

How Susan G. Komen Created Communities of New Supporters & Recouped Revenue



Executive Summary



Breast cancer did not stop during the pandemic. In fact, breast cancer patients encountered *more* challenges when accessing much-needed care. Many were scared to get screened or see a doctor, and others were facing a sudden loss of insurance or other new financial challenges.

At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic created direct barriers for nonprofit fundraising which were felt by organizations far and wide—including Susan G. Komen and the funds it raises to help breast cancer patients. For the first time in its decades-long history, Susan G. Komen faced barriers when it came to:

- Raising funds for medical care, screenings, and support for women
- Reaching investment research goals to advance cancer cures
- Cultivating community for survivors and co-survivors of breast cancer

Breast cancer didn't quit during the pandemic, so Komen didn't either.

Committed to finding new ways to raise money and meet the needs of the breast cancer community, Komen partnered with GoodUnited, the social fundraising solution provider. The partnership created a series of digital peer-to-peer fundraising challenges that mimicked in-person peer-to-peer camaraderie on Facebook. Not only did Komen recoup lost revenue and raise 2x the donations expected, but they also attracted 10,000 fresh supporters.



About Susan G. Komen



Founded in 1982, Susan G. Komen is the world's leading breast cancer organization and the only nonprofit that addresses breast cancer on multiple fronts: community health, global outreach, and public policy initiatives.

Since its inception, the Susan G. Komen Foundation has poured \$2.9 billion into groundbreaking research, community health outreach, advocacy, and programs in over 60 countries. The organization's efforts have helped contribute to the 40% decrease in cancer deaths between 1989 and 2016.

Through its fundraising efforts, Komen has built community, raised funds for cancer research, and honored those who lost their battle with the disease.



Altering an Approach to Facebook



In light of the many fundraising challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, doubling down on Facebook, where Komen has had success with birthday fundraisers, seemed a smart choice.

But, supporters were hesitant to ask their friends and family to donate at a time when so many were facing their own financial and personal challenges. Meanwhile, fundraisers for causes that were directly tied to COVID-related relief – shelters, first responders, and food insecurity – surged.

Komen needed a new way to continue raising peer-to-peer funds on Facebook while being sensitive and empathetic to the current circumstances.

Historically, GoodUnited had helped Komen maximize Facebook birthday fundraisers. So when GoodUnited offered a newly developed solution, Facebook Challenges, Komen said yes.

Trying Something New Pays Off In New Supporters



In January 2021, Komen and GoodUnited partnered to put together the first month-long Facebook Challenge. **Their goal? Acquire 6,500 supporters.**

Facebook Challenges are unique in that once supporters sign up, they're added to a Facebook group where they share their experiences with cancer and participate in a physical challenge such as performing burpees or running, all while raising both awareness of and funds for breast cancer.

GoodUnited's approach coupled with Facebook's targeting allowed Komen to find individuals who were new to the cause yet had an affinity for the organization's mission. The ads that prompted supporters to opt in were so successful that within the agreed-upon budget, **over 13,000 supporters joined the group, with 90% new to Komen and 10,500 agreeing to provide their emails.** In addition, over twice the projected dollar amount of donations was raised.

Building Community Connected by Experience



As part of the initial test, GoodUnited prompted participants to opt into Facebook Messenger. In Messenger, dynamic messaging developed and personalized in collaboration with Komen prompted users to start their own Facebook Challenge fundraisers. Supporters were coached on how to raise money and were encouraged and recognized for their efforts.

Along the way, they shared their own experiences, reminisced about loved ones who had passed from cancer, and cheered for each other as they completed physical challenges. Rallied by a mutual passion to fight cancer, differences in



gender, fitness level, or relation to the cause only served to enrich the community rather than detract.

Whether it was a small number of burpees a day or more vigorous exercise, everyone was cheered on by their peers. What's more, after initial content development, little to no Komen employee involvement was necessary to get conversations started and build up mutual support.

Friendships were formed. Stories brought supporters to tears. Supporters pledged to participate in future fundraisers.

On Facebook, a community grew.



I watched this group grow a sense of community organically and double the number of people in the group.

Josh Hirsch

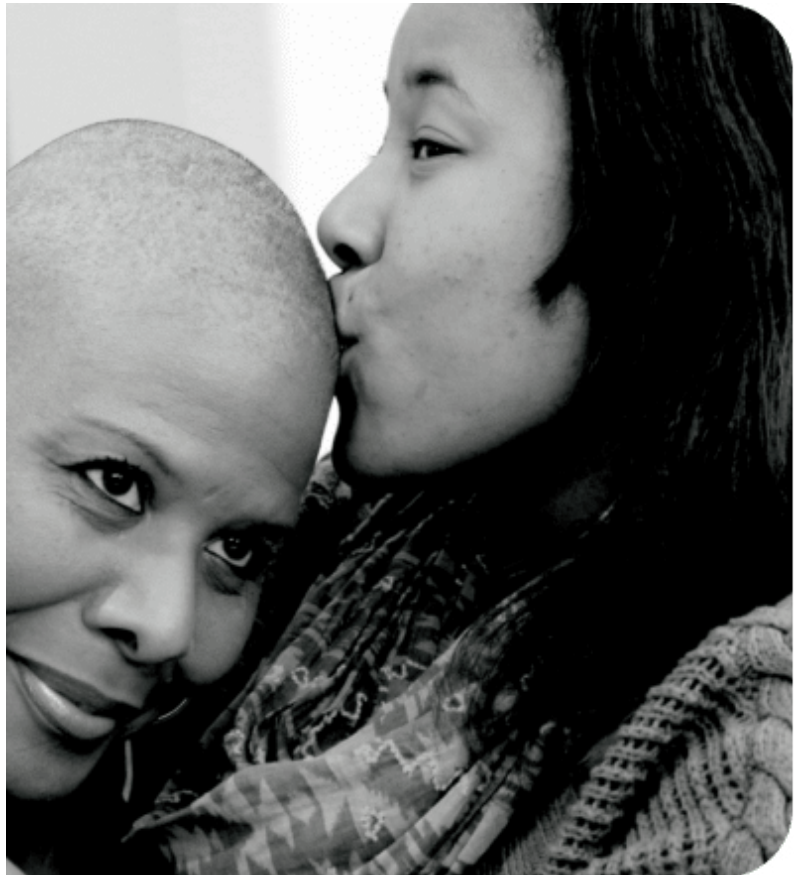
Social Marketing Content Manager,
Susan G. Komen

Facebook Challenges & Ongoing Fundraising Make a Strong Team



Since Facebook Challenges are location-independent and Facebook's targeting provides access to an inexhaustible pool of potential new supporters, Komen realized they could run multiple challenges in multiple locations throughout the year.

While the fundraising barriers of 2020 have eased, Komen will still use Facebook Challenges as an additive fundraising method alongside the organization's traditional efforts.



Komen has acquired another tool to uplift and support the breast cancer community.

Process



Komen was no newcomer to peer-to-peer fundraising; hosting new, online peer-to-peer fundraisers was second nature.

GoodUnited provided the copy for the messaging in Google Docs so Komen could easily request changes and approve content. GoodUnited also created a test environment where Komen could see exactly what users would experience and provide feedback accordingly.

Finally, a dashboard showed all relevant metrics – whether opt-in rates or how much money was being raised – updated in real time, so Komen could see how everything was performing whenever they wanted to.



It's a very smooth process with approving content, everything live online, and having that test environment for us to walk through the end user experience ourselves.

Josh Hirsch

Social Marketing Content Manager,
Susan G. Komen

Conclusion



As anyone who has been touched by breast cancer can attest, one moment can change everything.

Whether it is the moment someone first hears “You have breast cancer” or the moment they hear “We no longer see any evidence of cancer,” life is forever changed.



The same holds true for the year 2020. It was a moment that changed lives and livelihoods for people and organizations across the globe.

Nonetheless, Komen was able to harness the power of social media to recoup revenue, continue providing life-saving medical services, fund research into cancer cures, and build new communities of supporters that lifted spirits during such a challenging time. They built a new fundraising capability that is here to stay—long after the pandemic.

Are you interested in **hosting Facebook Challenges** just like **Susan G. Komen**?

Or maybe, you're interested in using Facebook groups and Messenger to raise your relationships?

Contact **GoodUnited** today to learn how these services can elevate your social strategy.

