
PERSONALIZATION IN THE NON-PROFIT SOCIAL IMPACT SECTOR

An increase in personalization has been seen across industries over the last couple of years. Even companies like IKEA, who are known for their standard offering, are moving towards customized and personalized furniture. In a not-so-distant past it would be impossible to imagine that people would not receive the same news. Today, that is the reality. Examining the struggles and challenges faced by non-profit social impact organizations, it seems possible that personalization, in this space too, could provide value both for the organizations themselves and their followers.

There are in principle two kinds of social impact organizations: those focused on one or a few specific subject matters, and those in the noble pursuit of protecting a wide range of civil rights, fighting societal injustice, and contribute to a better society at large.

Amnesty International, an organization of the second type, was the subject in a recent research study during which possibilities for leveraging internally created data for decision making and other organizational activities was examined. While many use cases of data was identified, an especially interesting one concerns personalization of communication with supporters. See, even though the broad span width of Amnesty provides the organization with trust and ethical authority, many people seek to engage with social impact organization because of interests in specific subjects.

Consider someone that engages with a broad-topic organization, e.g. becomes member/donor, or signs a petition, because of a specific topic that the organization have paid attention to. Then it is by obvious reasons extremely relevant to provide that person with upcoming material concerning the same topic, and with that acknowledge the supports' interest.

When dealing with a wide range of communication channels and methods for reaching out to supporters, extensive demands are put on the technical landscape and data management processes for enabling such communication efforts. The research project concludes that not only do data integrations need to work properly, but organizational processes must also be in place. Aligning categorization and tagging of communication material, agreeing on ways of working with data, and educating employees to mention a few, are considered such necessary activities.

So what value does it bring? And is it worth it for non-profit social impact organizations to reconsider their data management processes? Opinions might certainly differ across organizations. During this project, many knowledge workers within Amnesty have with great enthusiasm described how they wished to leverage data, and what benefits it could bring to their specific work. Many convinced that working in a data driven manner is of great value both for themselves and their followers.