

Get Schooled in Social Media

8 Steps for Creating a Campaign for Your School that Actually Works

INTRODUCTION

If you're not marketing your school on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube, you may be missing out on real opportunities to engage your audiences and attract the support you need to reach your goals. Whether you're looking to increase alumni participation for your capital campaign or boost enrollment for your transitional kindergarten program, a social media campaign can make the difference in whether or not you surpass your intended target or narrowly—and in some cases, widely—miss it.

Social media campaigns should be a targeted effort with specific goals, audiences, and timelines in mind. Follow these eight steps to make sure your school's social media campaign is successful.

1 Establish F.A.S.T. Goals

Great social media campaigns have 1–2 clear goals that are:

- Focused
- Attainable
- Strategic
- Timely

Examples

- Raise X funds for your capital campaign in two months.
- Increase alumni event attendance by X% in the new year.
- Increase qualified admissions inquiries by X% December–February.

Exercise

My social media campaign goal(s):

a. _____

b. _____

2 Identify and Understand Your Audiences

Who do you need to engage to help you reach your goals?

Think about your audience's demographics (age, gender, education level, etc.) and psychographics (beliefs, motivations, online behavior, etc.). Describe your audience and what matters most to them. What can your campaign leverage to meet their needs?



Example

Alum Alex is 45 and married with two kids. He works for a tech startup and commutes 1.5 hours from his home in Oakland to Silicon Valley each day. Alex is constantly on his phone, which he's proudly set up to synch with apps and other devices that he has at home, in the car, and at the office. He checks Facebook a few times a day to see what his family and friends are doing; he posts to Instagram once a month. He believes in the power of relationships and is keen on spending individual

time with each of his children, he takes his wife out on weekly date nights, and makes a point to have lunch with his old high school teacher (and now family friend) every other month. To hone in on Alum Alex for your campaign, you may lead with how the personalized approach your teachers and staff provide students and families helps people like Alex grow up to be the very best version of themselves.

Exercise

My audience is _____

and they care about _____

_____.

3 Choose the Most Effective Platform(s)

Determine which social media platform will be most effective in *moving* your audience to action.

User interviews and secondary research can help you pinpoint which social media platform will be most effective. Also, be sure to keep in mind how your audience utilizes that platform (mobile, desktop, tablet).

Example

Alum Alex Googles everything and seeks online advice/reviews from his friends and family mainly through email or Facebook. He's constantly on his phone, which is the easiest way for him to engage with others.

According to **Pew Research Center** (pewinternet.org/2018/03/01/social-media-use-in-2018), social media use by age in 2018 looks like this:

- Americans ages 18–24 are more likely to be on YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram and Twitter.
- Facebook is used by a majority of Americans across a wide range of demographic groups.
- LinkedIn is especially popular for college graduates and those in high-income households.

Exercise

Considering the above information, along with the other research I've conducted, the best platform(s) for reaching my audiences are:

Audience 1: _____ Platform 1: _____

Audience 2: _____ Platform 2: _____

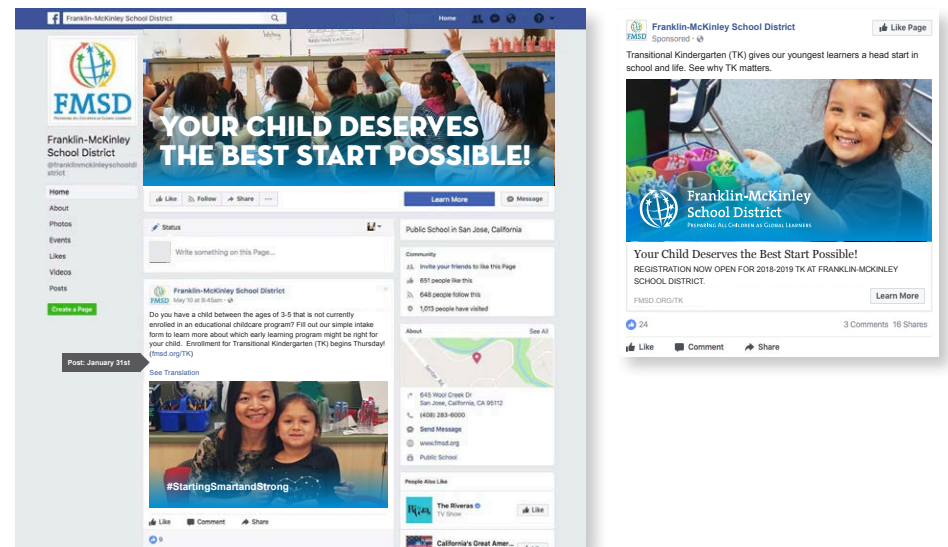
4 Create a Powerful, Compelling Theme

A compelling theme must:

- Align with your brand strategy
- Incorporate a clear and deep understanding of your audience(s)
- Move people to action through: Urgency + Emotion + Rationale
- Utilize consistent visuals and powerful headlines
- Be short and easy to understand

Consider relevant, memorable hashtags for your campaign. Free tools like **Hashtest** (hashtest.io/) can help you determine the best hashtags to increase your campaign's reach.

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



Franklin-McKinley School District Social Media Campaign.

5 Allocate the Proper Resources

Be realistic about what resources you have available to make this a successful campaign.

Consider:

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

Free online tools like **Canva** ([canva.com](https://www.canva.com)) make it easier than ever to create beautiful social media graphics tailored to the size requirements of each platform. You can also find free stock photography on sites like **Unsplash** (unsplash.com) or **Pixabay** (pixabay.com).

Did you know?

A sound social media campaign typically includes promoting your campaign via paid media. While a budget of \$500 in paid media can be effective, \$2,000–\$5,000 is more appropriate to drive specific, memorable campaign results.

6 Adjust Your Campaign with Real-Time Analytics to Meet Your Goals

Don't wait to do this until after your campaign is done.

The beauty of social media is that you can maximize your performance and reallocate budget to the tools that are working best *during* the campaign, in real time.

Exercise

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

Who will analyze the data and make recommendations for adjustments?

Did you know?

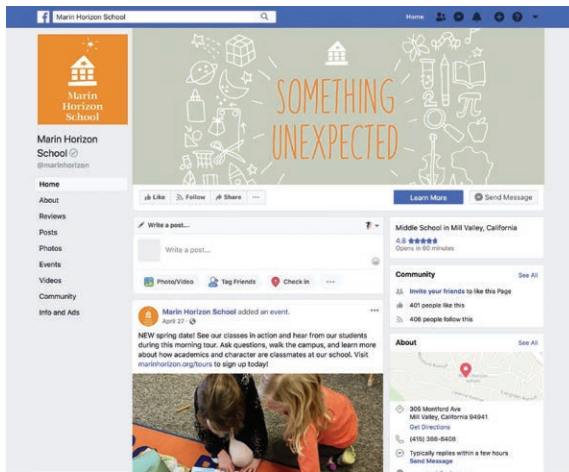
Each social media platform has its own analytics for you to review your campaign's performance in real time. Track all your social media analytics through tools like **Hootsuite** (hootsuite.com) or **Iconosquare** (pro.iconosquare.com); note that Iconosquare is just for Facebook and Instagram. Consider other free tools like **Followerwonk** (followerwonk.com), which allows you to better understand your Twitter followers, when they're online and more likely to engage with your posts, and where they're located.

7 Reflect

While you'll be evaluating and adjusting your campaign in real time, carve out time post campaign for a postmortem.

Consider:

- What worked well in moving your audience to action?
- What was a miss?
- Did you allocate enough budget, resources, and time for 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 future campaigns?



Marin Horizon School Social Media Campaign.

8 Repeat

Through this process, you are guaranteed to have learned so much about your target audience, social media platforms, what worked best, and what missed the mark.

The best time to start planning for your next campaign is when learnings are fresh and relevant. Take everything you've learned about your audience, choice of social media platforms, creative and copy for your posts, and campaign performance to make your next campaign even stronger.

For additional research and stats on social media trends, check out these resources:

- givingreport.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2018-GivingReport-English.pdf
- mrbenchmarks.com
- spredfast.com/social-media-tips/social-media-demographics-current
- pewresearch.org



Learn More

Mission Minded is a branding firm that works exclusively with nonprofits, independent schools, and foundations. We believe you only reach your highest potential if people understand the importance of your work—not just what you do, but why it matters.

Every day we partner with clients like Marin Academy, Crane Country Day School, Crystal Springs Uplands School, and Prospect Sierra School to help them determine the brand—or reputation—for which they want to be known. Then we help them bring that brand to life with key messages, admissions campaigns, capital campaigns, web design, videos, and more.

As a result, 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.