

Using Social Media



Social media is a critical part of any successful outreach or advocacy campaign. Advocates can use Social Media proactively to:

- Share news and information about upcoming events.
- Build larger and more closely-connected networks of allies and supporters.
- Build relationships with reporters, lawmakers and other important stakeholders.

There are other Social Media platforms out there (Instagram, Snapchat, among others) but Facebook and Twitter dominate. They are here to stay. Just consider:

- Facebook reports more than 2.7 billion daily users.
- Facebook delivers news: According to a 2020 Pew Research Center survey, 71% of people get at least some of their news input from social media platforms. Social media isn't just for the kids anymore: A survey in 2017 found that 67% of Americans report that they get at least some of their news on social media. Social media isn't just for the kids anymore: That same survey found that "... more than half (55%) of Americans ages 50 or older report getting news on social media sites."
- Twitter reports an average of 187 million monetizable daily active users.
- Twitter is an important tool for reporters: Nearly three in four journalists (73.3 percent) claim to use social media - and Twitter specifically - to develop relationships with potential news sources, according to one study.
- Instagram reports more than 1 billion monthly active users and 500 million of them use Instagram Stories.
- Instagram reports that 81% of people use the platform to help research products and services.

Every lawmaker has a Twitter feed and most lawmakers have a Facebook and Instagram page. Staff manage some of these platforms for lawmakers but there is no question that lawmakers are well aware of their Social Media platforms and interactions with constituents. Many lawmakers follow reporters on Twitter so you can join those online conversations as well. There are several tools available for free that allow users to schedule Tweets, Facebook, and Instagram posts. You can also measure your impact by simply tracking the number of followers, likes and shares you're receiving on Facebook and Instagram; and the number of followers and retweets you are adding on Twitter.

TIPS FOR USING TWITTER:

For newcomers, the Twitter Help Center is a great place to start. You can also find a Twitter tutorial at YouTube.

Tips for Tweeting:

- Keep tweets short. Twitter allows up to 280 characters, so you don't have a choice, but less is more.
- Tweeting a photo, infographic or website link will generate more retweets and a stronger response.
- Try and use a hashtag (#) with every tweet. You can find the most popular hashtags by using Twitter's search function, which will show you related tweets.
- Retweeting is an excellent way to stay engaged and get more followers. Retweet news stories as often as possible.
- Tweeting Legislators helps get their attention as well as their followers.
- When Tweeting, keep in mind the entire universe your Tweet will reach.
- Stick to policy and personal stories and stay away from partisan politics.

TIPS FOR USING FACEBOOK:

Posts should be short and take only a few seconds to read.

- Share posts from pages as well as news stories to get your friends interested in your issue.
- Photographs, infographics and short video clips will gain more attention, shares and likes. Text alone is far less engaging.
- Remember to ask friends to share your posts and “like” the pages you share.
- Facebook is driven by user stories so when posting news articles or other materials, try to add a personal note explaining why the post is important to you and your community.
- Make sure to monitor the comments and delete any that are offensive or rude.
- Posts that end in a question usually get the most comments, so ask away and especially ask for direct feedback to your latest post.

TIPS FOR USING INSTAGRAM:

Posts should tell a story through images and videos to compliment your brand.

- Captions serve as an opportunity to not only show off your creative side but also encourage engagement; Ask questions, encourage sharing via hashtags and regrams, use “tag-a-friend” posts that encourage conversations between users, point people to your bio link.
- Instagram is all about compelling visual content. Videos are a prime way to instantly step up the entertainment value of your feed.
- Stories don't have to be polished. Snapshots, selfies and bite-sized posts that show off your brand in the real-world work best.
- Make sure to monitor the comments and delete any that are offensive or rude.
- Tagging Legislators helps get their attention.
- Share other users posts to your Instagram stories! Tap the paper plane icon under the image and click “add post to your story”.