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UNWIRED**

DIGITAL ———
ADVOCACY
STRATEGIES:

5 Tips for Online Engagement



Learn more about connecting with your supporters through virtual canvassing with Grassroots Unwired.

Digital advocacy campaigns offer a new, exciting way for grassroots organizations to engage their supporters and build an expansive community around their mission. Advocacy has evolved over the years, and few organizations rely solely on paper flyers and door-to-door campaigns anymore. While traditional advocacy strategies still have their merits, advocacy groups can find greater success and online engagement through digital campaigns.

Digital advocacy campaigns are an opportunity to advance your mission through grassroots action and introduce more potential supporters to your cause. Of course, there are many other advocacy groups already vying for attention online, which means your organization will need the right tools and strategies to stand out.

To help improve your digital advocacy campaign, this article will explore five strategies for engaging supporters online:

1. **Create an engaging message.**
2. **Use face-to-face communication tools.**
3. **Offer easy ways to get involved.**
4. **Keep up a regular messaging cadence.**
5. **Stay up-to-date on modern advocacy trends.**

Remember that advocacy campaigns aren't planned over the course of a day, and your organization will need time to review potential engagement strategies and adapt them to your unique brand. As you go through this process, keep your audience in mind to create materials that resonate with them and their personal investment in your mission. Let's get started.



Whether your campaign is run online or in-person, people will connect with it if you have an impactful, engaging message. Your campaign's overall goal will differ slightly from and be more specific than your organization's primary mission. Ensure that your digital messages reflect this change in a manner that will appeal to your online audience.

For instance, an advocacy group dedicated to protecting local forests might run a campaign to spread awareness about the dangers of invasive species and how they can inadvertently be spread through dirt biking and the use of recreational vehicles. In this situation, their digital advocacy campaign materials would focus just on invasive species and what supporters can do about this specific problem.

Once your advocacy group has a specific campaign message and goal, begin crafting a story around it. Stories encourage supporters to get involved with your cause, helping them see your mission's importance and feel compelled to do something about it. Here are a few storytelling tips that your organization can leverage for your advocacy campaigns:

- **Encourage action.** Storytelling for advocacy campaigns requires striking a careful balance between presenting a problem that is dire enough to require immediate action without making it seem hopeless. At the end of your story, consider how you can finish with a call to action that will motivate readers to take the next steps to start supporting your cause.
- **Use visuals.** It's commonly said that a picture is worth a thousand words, and there is some merit behind this idea. Visuals can often convey your story's emotions and importance faster than a text description can, while also catching the eye of someone scrolling through several text-only posts on social media.
- **Create compelling characters.** Stories are an effective marketing tool as they encourage readers to make a personal connection with a central character. The characters in your story should be relatable and invoke sympathy, but while storytelling will require some degree of fictionalization, make sure not to distort the truth too much as doing so can be considered unethical.

Crafting an engaging message may take a few tries. Draft several variations of your campaign's mission statement and your first stories before sharing them online. Proper revision will ensure that you present your brand correctly from the moment you announce your campaign, creating a professional, cohesive image.

02

Use face-to-face communication tools



Digital advocacy campaigns have many benefits, including the ability to connect with a large audience and get in touch with supporters instantly. However, campaigns run solely online can miss out on the benefits of in-person communication. Fortunately, there are modern advocacy tools that overcome this dilemma, allowing campaigns to find a balance between digital and traditional outreach methods.

By incorporating face-to-face communication methods into your digital outreach strategy, your advocacy group will have access to a variety of benefits, including:

- **The ability to create personal connections.** It can be easy to ignore even compelling causes without a face to connect them to. Face-to-face communication will make it easier for your volunteers to form personal relationships with supporters, which can then lead to increased follow-up and donations.
- **Improved ability to leverage volunteers' networks.** [As Grassroots Unwired's article on canvassing tips](#) explains, volunteers tend to capture more leads for your cause when they are reaching out to people in their home communities. With face-to-face communication tools, your volunteers can continue to leverage their personal connections even while getting in touch remotely.
- **A safer, more accessible advocacy experience.** Getting in touch with supporters remotely can allow more of your volunteers to participate in your campaign efforts. These volunteers can reach out to potential supporters without needing to physically go to potentially remote locations. Plus, they can also continue advocating and making connections in situations where in-person advocacy would need to be put on hold, such as during rainstorms.

When browsing digital advocacy tools, look for solutions that can accommodate both in-person and virtual campaigns. These platforms will provide your advocacy group with an added degree of flexibility and can likely be used repeatedly for multiple campaigns.

03

Offer easy ways to get involved.

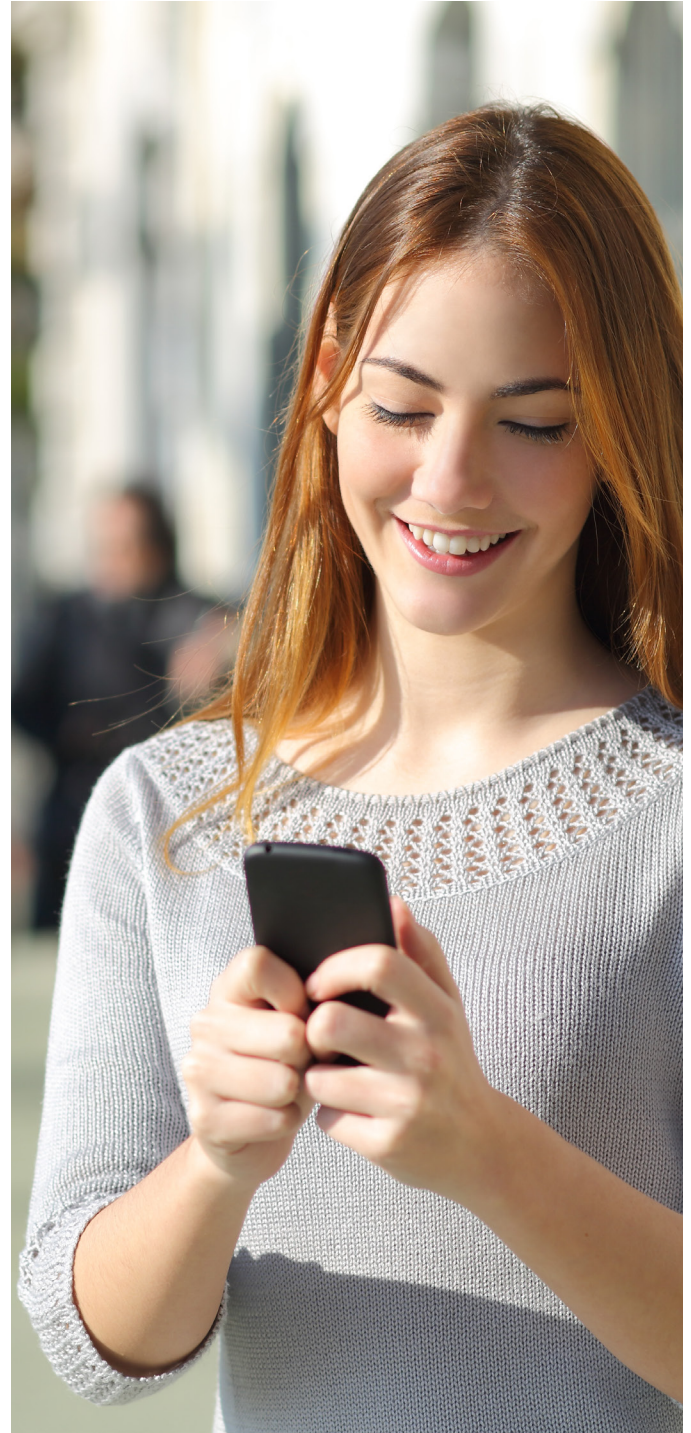


After someone reads one of your digital advocacy messages on social media or in an email, they will likely be motivated to take action at that moment. If they discover that the following steps require filling out a long form or writing a message from scratch to send to their representative, they may hesitate to do so and fail to act at all.

Avoid this scenario by making taking action as easy as possible. Remember that many of your supporters have busy lives and might even be reading your outreach messages on their phones. **Reach the widest audience possible by creating mobile-friendly forms and message templates.**

Consider how you can work added convenience into your other campaigns, too. For example, you might run a [peer-to-peer fundraiser](#) to promote your advocacy campaign. As part of this campaign, provide volunteers with the tools to embed a donation form straight into their campaign page. Then, visitors can give immediately to their friend or family member advocating on your behalf.

Or, for a canvassing campaign, you might rely on traditional follow-up methods that encourage supporters to make a donation later after speaking with your volunteer. But you could also make it a one-step process when volunteers are canvassing online and allow them to collect donations on the spot.



04

Keep up a regular messaging cadence.



Advocacy campaigns usually last several months at a minimum, which means maintaining high engagement levels can be a challenge, particularly during slower planning periods. Ensure your supporters stay invested in your cause by making a concerted effort to keep in touch throughout your entire campaign.

In addition to making regular social media posts, send your supporters emails, direct mail, and text messages to keep them updated on your campaign. These updates can consist of developments related to your campaign, calls to action, stories about your mission, and more. Ensure each message builds momentum and offers something new to interest your supporters.

If your organization aims to establish a permanent advocacy initiative, have a strategy in place for maintaining consistent communication between campaigns. This down time period can cause supporters' initial investment to fade. Counter this reaction by crafting emails that show your organization is still active and has a variety of engagement opportunities to offer in the lead up to your next campaign.





As mentioned, there are many advocacy groups launching online campaigns to advance their causes every day. This means that you aren't alone and can potentially learn a lot by paying attention to other campaigns happening alongside yours.

Here are a few ways you can stay up-to-date on what's happening in both your community and the wider advocacy landscape:

- **Read advocacy blogs.** There are many reliable blogs and news sources that keep their readers informed about recent advocacy campaigns and current trends. Find a few trusted resources and make it a habit to browse through them regularly.
- **Partner with local advocacy groups.** Chances are that your advocacy group isn't the only organization interested in launching a campaign in your community. Staying in touch with other local advocacy groups can help your organization gain a deeper understanding of community trends and potential opportunities. For example, you might learn that an advocacy group experienced greater success than expected canvassing a specific neighborhood. Or, maybe a local business is interested in starting a corporate philanthropy program.
- **Attend conferences.** Conferences, lectures, webinars, and other gatherings can help you learn more about your industry while also making new connections and improving your skills. Look for opportunities related to both advocacy in general and your group's specific mission and use these events as a chance to both learn and network.

Remember that you don't need to implement or follow every trend that crops up, but staying updated on them can help you navigate how to promote your campaign online. For instance, if you see a new trend that leads to increased engagement rates, it may be worth investigating to check if it can be adapted to your current outreach strategy.

Digital advocacy campaigns are an opportunity to fulfill your mission and forge deeper connections with your supporters. To help your campaign stand out online, focus on building an engaging digital presence that emphasizes the importance of your mission and provides supporters with convenient ways to get involved. Then, maintain your momentum by using the right communication and advocacy tools to stay in touch with your supporters from the beginning to the end of your campaign.

Ready to improve your digital engagement strategy?

Learn how Grassroots Unwired can help by [requesting a demo](#).

