



## BEST PRACTICE GUIDE

# PROMOTE A CAMPAIGN

## Introduction

Now you've created content you're almost ready to launch your campaign! But first it's important to think about how you are going to make sure your message reaches your target audience. Where are the best places to find your audience online? What kinds of online activity are they most likely to respond to? Answering these questions brings you one step closer to a successful campaign!

## How Does Your Target Audience Use Social Media

Exploring how your target audience behaves online will help you decide how best to reach them. It will inform the methods and tactics you will use during your campaign. Look back at the audience research you did when you were planning your campaign:

- Which social networks or platforms are **the most popular**? Are certain platforms banned or not heavily used in your area?
- How does your audience use these platforms? Do they tend to interact with only their friends or do they share content and discuss issues with others?
- What types of posts or content are typically the most popular with your audience?
- What times of day are they most likely to be online?
- Do they also use online forums or blogs like Reddit, Tumblr or 4Chan?

## Choosing your platforms

Now you have an idea of where and how your target audience spend their time online you can choose which platforms will be best for your campaign.

The **medium** you choose to convey your message will also be an important factor here. For example, if you have a video then you will probably need to host it on a platform like YouTube, Dailymotion or Vimeo. If you have an image based campaign then perhaps Instagram or Pinterest will work best. Remember though that platforms like Facebook and Twitter are very popular and can also be used for many different types of content.

There are hundreds of social networks and online platforms out there. Don't feel you need to be on every platform. Only choose the most appropriate for your audience and content. Think carefully about why you want to use each platform and what specifically it will add to your campaign. What does it offer that other platforms don't?

How will the different platforms you choose complement each other? Many of the social networks will allow you to link your accounts to other platforms, as well as share your content between them. Using unique banner images and logos and keeping the tone of your posts and comments consistent across platforms can help to establish the "brand" of your campaign and encourage people to find or follow you in more than one place.



There are far too many platforms out there to mention here, but below are some of the most popular and widely used;

**Facebook** is the largest and most popular social network in the world. Most people use Facebook to connect with friends and family, participate in groups or “like” pages or organisations. Sharing lots of different types of content is easy and it offers advertising features that can be very useful for reaching your target audience.

**YouTube** is the world’s largest video hosting platform. Users can watch, upload and share videos not just on YouTube but on other social networks and websites as well. Viewers can interact with each other, commenting on videos and subscribing to “channels”. YouTube offers extensive advertising services via Google AdWords that can help you reach your target audience. YouTube also offers a broad range of services through their **non-profit programs** in Australia, Canada, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, the UK, and the US. YouTube is also automatically connected to Google+, Gmail and other Google services.

**Twitter** varies in popularity around the world but is still one of the most popular social networks. Like Facebook it has become a popular tool for content-sharing among friends and likeminded users. Twitter is famed for its shorter messages, a faster pace, and its ability to break news and galvanise political and social movements. Twitter also offers advertising that can boost your tweets into your audiences’ news feeds.

**Instagram** is primarily a photo-sharing platform that is increasingly being used to share videos. With 70% of its users being millennials it is a great platform to reach a young audience and is most popular with mobile and tablet users.

Blogs and forums can provide an alternate to engage and connect with your target audience. Popular blog sites like **Tumblr** (more than 400 million users worldwide), **StumbleUpon** or **Wordpress** (over 76 million blogs) are widely used because they are very simple to use. In some countries, you will find that blogs are the most popular forms of social media. Forum based platforms like **Reddit** give you the opportunity to engage with users in a more conversational manner but are also capable of generating lots of interest for your campaign.

**Flickr**, **Pinterest** and **Imgur** are also popular for photos and images, as are **Vine**, **Vimeo** and **Dailymotion** for videos. Messaging based apps like **WhatsApp**, **Snapchat** and **Telegram** are also increasingly used to share content as well as stay in touch. There are even music-centric social networks such as **Soundcloud** or **Last.fm**.

There are so many options. Go explore and find what’s right for your campaign!

## How Will You Reach Your Audience?

Now that you have a shiny new social media presence make sure you use it! You can post or tweet your content, pose questions to your audience or start a discussion. Be proactive, be social, and don’t be afraid to get involved! Write posts, tweets or descriptions that resonate with your audience, reflect your message or mission and encourage sharing and comments. If you use more than one platform, make sure you link them together and cross-post content. If you want your audience to do something, don’t forget to ask. Inspiring “calls to action” can make a real difference. Depending on how long your campaign will be you may want to consider staggering the release of your content to keep your audience hooked.



There are also many other tactics you can use promote your message for free! These can be some of the most effective and direct ways to get your voice heard by the right audience.

Consider who can reach your audience and reach out to them to share your campaign. They could be people you already know, but social media is also perfect for making new connections so be bold. You could approach anyone who is influential with your target audience and might be interested in your campaign. It could be partner organisations and other NGOs working on similar issues or popular online figures. If it is right for your campaign you could also approach websites that are popular with your audience. This could be blogs, news websites or popular “aggregators” such as BuzzFeed and Upworthy. Ask if they are interested in featuring your content or writing a story about your campaign. Make it clear what you would like them to do and why it is important! This could be sharing your content on their social media, featuring your campaign or simply spreading the word.

If you have the budget you can also make use of social media advertising to directly reach the news feeds of your chosen audience. Online ads can be used creatively by causes as well as companies. You can use ads to show off your videos, boost your social media posts, attract people to your website or disrupt extremist content and social networks.

Another possibility to consider is linking your online campaign with “real-world” events. These can provide a valuable opportunity to engage with your audience, raise the profile of your campaign and get your message heard. You can promote events on social media and encourage guests to talk about the event live online by using hashtags or sharing your videos and photos. Events are also a good opportunity to invite the media if appropriate for your campaign and your audience.

## Final Considerations

There are just a few final points to consider before you are ready to launch your campaign.

It's a good idea to consider how much time you will need to manage your campaign once it is up and running. Do you have enough time to do everything by yourself, or will you need some help? If you have a team working on the campaign have you decided who is going to do what? Try and ensure that you play to your strengths and make sure you use the expertise available to you in the right places.

It's also important to be as responsive as possible to your audience. Have you thought about how you plan to interact with your audience, who will be responsible for this and when they will do it? This could be as simple as thanking people for their support, answering questions about your campaign or joining in with comment threads or discussions. Don't be afraid to be creative and experiment. But, keep an eye on which kinds of interactions are most popular and successful with your key audience!

It's important to remember that some counter-narrative campaigns can be challenging or controversial, especially if you are aiming to reach people that might hold extreme views. However wonderful your campaign, be aware that you may receive negative responses, or in some cases even abusive, threatening or racist comments. Before you launch your campaign consider how you might want to respond if this does happen. Social networks all have community guidelines that set out what is allowed and what isn't. Most allow you to “flag” or report harmful or offensive material. Be familiar with the rules on the platforms you plan to use and decide where you will draw the line. If you do plan to engage with people that hold extreme views then your responses will need to be considered and thought through. Take care to avoid engaging in hostile debates in a way that may undermine your message.



## Ready to launch!

It's always a good idea to have your [Campaign Plan](#) and [Social Media Strategy](#) handy so that you can refer back to them and make sure you stay on message, on budget and on track. They also great way for double checking you have all your content, social media accounts, website, posts and ads set-up and ready to go. Focus on your goals and objectives and remember how you plan to reach your audience. Don't be afraid to refine your tactics during the campaign if you need to.

Now you're ready to launch your campaign! Good luck!

## Monitoring and Evaluating Your Campaign

Counter-narrative campaigning, just like everything else in life, gets easier the more you practice. To progress we need to understand what we are doing right, but also where we could get better. Chances are you won't get absolutely everything right first time round. Reaching a specific audience online is not an exact science and takes a little trial and error.

Monitoring and evaluating your campaign is therefore crucial, not only while your campaign is running but also once it has finished. Any insights into how you are doing can be used to tweak aspects of your content or tactics to ensure you meet your objectives. When you have finished your campaign you can assess whether you achieved your goals and where you might improve next time. Online counter-narrative campaigns are still quite new so learning as much as you can from your campaign is really important!

There are many ways you can monitor your campaign. Many social media platforms provide built-in analytics that can tell you a lot about how you are doing. If you are using advertising then you will have access to even more data. Websites can be monitored using free tools such as Google Analytics. These services can tell you lots about your campaign and whether you completed your objectives through a wide range of different "metrics". Broadly speaking there are two types of quantitative metrics;

- **Reach metrics:** How many people saw your posts or content? How many people visited your social media platforms or website? Did you reach the right audiences?
- **Engagement metrics:** How many times did people like, share or comment on your content, website or social media accounts? How many likes or followers do your social media platforms have?

Beware of so-called "vanity metrics". These are impressive sounding numbers that do not necessarily tell you much about how effective your campaign was. For example, if your campaign was about reaching a very specific audience, then reaching 100,000 people is not necessarily a good result if they are not the right people!

It is also worth considering possible qualitative "impact indicators" to help you determine if you were able to meet your goals. These will vary depending on what you originally set out to do. You could look at what your audience said about your campaign or content in their comments? Did your content change their opinions or attitudes? Did they respond to your call to action? Measuring impact in this way will not be an exact science, but it can help to give you a sense of whether you were able to get your message across!