

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media platforms—like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter—allow you to share your message with a wider audience than traditional door-to-door grassroots work can. With a few clicks, you can access the right people at the right moment, making them aware of an issue and garnering their support. The following tips will help you do just that: extend your community of advocates online to create an even bigger groundswell of support for your cause.

The Big Three Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

There are many social media sites and it can be overwhelming to decide which one(s) to develop content for. To keep things simple, this tip sheet will only focus on the big three: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram—the differences between the three and how and when to use them. (Note: If you have limited resources and time, focus your energy on one platform. It's better to do one thing well than three things poorly.)

Facebook

Facebook is the biggest social media platform with 2.83 billion monthly active users worldwide - and growing. It's been going through a lot of changes recently, shifting from a very open and public communications platform to a privacy-focused communications platform. The news feed, which displays content based on popularity and what users engage with, is currently Facebook's main feature, but private messaging, groups and events are expected to become a big focus. Use Facebook to build out a true online community that connects supporters to each other and to your organization through consistent online community management (responding to comments, asking questions, featuring supporters, creating groups, hosting events, etc.).

Below are a couple of tips for using Facebook:

- ▶ **Add a button on your Facebook page.** Buttons encourage visitors to take an action, like sign up for your emails, donate, or visit your website, without having to leave the page. Figure out which action is most important to your cause and click “add a button.” The button will appear right below your cover photo.
- ▶ **Pin key posts to the top of your page.** If you'd like to call attention to a particular post, you can pin it to the top of your Facebook page by selecting the drop-down arrow on the right-hand corner of your post and choosing “Pin to Top of Page.” (Note: You can do the same for Twitter.)

Instagram

Instagram is the second biggest social media platform with 1 billion monthly active users. This is a platform worth investing in only if you have great visuals that will deepen your followers' understanding of who you are and what you do. Instagram stories, which is a feature that lets users post photos and videos that vanish after 24 hours, is becoming increasingly popular as is IGTV. IGTV is a separate app that lets users post longer videos (Instagram only lets you post videos that are up to one minute long). Videos that are made on IGTV can be seen on Instagram.

Below are a couple of tips for using Instagram:

- ▶ **Add a donation sticker to Instagram Stories.** Instagram stories have become increasingly popular, and now you can add a donate sticker to make it easier for users to donate to your cause without leaving the app.
- ▶ **Add Story Highlights to your Instagram profile.** Unlike regular Instagram Stories that vanish after 24 hours, Story Highlights live permanently on your profile under your bio. It's the perfect place to direct followers to your most valuable and interesting content, like pictures or videos from a recent event or information about a big announcement or win.

Twitter

Twitter has 321 million monthly active users. Though its audience is not as far reaching as Facebook's, Twitter is great for reaching influencers, specifically those in media and politics. You should use Twitter for fast-paced, timely updates.

Below are a couple of tips for using Twitter:

- ▶ **Pin key posts to the top of your page.** Much like Facebook, you can pin key posts to the top of your Twitter profile page. Just click on the drop down menu on the right side of the post you want to pin and click "Pin to your profile page."
- ▶ **Use Twitter to share messages with decision makers.** Almost all state decision makers have a Twitter account (some have a Facebook and Instagram too), making it an effective way for them to hear from advocates. You can encourage advocates to tag their decision makers in tweets or posts. (Note that some decision makers may have set their privacy to restrict this.) *A post that tags a legislator is considered lobbying if it reflects a view on specific legislation. A post that does not tag a legislator is considered public communication and will be lobbying only if it reflects a view on specific legislation and it includes a call-to-action. If a social media post constitutes lobbying, the staff time related to writing the post is attributable to lobbying, however small the cost of that staff time may be.*
 - ▶ If advocates are visiting decision makers, ask them to take pictures. Pictures with the decision makers themselves are ideal, but can be tough to get. Advocates can also take pictures and videos outside of the decision makers office to capture their visit. To make things easier for your advocates, you can draft sample social posts that they can use to share their pictures/videos.

And here are two important tips to keep in mind when using any of the three platforms mentioned above:

- ▶ **Use your existing accounts.** Do not create new pages or accounts for single issues. People may follow you for the work you're doing on a single issue, but it's good for them to stay in the loop on your other initiatives.

- ▶ **Highlight partners.** There may be other community organizations working on the same or related issues. Consider working with them to highlight each other's work. That way, your mention will show up on their channels (and vice versa), giving you leverage to reach their community for recruitment purposes.

Using Images and Videos

Posts with multimedia, such as videos and images, drive higher engagement rates and increased reach—people are more likely to engage with posts that include images and videos. Below is a quick overview of how you can best put multimedia to use through social media:

Images

- ▶ **Choose a diverse range of people.** It's important that your audience see people who look like themselves in the images you use.
- ▶ **Try to use content you own.** If your organization has an existing photo library, search to see if anything can be repurposed. If you don't have any photos, you can get free stock photos from [Unsplash](#), [Pixabay](#) and [Pexels](#). (Warning: Using stock photos on social media can come off as disingenuous. We suggest only using them as part of a designed graphic but not as a standalone.)
- ▶ **Ask your advocates to sign release forms.** Photos of real-life advocates are always ideal. Just remember that anyone you spotlight online—whether in stories, photos, or videos—must sign an authorization release form. Ask your organization for the appropriate forms.
- ▶ **Repurpose print materials online.** Print materials that are visually appealing and have little text, like infographics, postcards or flyers, can be resized and posted online. Be sure to use a 16:9 ratio for best results. For a detailed list of image dimensions for each platform consult [this spreadsheet](#).

Videos

- ▶ **Highlight your advocates.** If you have access to a video camera, smartphone or even Skype, consider creating a video featuring advocates. Ask them to talk about their role in the campaign and why they support programs that help all kids live healthier lives. If you can't meet with your advocates in person, you can interview and record them via Skype, or other video conferencing platforms like Zoom and Google Hangouts. This alternative is becoming increasingly popular and is cost efficient.

Below are a few tips to keep in mind when creating videos for social:

- ▶ Produce videos in languages spoken in the community and include captions when possible. There are many free and low-cost options for closed captioning available.
- ▶ Keep your video under 90 seconds.
- ▶ When recording with a smartphone, hold it close to your body to keep it steady, or consider investing in a tripod.
- ▶ Shoot the video at eye level of the person being recorded or slightly above, not from a lower height.
- ▶ Shoot in brightly lit and quiet areas. (Note you can improve the audio quality of a smartphone video greatly with inexpensive microphones that can be bought online.)