

Campaigns that Cut Through the Noise

How to Use Digital Platforms to Achieve Your Nonprofit's Campaign Goals

INTRODUCTION

In a time when so many of us depend on the Internet for communication, information, and action, the power of your organization's digital platforms cannot be underestimated.

If you're not marketing your organization digitally, you may be missing out on significant opportunities to engage your audiences and attract the support you need to reach your organizational objectives. Whether you're looking to increase volunteer signups or donations to a specific initiative, digital platforms can make the difference in whether you meet your goals—or miss them.

Any digital campaign should be a coordinated effort with specific goals, target audiences, precise calls to action, and a deadline. We've summarized the 8 steps you can take to make sure your nonprofit's digital campaign is successful.

Digital Words to Know

Digital Platforms/Channels: A summary term for the tools in your digital marketing toolbox, which can include social media, email, and your website.

Digital Ecosystem: How the digital platforms mentioned above work together as one “whole” to cohesively communicate with audiences across all relevant platforms.

1 Establish Realistic Goals

Great digital campaigns have 1–2 goals that center on clear and timely calls to actions aligned with your organization’s internal priorities.

These should be realistic and attainable based on your internal team’s bandwidth to launch and manage this campaign. It’s exciting to envision a huge mass audience of deeply engaged supporters, but don’t set goals that are completely out of reach.

Examples of Clear Goals

- Increase individual monthly donations by X%
- Raise \$X towards your annual fund over the next two months
- Engage X volunteers in the community over the next quarter
- Push peer-to-peer fundraising to reach \$X by the end of the year

Exercise

My specific digital campaign goal(s) are:

1. _____

2. _____

2 Identify and Understand Your Audiences

Who do you need to engage to reach your goals?

- Think about your [audience’s demographics](#) (age, gender, education level, etc.) and psychographics (beliefs, motivations, values, etc.). Take the time to create profiles of representative members of your audience, including what matters most to them.
- Remember that not all of your key audiences use digital platforms in the same way. How do they use the Internet to stay up-to-date on news and other updates relevant to your organization?



Example

Donor Diana is 55 and married with two kids. (That’s her demographic profile.) She is a partner at a law firm she co-founded and is passionate about supporting causes that uphold social justice in her community. She and her family are active in the community, and Diana keeps up with local and national news and updates via TV news, e-newsletter, and Facebook. She believes heavily in the power of relationships and is eager to use her connections to further support your organization’s work. (That’s her psychographic profile.)

Exercise

My target audiences are:

1. _____
2. _____

3 Choose the Most Effective Digital Platform(s)

Which digital platform will be the most effective in moving your audiences to action?

Although there are a variety of digital platforms out there, you'll want to prioritize only those that your audiences are most active on first.

For example, if your audience is 65 and over, email and Facebook may be your best tools. If you're trying to reach Gen Z, TikTok and Instagram may be most effective. [This list from Classy](#) has a great breakdown of your options.

If you are unsure of your audiences' behavior online, ask! Interviewing key audience stakeholders can help you get answers on their go-to digital sources for information. Also keep in mind how your audience accesses digital platforms, whether via mobile, desktop, tablet, or some other device.

Example

- Donor Dianna seeks online advice and reviews from her friends and family mainly through email and Facebook. She's constantly on her phone, which is the easiest way for her to engage with others, although she also appreciates direct-mail appeals that help her understand the impact of her favorite cause organizations' work.
- Based on our knowledge of Dianna's social platform usage and her demographic information, we can craft a profile for her digital activity that can help us better connect with prospective donors just like her.
- For example, we know that Donor Diana (Audience) is most active on email and Facebook (Platforms).

Exercise

The best platform(s) for reaching my audiences are:

Audience 1: _____

Audience 2: _____

Platform 1: _____

Platform 2: _____

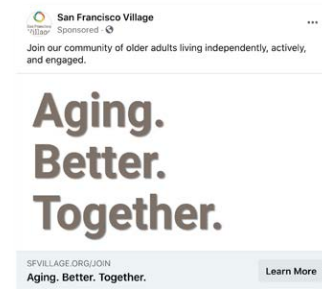
4 Create a Powerful, Compelling Campaign

A compelling campaign must tell your brand's story cohesively across all platforms in your digital ecosystem, strategically connecting them as one whole.

It should:

- Have a theme that is both brand-centered and aligned with the timely "ask" of the campaign
- Move people to action through this formula: Urgency + Emotion + Rationale = Great Campaign
- Utilize consistent visuals and powerful headlines, relevant hashtags, and clear calls to action

Take a look at an example of a great campaign theme:



SF Village Digital Campaign

5 Allocate the Proper Resources

Be realistic about your resources and capacity to implement a campaign.

Consider:

- Who will create the campaign content (e.g., copy and design for paid ads and posts, etc.)?
- Who will oversee your campaign?
- Who will implement, monitor, and adjust your campaign?
- What's your budget for paid media (e.g., Facebook and Google ads)?
- What visual assets do you have available (e.g., in-house video and images vs. stock)?

Did you know?

Digital campaigns typically include some paid promotion; even a \$50 boosted post can reach hundreds of potential new audience members. Although campaigns can also include unpaid or "organic" posts, paid posts tend to have a further reach, helping you achieve your campaign goals.

6 Adjust Using Real-Time Analytics

The beauty of digital platforms is that you can maximize your campaign's performance and reallocate funds to the tools that are working best during the campaign in real time.

Don't wait to analyze results until after your campaign is done. Staying on top of what's working and what isn't allows you to fine-tune the campaign for stronger results now, not the next campaign.

Exercise

What tools will you use to analyze your campaign (free vs. paid)?

What key metrics will you track to understand if your campaign was a success? (reach, click-through rate, conversions, etc.)

Who will analyze the data and recommend adjustments?

Did You Know?

Each digital platform has its own analytics that enable you to review your campaign's performance. This guide by [Social Media Examiner](#) can help you understand these metrics.

7 Reflect

Following the conclusion of your campaign, you should review your tactics to summarize what worked as well as areas of improvement for future campaigns.

Consider:

- What worked well in moving your audience to action?
- What didn't work?
- Did you allocate enough budget, resources, and time to your campaign?
- Did you meet your goals? If not, were they unrealistic or did other factors come into play?
- What else can you learn to improve?

8 Repeat

Remember to keep going! The more campaigns you create, the more opportunities you have to share your inspiring work with your audiences, learning more about what effectively engages them each time.

The best time to start planning for your next campaign is when insights are still fresh and relevant. To make your next campaign even stronger, consider everything you've learned about your audience, digital platforms, the design and writing of posts, and your campaign's performance.

To learn more about creating compelling campaigns, check out these resources:

- [How to Replace Your Biggest Event with an Online Campaign](#)
- [How to Blog \(And Why it Matters\)](#)
- [The Ever-Changing Digital World: How to Feel Less "Arghh" and More "Ahh"](#)
- [Seven Secrets to Creating Compelling Digital Content](#)

Learn More

Mission Minded is a branding firm that works exclusively with nonprofit organizations.

We believe that a brand that sets you apart is essential to a nonprofit's success. Everyday we guide our clients to uncover the big, bold idea that will attract more people to their work. Because in today's world, a worthy mission is not enough. You've got to communicate what makes you unique at every opportunity.

Our clients successfully raise more money and attract the support they need to achieve their goals. To find out how Mission Minded can help your school, call us today at 415-990-9360.