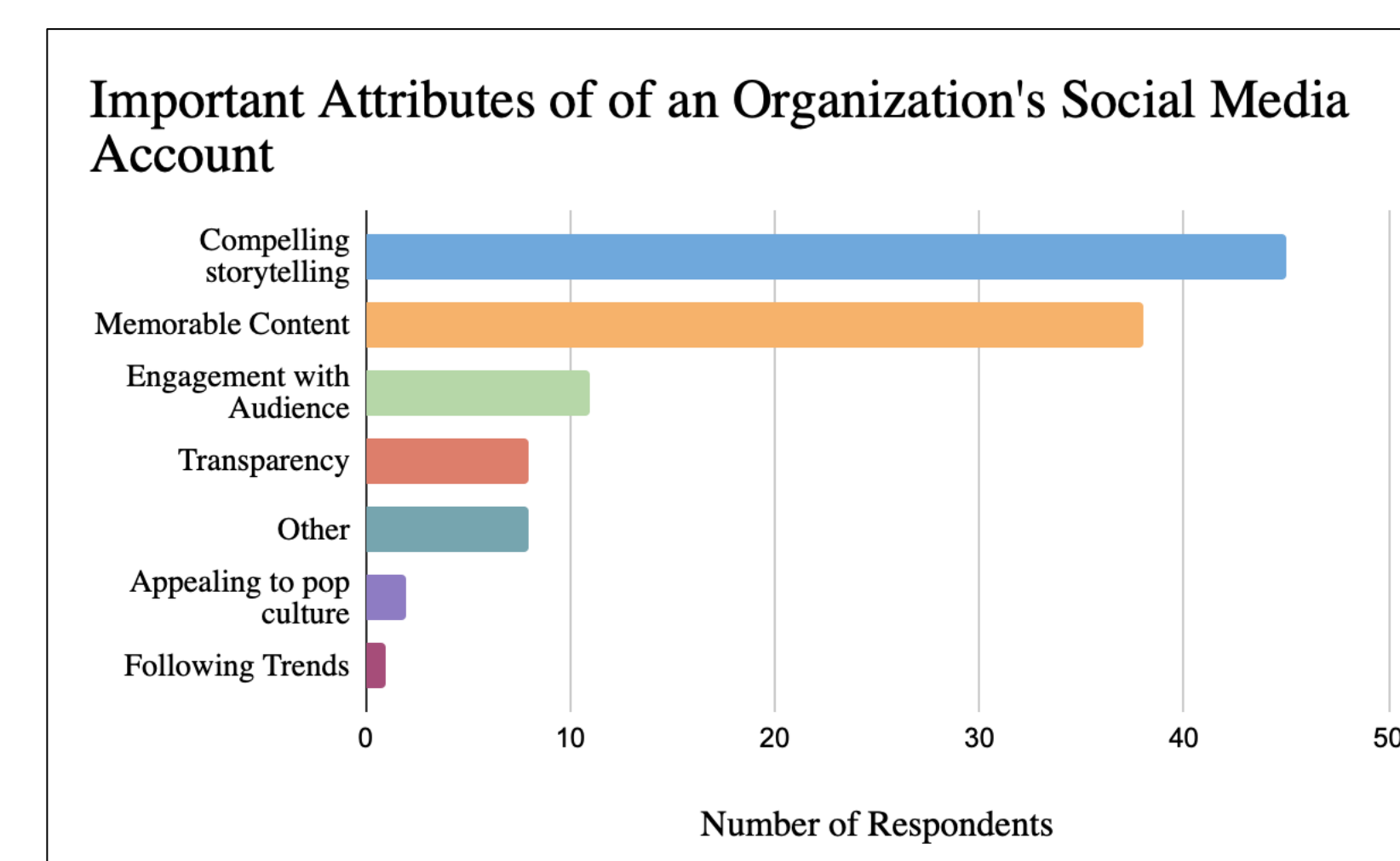


Figure 3. Survey responses from 115 Seattle Subway supporters on the attributes of an organization's social media account they deem most important.

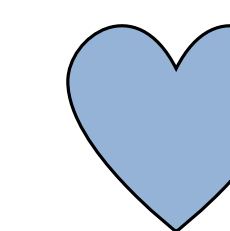
Key Takeaways



- Prospective supporters need to understand who and what the organization supports in order to lend their support.



- Implement two-way communication to establish a connection with the audience that is not solely transactional.
- Creating dialogue with the audience before demanding action on behalf of the organization.



- Comedic trends often can make the distribution of information more accessible.
- Storytelling can be most effective when providing a face to common statistics surrounding transit issues.

Broader Implications

- Using comedic trends are effective ways of engaging audiences and can expand the audience to include youth.
- Continuing surveys on audience satisfaction to assess effectiveness of implementing these features.
- Future research should analyze content and compare the platform's built-in engagement analytics concerning the implementation of these features.
- Effective online communication can inform constituents about their proximity to transit justice issues.
- With Seattle Subway often promoting opportunities for public participation, informed constituents can make a positive socioenvironmental impact.

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