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 Writing for Social Media  
 7 October 2025

## Minnesota Orchestra and 15/10 Foundation: Writing for Social Media and the Workplace

### Overview

I selected the Minnesota Orchestra (@minnorch) and the 15/10 foundation (@15outof10) based on their strong engagement and positive reception on social media platforms, particularly on Reddit where users frequently praised both organizations. The Minnesota Orchestra is known for its humor and friendly content that resonates beyond traditional classical music audiences, while the 15/10 Foundation, a dog adoption organization affiliated with We Rate Dogs, gains widespread appreciation for emotionally engaging content featuring adoptable dogs. These organizations represent distinct sectors (arts/culture and animal welfare) with different engagement approaches, making them ideal for comparative analysis.

### The Minnesota Orchestra

#### *Overview and Mission*

The Minnesota Orchestra is a Grammy Award-winning symphony orchestra founded in 1903 (originally as the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, renamed in 1968) based in downtown Minneapolis and led by Music Director Thomas Søndergård. The organization's mission is to "enrich, inspire, and serve" its community through artistic excellence, guided by core values of "Listen, Respect, and Collaborate," while addressing systemic inequities and bridging cultures through music.

The Orchestra performs approximately 175 concerts annually at Orchestra Hall, including Classical concert series, Live at Orchestra Hall concerts, and summer programming. Beyond performances, they maintain an active recording schedule, tour throughout Minnesota and internationally, offer Young People's Concerts (a tradition since 1911 reaching over a million young people), run the Composer Institute (supporting 150+ emerging composers), and host the Minnesota Orchestra fellowship, a two-year residency promoting diversity in the orchestral field.

#### *Target Audiences*

The Minnesota Orchestra serves multiple target audiences, which can be identified through their diverse programming and outreach initiative:

1. **Classical music enthusiasts and traditional symphony-goers:** evidenced by their core Classical concert series and commitment to masterworks by composers like Beethoven, Sibelius, and Mahler
2. **Families and young people:** demonstrated through Young People's Concerts that have been running since

- 1911 and have reached over a million participants
3. **Minnesota residents statewide:** shown by their emphasis on being "the Minnesota Orchestra" rather than just Minneapolis-based, regular state tours including the Common Chords residency, and the fact that they draw audiences from every Minnesota county annually
  4. **Diverse and underrepresented communities:** reflected in their Minnesota Orchestra Fellowship program supporting musicians from diverse backgrounds, their commitment to programming works by AMELIA (African, Middle Eastern, Latin, Indigenous, and Asian) composers, and their stated dedication to addressing systemic racism and creating equity
  5. **Contemporary music audiences:** indicated by their commissioning of over 300 new works, the Composer Institute, and intentional programming of contemporary compositions alongside historic repertoire
  6. **International classical music community:** demonstrated through their extensive international touring, Grammy recognition, and recording projects

## Brand Personality

The Minnesota Orchestra projects an approachable, humorous, and authentically personal brand that balances its Grammy-winning reputation with a down-to-earth social media presence. They demystify classical music through behind-the-scenes “Mic’d Up” segments featuring candid moments with composers and musicians, behind-the-scenes glimpses (like harp setup videos), trend participation using popular audio clips, and interactive engagement responding to audience feedback (including criticism) with humor. Their warm, conversational tone breaks down barriers traditionally associated with classical music institutions, creating accessibility without compromising artistic integrity.

What distinguishes the Minnesota Orchestra from competitors is their willingness to embrace vulnerability and humor in ways traditional arts organizations typically avoid. Their authentic trend engagement and public addressing of criticism with good humor demonstrates confidence and builds trust which is a risky strategy they execute with a light touch that somehow enhances their credibility. While many orchestras maintain a formal presence, the Minnesota Orchestra has found a balance that respects the art form while remaining relatable to their social media audiences.

## Instagram

The Minnesota Orchestra maintains an active Instagram presence with 48.7K followers and 2,441 posts. They post at least five times per week, sharing behind-the-scenes content, “Mic’d Up” segments featuring musicians and composers, and content incorporating current social media trends. Engagement varies considerably, with posts receiving between 200 to 3,000 likes, 1 to 40 comments, and 5 to 167 shares per post. Content that seems to receive the highest engagement typically features individual orchestra members showcasing their instruments or roles, either speaking directly to the camera or performing with trending audio in the background. Beyond regular posts, the Orchestra utilizes Instagram's full feature set to strengthen its identity, including three highlights (Press, New Season, and Broadcast), active story resharing, and a broadcast channel called “MinnOrch Updates” with 342 members.

## **TikTok**

The Minnesota Orchestra has 8,109 followers and 159.2K total likes on TikTok. The organization posts approximately seven times per week, largely using their Instagram content while occasionally creating platform-specific posts that reference TikTok trends (like a video acknowledging the platform's interest in Sibelius 2 in a joking way). Engagement varies significantly, with their most popular video receiving 69.8K likes, other successful posts garnering around 6K likes, and typical posts ranging from 90 to 500 likes with 20 to 500 shares. Similar to Instagram, content featuring artists and musicians performing with their instruments or voices generates the highest engagement. The Orchestra reinforces its brand identity through strategic bio links directing users to their website and Instagram, and consistently uses the hashtag #MinnOrch across the majority of their posts to build brand recognition and searchability.

## **Evaluation**

### *Doing Well*

Their posting frequency aligns with recommended best practices (approximately five times per week on Instagram matches the 3-5 posts guidelines from the "How often should a business post on social media" article we've read). While their seven weekly TikTok posts maintain consistent engagement. They successfully tailor content for each platform's unique audience, creating platform-specific TikTok content while maintaining cohesive branding. Most importantly, their highest-engaging content features individual musicians speaking to the camera or performing which is the exact type of content that performs best on both Instagram and TikTok.

### *Areas for Improvement*

Despite strong fundamentals, there are opportunities for improvement. The wide engagement variation (200 to 3,000 likes on Instagram) suggests they should use analytics to identify which specific content types consistently drive higher engagement and focus on quality over quantity (which was discussed in the "What to post on each social media platform: Your guide to content success" article). The Orchestra could also be more strategic about promoting ticket sales and upcoming performances on TikTok. Finally, their Instagram broadcast channel with 342 members represents untapped potential for exclusive content and deeper community engagement that could strengthen audience loyalty.

## **The 15/10 Foundation**

### *Overview and Mission*

The 15/10 Foundation, launched in 2020 and named for WeRateDogs' highest rating, is a 501(c)(3) public charity that sponsors shelter dogs with behavioral or medical issues unlikely to be adopted. Founded by Matt Nelson after adopting Doug (an 11-year old German Shepherd with severe health and behavioral challenges). The Foundation emerged from years of WeRateDogs community fundraising that raised over \$2 million for pet medical bills since 2017. The organization addresses the harsh reality of expensive veterinary care by focusing on dogs who,

like Doug, would likely never leave shelters due to costly medical needs or behavioral problems that reduce their adoption prospects. This organization partners with 46 rescue organizations coast to coast to handle the ground-level work for each sponsored dog.

### ***Target Audiences***

The Foundation's target audiences include:

1. WeRateDogs followers: the established social media community that has consistently supported weekly fundraising efforts for years
2. Dog lovers and pet owners: people who understand the financial burden of veterinary care and are emotionally invested in animal welfare
3. Potential adopters: individuals willing to consider dogs with special needs
4. Donors seeking tax-deductibly charitable giving: the 501(c)(3) status appeals to those wanting formal recognition for their contributions

### **Brand personality**

15/10 Foundation's brand is empathetic and mission-driven, established through their distinctive "This is \_\_\_\_:" format followed by the dog's backstory that typically details difficult circumstances. This serious, storytelling approach creates an emotional connection that inspires compassion and urgency while making promising transparency and direct impact to donors.

What distinguishes the 15/10 Foundation is their visual storytelling and accountability. They document transformation through multiple photos showing dogs' progress from poor to improved conditions, edit captions with real-time funding updates, and demonstrate financial transparency by closing the loop on each story. This combination of emotional narrative, visual proof, and live updates builds trust and shows supporters exactly how donations make a difference.

### **Instagram**

The 15/10 Foundation has 118K followers and posts sporadically (approximately five times in the last week). Engagement is strong ranging from 7K to 40K likes and 20 to 200 comments per post. Videos of the founder presenting the dogs of the month consistently perform well, though overall engagement remains high across posts due to the consistent format of featuring individual dogs with their backstories. The organization leverages its connection to the WeRateDogs account (4.8M followers), which includes the 15/10 Foundation link in its bio, creating a powerful cross-promotional connection that really drives awareness and support to the Foundation.

### **TikTok**

The 15/10 Foundation has 116.1K followers and 2.3M total likes. The founder posts 3-4 times monthly, creating videos where he personally introduces each dog and shares their story. Engagement is good, ranging from 20K to 196K likes and 200 to 2K comments per post, with the founder's direct storytelling approach consistently driving the highest engagement. The organization leverages cross-platform promotion through its bio, which references WeRateDogs

(3.4M followers) and includes links to their website and Instagram, creating a somewhat integrated digital presence that directs audiences across platforms.

## **Evaluation**

### ***Doing Well***

The 15/10 Foundation demonstrates several strategic strengths, for instance their content strategy is highly effective. The founder speaking directly to the camera and telling individual dog stories aligns perfectly with the type of authentic, short-form video content that performs best on both Instagram and TikTok. The engagement numbers (7K-40K likes on Instagram, 20K-196K on TikTok) confirm this approach resonates strongly with audiences. They successfully use storytelling techniques to create emotional connections which have been touched upon in our readings. They also excel at leveraging the WeRateDogs connection since they have such a large following.

### ***Areas for Improvement***

Despite strong content performance, the Foundation's inconsistent posting frequency undermines potential growth. Best practices recommend posting 3-5 times per week on Instagram and between 3-5 times per week on TikTok, yet they post sporadically (five times in one week, then 3-4 times monthly on TikTok). Consistency matters because most social media algorithms reward regular posting which we've discussed in our readings. Also just like the Minnesota Orchestra, they could be more strategic about utilizing TikTok because it could dramatically expand their reach and fundraising potential.

## **Conclusion**

### ***Similarities and Differences***

Both organizations excel at authentic storytelling and leverage their strongest content formats effectively: the Minnesota Orchestra features individual musicians performing or speaking directly to camera, while the 15/10 Foundation showcases the founder presenting dogs and their stories. Both understand that personal content drives the highest engagement on these two platforms. However, their approaches to consistency differ significantly. The Minnesota Orchestra maintains recommended posting frequencies (5 times on Instagram, 7 on TikTok), while the 15/10 Foundation posts irregularly despite strong engagement, showing they haven't fully capitalized on the possible advantages of consistent scheduling. Also, the Orchestra builds brand identity through diverse content types (behind-the-scenes, Mic'd Up segments, trending audio), whereas the Foundation uses a singular, emotionally-driven format focused on rescue narratives and transformation visuals.

### ***Applications for My Own Organization***

What I've observed from these organizations is that consistency and quality must work together. Posting regularly within recommended frequencies while maintaining high standards creates both algorithmic favor and audience trust. Second, identifying and doubling down on top-performing content formats is crucial and both organizations succeed because they know

what resonates and repeat it strategically. Finally, leveraging existing communities and cross-promotional opportunities (like the WeRateDogs connection) can really accelerate growth, suggesting partnerships and bio links deserve strategic attention in building a digital presence. For example, mentioning the School of Public Affairs connection might be more beneficial than we think when it comes to marketing APAC.

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