DIGITAL S.M.A.R.T.S.

A Guide for Nonprofits

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SPARK CHANGE

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Digital communications are critical to nonprofits, foundations and their grantees. From social media to websites, to email and analytics, developing and implementing an integrated digital strategy is essential to helping you achieve your goals.

Spitfire's new toolkit, Digital S.M.A.R.T.S.: A Guide for Nonprofits, is a free resource for any organization looking to strengthen its digital strategy. Whether you're building from the ground up or just searching for tips on taking your digital outreach to the next level, this collection of handouts will help you effectively divide your time across the most important digital platforms and create a comprehensive and integrated digital strategy. Digital S.M.A.R.T.S. gives you the tips and tricks you need to expand your reach and engage with your target audiences online using **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, **T**ime-bound and **S**trategic objectives.

Spitfire is here to help. Contact us if you're ready to take your digital strategy to the next level and we'll help show you the way. We've given 101 and advanced level trainings to all levels of nonprofit and foundation staff, created online campaigns that generated actions and sparked social change.

Give us a call at 202.293.6200 or email **digital@spitfirestrategies.com.**

Digital communications are critical to every nonprofit organization.

From social media to websites, to email and analytics, developing an integrated strategy is essential to helping you achieve your goals.

Set Objectives

Start by reviewing your organization's overall communication or strategic plan to see how digital can reinforce that work. If you need help developing a communication plan, the **Spitfire Strategies Smart Chart®** can help you develop objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (S.M.A.R.T.). Your plan should answer these questions:

☑ Who are your priority audiences?
☑ What are you trying to mobilize them to do?
☑ Where can those audiences be found and engaged?

Take Stock

Assess what you know about your organization's digital outreach:

- What forms of digital communications do you use? (i.e., social media, email, SMS/mobile, web, search, blogs?)
- Are you tracking metrics for your digital outreach?
- If yes, do you alter your content based on what the metrics tell you?

Prioritize Audiences

Examine the priority audiences from your communication plan and think about the following questions:

- Which forms of communication best reach your target audiences?
- What other forms of outreach do you need to consider?

Then, take a look at your metrics to prioritize where to focus your time. You don't need to fix it all right away – but if you know for sure that no one is reading your emails or tweets – you are in a position to better prioritize.

Staff Up

A strong team is essential to making a digital strategy succeed. If staff wear many hats, make sure they have enough time to meet objectives.

- Create a work plan to prioritize their time, based on your objectives.
- Determine which staff will be responsible for analytics, which will conduct outreach, and which will determine the strategy.
- Define how digital staff interact with other departments and senior management so that digital is part of the core organizational culture, not an afterthought.

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Listen, Measure and Engage

Start off with a strong foundation of information that will help you judge how well your plan is working. Periodically reassess your plan and reevaluate your efforts to stay on top of the changing digital landscape.

- Research where your audiences are already active and where your current efforts need to shift. Are there new digital tools that can help you understand how your audience is reacting?
- Track the metrics of your digital channels on a monthly basis. Don't just look at the numbers but think about what they mean. If you had a spike in traffic to your website, investigate why. If a Facebook post was shared more widely than usual, take a look at what was different about it.
- Things change. Do you need to revise which metrics you are tracking to get a better picture of your achievements? Revisit your plan and strategy every six months.

Create Content

Good content is king in the digital realm. Everyone wants to go viral for free but many forget to think through the essential elements that make most viral sensations tick. Is your content timely or is it old news? Is your content simple? Does it evoke emotion? The following offer tips for creating your best content on any platform.

Websites

- **Pair simple content with strong visuals**: Make web copy engaging with short and active sentences free from jargon.
- **Help your audience find information quickly**: Use simple navigation to avoid having your audience click more than two times to get what they need.
- **Take advantage of Google Grants**: Google offers nonprofit organizations up to $10,000/month of in-kind advertising through their Google AdWords Grants. Don't miss out on this free opportunity to drive traffic to your website.

Social Media

- **Prioritize social media platforms**: With so many available options, research the social media sites you want to join and which will help you best reach your audiences.
- **Post content appropriate for the channel**: Each social media channel lends itself to a certain type of content. Facebook content should be heavy on visuals, while Twitter is useful for breaking news or giving your organization's perspective in a conversation. LinkedIn content tends to be more for an academic audience.
- **Stay engaged**: Social media works best if you populate content on a regular basis, listen to your followers and engage them in a conversation.

Email

- **Personalize your emails**: Be sure emails come from a specific person, not just the name of the organization.
- **Short and sweet – with an ask**: Keep the text clear and concise, and include a simple action for your audience to take. Don't overload your emails with multiple actions.
- **Divide and conquer**: Segment your databases whenever possible so you can craft more targeted emails to each audience.

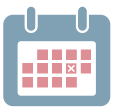
Mobile/SMS

- **Mind the limits**: Text messages limit you to 160 characters so be sure your message and ask can be explained clearly within the limit.
- **Harness your offline events**: Ask supporters to take an action via a live text-in pitch at your events. Make sure to repeat the short code and keyword more than once and display it on a screen if possible.
- **Make it interactive**: Text messages are a great way to collect feedback from your audience. Consider sending trivia questions or asking them to respond to a poll via text.

Expand Your Reach

Each month, look at your editorial calendar to identify opportunities for creative content and ways to expand your efforts to a larger audience. Think about both offline and online activities. Is your organization hosting a big event that month? Will you be attending a rally? Will you be launching a new petition drive? Is there an external event you can react to?

Create a plan to increase your reach on your priority channels. Below are a few examples:



- **Partner with bloggers**: Cross-post content relevant to their audience and vice versa. Many blogs include a blogroll that can point to other outlets you may want to reach.
- **Promote content on Facebook**: Once you have identified what types of content your audience responds to, consider testing a small ad buy or a promoted post.
- **Expand your Twitter following**: Participate in Twitter chats or live tweet events you attend to reach a larger audience. Research influencers in your space and develop a strategy to engage them on Twitter.
- **Ask your subscribers to pass the word**: Make sure all your email actions include the option to share the action through social media and email.
- **Capitalize on offline and external events**: Circulate your petition with an email sign-up or ask the audience to take action and join your mobile list.

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The Principles of Great Content Creation

Everyone wants their content to go viral. It's a digital badge of honor.

Set Expectations

We are all jealous of viral content we've seen succeed, like when the **Human Rights Campaign turned Facebook red** or the ALS ice bucket challenge happened. But here's the thing: it's a great goal to shoot for but it rarely happens.

What you should really focus your energy on is reaching your target audience. If your target audience is everyone then you likely aren't reaching anyone. Instead focus on creating good content that will inspire those that you are trying to reach.

Remember to ask yourself:

1) Who is my target audience?
2) What do I want them to do once I have their attention?
3) How will this content add to or support my overall digital and communications objectives?

Spitfire's Smart Chart® can help you think through these questions and incorporate your content creation into your overarching communication strategy.

What Makes Good Content

Once you have established who you are trying to reach, consider what will inspire them to act. Think about these general principles of good content creation.

Tell authentic stories. Your content should feature stories with a genuine message. If your audience feels like you are trying to pull one over on them, they are likely to skip over your content, or maybe worse, stop following you. People are also more likely to share and like your content if they see something about themselves in the story and empathize with it. Therefore, it pays to humanize your content and make it personal.

Address your audience's barriers but don't reinforce them. Identifying your target audience is particularly useful because then you can tailor your message to reach those you want to engage. Think about what it is that might be holding your audience back from participating or agreeing with your position. Then address that barrier in your message. But be sure not to repeat the barrier. Stay away from "myth vs. fact" posts because studies show that mentioning the myth just reinforces it.

Include an emotional ask. Emotion is an important element of what makes content good and empowers your supporters to act. Think about what emotion you want your piece to evoke. If you are looking to motivate your audience to act, consider using a tone of anger or hope. If your issue is heavy, beware of depressing your audience. Depression rarely generates action. but using geolocation data to provide tailored information such as a city name, makes a difference. Make sure not to use ALL CAPS or too many punctuation marks. Include a call to action when necessary, but keep in mind that you'll lose subscribers' interest if urgency is overdone.

What Makes Content Spread

Now you have a great piece of content. How are you going to make it circulate around the web? Planning how to distribute your content is just as important as creating a post that will inspire your audience. After all, if no one sees it, what impact will it have?

Cultivate influencers. Analyze your supporter network and organizational contacts to identify where you have relationships with influencers. Look for those individuals or organizational partners that you can tap to help you circulate your brilliant content. Ideally these folks will not only have a big following but will also be a trusted source of information on the topic. Don't just think celebrities. While many do have an enviable number of followers, do their followers actually care about your issue? Your time may be better invested in nurturing a relationship with someone who has smaller, albeit higher quality followers.

Let go of control. If you have created good content that inspires your audience. They will want to make it their own and share it with their friends and family. Embrace your online community and let them see themselves in your content. Letting go of control is hard for organizations concerned about their brand and identity. But beware; this worry could hinder the reach of your brilliant content.

Luck favors the well-prepared. Create a calendar including your organization's priority events and other important internal dates. Then include events that you know will be happening outside of the organization that you could leverage for your work. These could be related to the legislative cycle, a commemorative month, or a holiday. Use that calendar to plan ahead. Capitalize on events that will generate buzz online to gain more attention for your content.

Listen to Your Audience

You've created an inspiring piece of content, sent it out through your own digital channels, recruited influencers to help you give it an extra boost, now what? Your job is not done.

It's time to evaluate how you did. Think back to your initial strategic framework and assess how this content supported your overall objectives.

- How did your audience respond?
- Did you recruit any new supporters, petition signatures, or donors?
- Was it a success to share with your whole organization at the next all staff meeting? Or did it flop?

Think about what might have worked or not worked and why. It's important to look at your metrics and draw conclusions about how you can improve the next time around.

- Could you have posted it at a more opportune time of the day?
- Did you release the content after the news cycle expired?
- Could you have used a more compelling image?

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Listening to Audiences

Identifying and Tracking Metrics for Online Outreach

A **smart strategy** starts and ends with listening to your audiences through analytics.

Strategize

Why guess what your target audiences want when you can know for sure by listening to them? Each action they take on your website, email or social media can be tracked, analyzed and incorporated into a new or existing digital strategy. As with any strategy, you should first establish your objectives and research your target audiences to determine what they care about, the language they use, where they are, and how you will reach them. The **Spitfire Strategies Smart Chart®** can help you think through these questions and incorporate analytics into your overarching communication strategy.

Website

A website strategy should always reflect the values of your target audiences. Use **Google Analytics** to gain insight on overall website performance, behavior of audiences, sources of traffic and evaluation of content. Adjust your strategy when needed.

Dashboard

Your main Google Analytics dashboard should contain the following metrics for your overall website performance. These should be included in every analytics report.

Unique Visitors by Traffic Type Pie Chart: This metric allows for a quick summary of your visitor type (i.e. organic, direct, referral, email). How did this change from last month?
Unique Visitors: Use this metric, rather than unique pageviews, because it provides an accurate count of your audience for a specific time period.
Average Visit Duration: Tracking the time visitors stay on your site is a good metric for monthly analytics reports.
Bounce Rate: This is when people leave from the same page they landed on. Bounce rates vary widely, so it's best to check your sources to see where bouncing visitors came from and what your goals are for that page.
Goal Completions: Set up goals to track online actions, such as email sign-ups, donations or downloads. You can also track the most popular paths that led people to take action.

Audience

The audience section shows how you are targeting new and existing audiences in your outreach activities. It also allows you to learn more about your visitors' demographics (i.e. location, gender, age and mobile).

New Visitors: If you published an op-ed in an outlet with a new audience, did you receive new visitors? How long did they stay on the page compared to return visitors? Did they go deeper into your website?
Returning Visitors: This metric is helpful when determining if your website is reaching your primary audience.
Pages/Visit: How many layers of your site are visitors exploring beyond the entry page?

Acquisition

Direct: Your direct traffic sources usually indicate the content that readers of your newsletter clicked on. Can you identify patterns in popular direct traffic sources?
Referrals: What other websites are directing visitors to your site? Which outreach activities are the most or least effective? Are your social media efforts paying off?
Search: To increase the rank of your site in a Google search, mention the words listed in this section in your website's content.

Behavior

Determine what content is engaging users by tracking behavior on pages.

Overview: This lists the 10 most viewed pages, showing the main content people are coming to see. Are these the pages on which you want heavy traffic? These pages also present an opportunity to drive people further into your site with links to other relevant or popular pages.
Content Drilldown: This shows you on which pages people spend the most time.
Exit Pages: The top exit pages show where people are losing engagement.

Email

Email is a vital communication channel for many organizations and their supporters. The following metrics should be tracked to determine what drives high open rates and encourages action.

Open Rate: Track this over time to determine your norm. Studies vary widely on the average open rate for nonprofits. The **2014 M+R Benchmarks study** reported a 13 percent average open rate, while **MailChimp** found a 25.12 percent average open rate.
Click-through Rate: This shows what content in your email is getting the greatest response. Often this is the top story in a newsletter or the action link. The 2014 M+R Benchmarks study reported an average click-through rate of 2.9 percent for advocacy emails and 1.8 percent for email newsletters.
A/B Testing: Split your list in half and test different versions to determine the most effective subject lines, timing and content selection. Alternately, test different approaches in different emails and compare the open and click-through rates.
Forwarding Rate: Your metrics should show who has been forwarding your emails – a good indicator of your most engaged users who could be segmented. Studies confirm that, when it comes to spending, people listen to those they know.

Social

The Google Analytics social section can be used to determine the amount of referral traffic to your website from Facebook and **Twitter**. To evaluate these pages individually, you could use the following tools and metrics and experiment with the time and content you are posting to learn what works best for your audience.

Facebook

The Insights section on Facebook shows performance metrics about your page and posts.

External Referrers: This shows you the number of times people came to your Page from websites besides Facebook.
Reach: The type and age of a post, and the relationship between your organization and its fans affect the rank of your posts in news feeds. To increase reach, be sure to post pictures and links and to interact with your fans.
When Your Fans Are Online: Use this graph to pinpoint the best time to reach your target audiences.
Your Fans: Here you will find basic demographic data of your fans including age, gender and location. Are these your target audiences? If not, it may be necessary to increase your use of promoted posts and ads on Facebook.
People Engaged: Here you will find information about the demographics of the people who engaged with your posts compared with the overall demographics of your fans.

Twitter

Twitter offers **analytics** on an individual or organizational Twitter account. For more detailed and ready to use reports, use **TweetReach** for viewing the reach, top contributors and impressions your organization's handle or hashtag has recently received.

Mentions and Retweets: This indicates if your content is sparking conversation with your fans and encouraging them to share your tweets with their followers.
Demographics: What age and gender make up your Twitter following?
Impressions: This is the combined number of potential users who saw any content associated with your Twitter page. How did this compare with last month?

Implement

How often you track these metrics depends on the nature of your campaign and the level of need for insight. For a short and fast-moving call-to-action drive on your website or social media, you may want to check your metrics daily or weekly. For weekly check-ins to senior staff, short reports with only the dashboard metrics and a few email and social metrics could suffice.

Start by assigning staff to collect the metrics, analyze the data and develop actionable goals. Ideally, the person creating the content does his/her own analytics, whether that's email, social or web. Lastly, ensure decision makers for your overall communications receive analytics reports.

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Maximizing Facebook

Inspiring Social Change

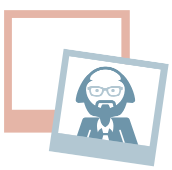
Increasing the chances of your content appearing in your fans' News Feed is not rocket science, but it requires a **smart strategy** and following best practices.

Strategize

It's always wise to build a plane before you fly it. First, establish objectives for your organization's Facebook strategy. They should be S.M.A.R.T (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound). Next, research your target audiences for Facebook to determine what they care about, the language they use, where they are, and how you will reach them. The **Spitfire Strategies Smart Chart®** can help you think through these questions and incorporate Facebook into your overarching communication strategy.

Build

Facebook uses an algorithm to determine if your message appears in your fans' News Feed. It takes three variables into consideration: the type and age of a post and the relationship between your organization and its fans. Improve your score by building better posts and a better page.

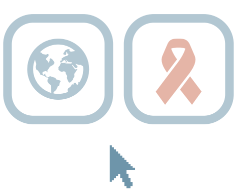


Photos

- Share photos and videos of your supporters, events and other aspects of your cause. Keep videos to 45 seconds or shorter to keep viewers engaged.
- Make your profile photo your organization's logo. **Profile photos** should be at least 180 x 180 pixels.
- Capture users' attention with your cover photo and embody your cause with the call to action and website link in the written description. No more than 20 percent of text should be in the photo. **Cover photos** should be at least 851 x 315 pixels.

Posts

- Keep posts between 100-250 characters or less. Shorter, succinct posts are more engaging.
- Don't use the words "like" or "share" in posts. Instead use action words such as "join us," "sign," or "watch this." Use self-referential words such as "we" and "us."
- Create content that lends itself to sharing by telling authentic stories and including emotional asks.
- Create a dialogue with your fans by responding when they comment and posting questions. Speak in the first-person narrative and try having a member of your organization post in their own voice every now and then to add a personal touch.
- Share timely, issue-centric content to establish your organization as a thought-leader in your area of focus. Facebook's algorithm will boost your content automatically if you use trending phrases on Facebook. These include news items and other topics in the trending section on your homepage.



About Section and Apps

- Add links in your About section to your website and social media sites; include your address and common keywords about your cause; and highlight your organization's mission in 25 words or less.
- Add apps to your page such as Donate and Events. You can rearrange the order, delete and add more apps in the admin panel.

Grow

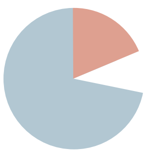
Expand your audience by promoting your Facebook page and improving your content strategy.

Cross-pollinate: Use Your Website and Email

Use your organization's website to encourage your current supporters to "like" your page. Add the Facebook "like" or "share" box to your home page and articles so visitors can share pages directly from your website to their Facebook timeline. Put Facebook links and content in your newsletter.

Promote Your Organization, Posts or Stories

Facebook has two programs that help organizations spread their message and gain new supporters. To promote your organization's page, event or external website, create a paid ad that combines a photo and text. Use your own photos or use **Wikimedia Commons** to find free images. Consider "boosting" your highest quality posts that are sparking conversation with your fans for as low as $5 or $10. This will move them up the ranks on your audiences' News Feeds.



Follow the 70/20/10 Content Rule

70 percent of your content should inform your audience about the issue; 20 percent should be shared content from other organizations; and 10 percent should be promotional content. Make sure to tag your organization and others in shared content to connect your organization with their fans' News Feeds.

5X

Plan Your Posts

Post at least five times a week. Check your Insights section to determine the best time to post content. Use **Hootsuite** to schedule Facebook posts and photos.

Listen

Every week use your Insights section to view performance metrics about your page and posts. Experiment with the time and content you are posting to learn what works best for your audience. The most important page and post metrics to track are listed below:

External Referrers: This shows you the number of times and from which site people came to your Page from websites besides Facebook.
Reach: The type and age of a post, and the relationship between your organization and its fans affect the rank of your posts in News Feeds. To increase reach, be sure to post pictures and links similar to those that have garnered high engagement in the past, and to interact with your fans.
When Your Fans Are Online: Use this graph to pinpoint the best time to reach your target audiences.
Your Fans: Here you will find basic demographic data of your fans including age, gender and location. Are these your target audiences? If not, it may be necessary to increase your use of promoted posts and ads on Facebook.
People Engaged: Here you will find information about the demographics of the people who engaged with your posts compared with the overall demographics of your fans.

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Paying to Play on Facebook

A Guide to Advertising

Facebook is becoming known as a pay-to-play tool as organizations are finding it challenging, if not nearly impossible, to get content into their audiences' News Feeds without creating an ad budget. Facebook acknowledges this occurrence and holds that competition for each News Feed story is increasing and people are connecting and sharing more than ever.

The Basics

On any given day, an average of **1,500 potential stories** from friends and pages could appear in a typical Facebook user's News Feed each time he or she logs on; of these, Facebook displays about 300. Breaking through the noise takes a thorough understanding of the way Facebook operates.

Build

Facebook uses an algorithm to determine if your message appears in your fans' news feed. It takes three variables into consideration: the type and age of a post and the relationship between your organization and its fans. Improve your score by building better posts and a better page.

The Mysterious Algorithm

There is no way to track exactly how Facebook determines if an organization's content will appear in its fans' News Feeds. Facebook admits that as people increasingly share content, the organic reach of pages will likely continue to decline. **A recent study** found that the average reach of organic posts declined from 12 percent in October 2013 to six percent in February 2014. It's safe to say that if organizations are not willing to pay to play, their content will slowly reach fewer and fewer people.

Getting Started

In order for someone to create an ad for a Facebook page, he or she has to be listed as a Page admin for that page. To assign a user this role, go to the page, click "Edit Page" and select "Manage Admin Roles." As a good rule of thumb, make sure that whenever Facebook asks you to update your page's layout to its new settings, always click update. Facebook changes constantly and keeping your page updated with new settings will help to ensure your content reaches the right audiences.

Budget

The key to determining an appropriate budget for Facebook ads is to test. Try starting with a small amount such as $50 - $100 and experiment with the different types of ads to determine what your audiences respond to best. Try promoting the same post to two different groups of people: those who like similar keywords as your issue and those who like similar organizations. Track the reach of the ads to determine which performed better. Use the "When your fans are online" metric in your Facebook "Insights" section to ensure you are promoting ads at the most popular times. See this example of an organization that tested two types of ads.

Cost

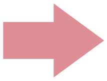
Facebook allows you to pay for impressions (CPM) or pay for clicks (CPC). If your goal is audience growth, maximize your dollars by paying only for ads that people click on as opposed to paying per one thousand people who will potentially see your ad. See more on bidding and pricing here.

Types of Ads

There are a few types of ads you can create. Choose the type of ad to run based on your objectives. Manage each ad by clicking the "Manage Ads" tab located in the drop down menu on the far right of your home page.
Be sure to check the size **guidelines** for each ad.

- **Boost your page posts:** This is the easiest and cheapest ad to create and results come fast. You can use this option quickly by clicking "Boost Post" on an individual post.

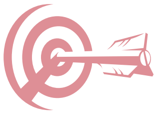
- **Get more page likes:** This is where you can get creative. Think about the images that describe your organization well. Look for ones that show what your organization accomplishes and who you impact. Use your own photos or use **Wikimedia Commons** to find free images. Upload up to six images, keeping in mind that text cannot take up more than 20 percent of the image. The **Facebook Grid tool** can help you determine if you have too much text. Next, write a short headline and message. Try using your mission statement but add a bit of flair to it.
- **Invite people to an event:** Friends of your fans are the best new audience to target with this type of ad.



- **Send traffic to your website:** Create an ad that directs Facebook users to your website. This can be used to highlight a new blog post, your current advocacy campaign, your donation page, or your website's homepage. Track the success of ads by installing a tracking code provided by Facebook to the webpages where conversions happen.

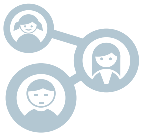
Audience Targeting

Facebook allows advertisers to narrow an audience down using demographic targeting. To access more advanced audience targeting options, organizations should install **Facebook's Power Editor**. It is more complex than the traditional ads manager and was originally intended for use by businesses managing multiple Facebook campaigns and ads.



1. **Targeting audiences based on interests and demographics:** It's best to start by making a complete list of things your audiences might "like" on Facebook (e.g., TV shows, local news outlets or newspapers, volunteering, etc.). Identify if they are college educated, what language they are likely to speak, their age, gender, location and whether or not you'd like to target friends of your fans or broader audiences not connected with your page.Once you have this list, start experimenting and testing to find your tailored audience group.

2. **Creating Custom Audience groups:** Organizations can upload their supporters' data (email addresses and phone numbers) collected outside of Facebook to target ads to them on Facebook. This tactic is helpful to repeat an ask to current supporters of your organization on an additional channel. Seeing an ask more than once increases the likelihood that your supporters will respond. To **create a custom audience** go to your "Manage Ads" tab, select "Audiences" from the left side and click "Create Audience" then choose whether you'd like to upload your Custom Audience through MailChimp or a data file.



3. **Create similar audiences to your Custom Audience groups:** After you create a Custom Audience, you can generate an audience similar to it. Facebook allows you to generate your audience with either one percent or five percent specificity. One percent specificity generates an audience with 99 percent of your custom audience's characteristics such as interests, "likes", demographics, etc.

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Expanding and Activating Your Audiences on Twitter

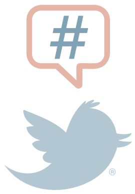
The key to spreading your organization's message on Twitter is to use a **smart strategy**, engage and activate your influencers, and listen to your audiences.

Strategize

Building a large Twitter following may seem like an obvious objective, but developing a large following with only a small portion of engaged users is not all that helpful. Be sure to focus on cultivating relationships and deeper audience engagement – not just the raw numbers. Start by asking: who are your target audiences; where are they found and what do you want them to do? The **Spitfire Strategies Smart Chart®** can help you think through these questions and incorporate Twitter into your overarching communication strategy

Research

Determine who of your target audiences has a valued opinion and large following in your subject area. These influencers could be issue experts, niche reporters or organizations with a following that look to them for insight. Follow these three steps to develop an outreach plan.



Step 1: Discover the Most Popular Hashtags in Your Subject Are

Enter keywords about your issue in an **advanced Twitter search** and browse the tweets for usernames of organizations that you recognize from offline activities. Narrow your search by the city or state to find hashtags and users related to your issues. Enter the usernames individually into **MentionMapp** to view their most commonly used hashtags. Develop a comprehensive list of hashtags related to your issue and compare them with **Topsy** to find out which ones have the most mentions. Use **Hootsuite** to create streams of tweets that include those keywords, hashtags and mentions in real time.

Step 2: Identify the Top Influencers

Influencers lead conversations on Twitter by consistently using popular and relevant hashtags. To find your influencers, enter the hashtags from step 1 into **Topsy's "Influencer" search**. Analyze the top users by their follower count and audience engagement. Scan their tweets to identify the messaging they use. Check their **Klout** score to determine their influence. Group your findings into two categories: influencers with a large following and niche reporters.

Step 3: Find a Connection

Browse recent press coverage of your organization and issue to find relevant reporters. Keep track of the reporters' articles and use a basic Twitter search to find their handles. For other influencers, check their profiles for related tweets about your issue and look for ways to tie their interests with your objectives.

Step 4: Make a Twitter List

Twitter lists are easy to create and can help you monitor tweets from a group of Twitter users. For example, Twitter lists could be useful for tracking the tweets of niche reporters during an announcement or news event. Once you know who relevant reporters are, conduct individual searches for them on Twitter, click the settings tab by the "follow" button on their profile and select "Add or remove from list." You do not need to be following each user to add them to a list.

Activate

Develop content that will inspire your target audience to take action by following these four principles.

Know Your Limits

Although Twitter allows for 140-character tweets, those that are limited to 100 characters or less save space for comments in any retweets of your content and receive about **17 percent higher** engagement. Keep in mind that any tweet sent with a URL will be reduced to 118 characters, or 117 for https links. Photos use 23 characters but have high retweet rates. A recent study found that tweets with photos or links to photos were retweeted **35 percent more often** than text-only tweets.

Content is King

Above all, content should be relevant and timely to your issue. Include a mix of tweets, retweets, conversation, calls to action and links to compelling messages. Include relevant hashtags, but no more than two. **Research** shows that quotes and videos tend to boost engagement.

Be Present

Post three to five times a day to establish your organization as an authority and a timely commentator on your issue or cause. Know when your followers are online by using **Tweriod**, a tool that analyzes up to 1,000 of your followers to pinpoint the best time to tweet. Schedule your tweets using **Hootsuite**.

Promote

Be sure to add the Twitter button to your website, email, blog and other social media sites.

Engage

Once you have identified the top hashtags for your subject, influencers to reach and connections to mention, engage your audiences with these actions.

- Follow any new influencers to increase the chance that they will follow your organization and retweet your content.
- Build a relationship with your influencers by regularly retweeting and commenting on their content.
- Ask for retweets. To double your response rate, use “retweet” rather than “RT ” in the request.
- Join the most popular hashtag conversations and spread your message to a broader audience by researching the hashtags used by other groups with similar interests. Use the hashtags to interest them in your cause.
- Live-tweet an event by notifying attendees of the hashtag and designating someone from your organization to tweet quotes and pictures. Use **Twubs** to organize and **Storify** to archive live-tweeting events.
- Twitter offers analytics on individual and organizational Twitter accounts. **Twitter analytics are available** to all users whose accounts have been open for at least two weeks and primarily tweet in English, Spanish, French or Japanese. Analytics shed light on the impressions, engagement and your follower demographic. For more detailed and ready to use reports, use **TweetReach**. Use **Topsy** for monitoring specific keywords.

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Organizing a Twitter chat

Twitter chats are effective ways to inform your audiences about an issue or give them **an opportunity to converse** with a prominent official or thought leader.

Chats will also help to grow your following as tweeters see your organization communicating about its work. Twitter chats are planned conversations organized between a few handles and their followers, all using the same hashtag. They are held at a specific time, about a particular topic and promoted in advance. Typically chats are moderated by a host who poses questions out to the invited “panelists”. The following guide provides best practices for how to prepare for, promote and carry out a chat.

Before the Chat

Think strategically. Consider what you are trying to accomplish with the chat. Who do you want to engage and what do you want them to learn? What time are they most active on Twitter? Who can help you reach your target audience?

Select the right person for the job. The person who is selected to participate in or moderate the chat should be able to respond to tweets quickly and accurately. He or she should also be comfortable with the content of the event and know which messages your organization wants to emphasize. You may want to team up and pair a Twitter-savvy staffer with an issue expert.

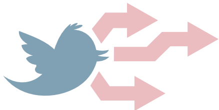
Pick a hashtag for the chat. When selecting a hashtag for the event, choose a word or phrase that describes what you will be discussing. Steer away from long hashtags as they take up too many characters. Try to avoid abbreviations and acronyms that might confuse Twitter users or lead them to guess what the conversation is about.

Invite and confirm priority participants. While the chat will be open to anyone interested in joining the conversation on Twitter, it’s useful to line up some priority participants in advance. Think about influencers with whom you have relationships, those active on Twitter who have large followings and individuals that can reach your target audience and are knowledgeable about the topic. Spitfire’s “Beyond a Following” guide can help you identify these influencers. These may be prominent leaders in your community, issue experts or legal experts, media partners or others with whom Twitter users will want to interact.

Prepare a Q&A in advance. If you are hosting the chat, circulate a draft Q&A template for the confirmed participants and identify who will be best suited to answer each question. You may want to organize a conference call in advance of the chat to walk through the Q&A, address any inquiries from participants and identify possible tough questions that could surface. Be sure to draft answers to any questions you will be on tap to answer and include links to relevant content to drive traffic to your website.

Make a list of relevant hashtags and Twitter handles. In addition to the chat hashtag, compile popular hashtags relevant to the content of the event so that you can easily reference them. Similarly, list the handles of any partner organizations or participants in the chat so you can easily create tweets on the fly.

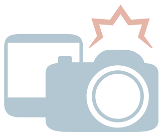
Set up your **Hootsuite** account. Before the chat begins, make sure you have the following streams set up for monitoring during the event:



- **Your sent tweets**: allows you to easily see what you have tweeted from your handle.
- **Your panelist's handles**: allows you to see which questions they have answered.
- **A search stream for the chat hashtag**: allows you to review what everyone using the chat hashtag is tweeting, re-direct any good questions to one of the panelists, and reply to or retweet any good tweets.
- **A search stream for mentions of your handle**: allows you to see anyone who mentions you on Twitter or tweets something at you during the chat.
- **A feed of any direct messages sent to your organization's handle**.

Promoting the Chat

Strong promotion of the chat will ensure a more successful event. Promotional tactics include:



- Create a sharable image with the date and time, hashtag, confirmed panelists and subject of the chat. Feature it on your website immediately. A few days before the chat, email the image to your network inviting them to participate and share it on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- Ask media partners and your confirmed participants to share the image with their networks via email, websites and social media channels. Retweet their promotional tweets.

- Ask allied organizations to share it with their networks and to participate on the day of, even if they aren't panelists.
- Tweet the image again and send out additional tweets asking folks to participate on the morning of the chat. Mention the handles of those confirmed panelists and encourage them to do the same.

During the Event

At the beginning of the event, send a tweet letting your followers know that the chat has begun and how to participate. This will give them context about the streams of tweets that they will see coming from your handle. Also, welcome your panelists to the chat. Sample tweets include:

- It's time to kick off the #HASHTAG chat [INSERT THE PURPOSE OF THE CHAT].
- Welcome to @PANELIST1, @PANELIST2 and @PANELIST3. Excited to have you join the #HASHTAG chat today!
- We welcome your participation in the chat by using #HASHTAG or you can DM questions to @YOURHANDLE.

Once the event begins, consider the following tips for the chat.

- Include the chat hashtag in all your tweets.
- Use the Q&A template and tweet out each question to the panelists identified to answer them. Be sure to give them a chance to respond before sending out the next question.
- Monitor the chat hashtag search to see if any related tweets warrant a response.
- Keep the previously created list of hashtags and handles easily accessible.
- Monitor any mentions of your handle and retweet or reply as necessary.

When the chat is complete, let your followers know and thank them for participating.

After the Event

A few hours after the chat is over and traffic has slowed, it's important to measure your reach and engagement. One easy and affordable way to measure is through a **TweetReach** report. TweetReach runs reports on Twitter handles and hashtags, and it will trace back to the last 1,500 tweets. To measure the reach of the full conversation, Spitfire recommends running a hashtag report on the chat hashtag. One report costs $20 and will tell you who tweeted using your hashtag, what their reach was, which handles were the most engaged and how many impressions your hashtag created on Twitter.

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Live Tweeting an Event

Live tweeting is a great way to **inform your audience** on Twitter about an offline event and describe them as they unfold.

Organizations can live tweet from a conference panel they are attending or a press conference in which are they participating. You could also live tweet an event covered on TV such as a prominent speech (e.g., the State of the Union). It is a great way to give your organization's perspective on a current issue, get noticed in the conversation on Twitter and grow your following. This guide provides best practices for how to do it right.

Before the Event

Before live tweeting any event, it is important to consider both logistical and content-driven aspects:

Select the right person for the job. The person who is selected to live tweet should not only be familiar with Twitter, but also be able to type quickly with accuracy while maintaining their composure. Remarks worth tweeting are often delivered quickly and the person will have to condense them into 140 characters without losing the meaning or power of the remark. He or she should also be comfortable with the content delivered during the event and know which messages your organization wants to emphasize.

Make a list of the relevant hashtags and Twitter handles. In addition to the event hashtag, make a list of popular hashtags relevant to the content of the event so that the person tweeting can easily reference them. Similarly, research the handles of any speakers, partner organizations or participants who are active on Twitter and make a list of those whom you want to engage.

Ask for remarks in advance. When possible, request speeches or prepared remarks before the event. This will allow you to read through what the speaker will say and pull out any important remarks that you want to tweet. Create those selected tweets ahead of time adding in the appropriate hashtags and incorporating any necessary handles. This will allow you to quickly copy and paste the tweet once the remark has been said.

Set up a **Hootsuite** account. There are a number of tools that help you manage your Twitter account, schedule tweets, track who is mentioning you, etc. HootSuite is one such tool that is easy to use, but feel free to use whichever tool you prefer. Before the event begins, make sure you have the following streams set up for monitoring during the event:

- **Your handle's tweets:** this will allow you to easily see what you have tweeted from your handle.
- **A search stream for the event hashtag**: this will allow you to review what everyone using the event hashtag is tweeting and easily reply to them or retweet any good tweets.
- **A search stream for mentions of your handle**: this will allow you to see anyone who mentions you on Twitter or tweets something at you during the event.

Confirm WiFi capability and equipment. Make sure there will be WiFi available and if not, plan accordingly. It's often easier to live tweet from a laptop computer so that you can view multiple streams at once. Also, using a phone without a WiFi connection can quickly drain your battery and cripple your tweeting.

During the Event

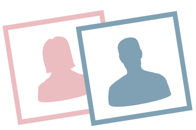
At the beginning of the event, send an introduction tweet out letting your followers know where you are and that you will be live tweeting the event. This will give context to your followers for the stream of tweets that they will see coming from your handle.

A sample introduction tweet follows:

> Getting ready to kick off the [EVENT NAME] in [CITY/LOCATION]. Follow the conversation at #EVENTHASHTAG

Once the event begins, consider the following tips for live tweeting:

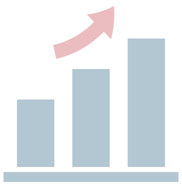
- Tweet the substance of the conversation, such as any good quotes from speakers or comments from the audience, keeping in mind the messages that you want to communicate to the public.
- Use the tweets that were prepared in advance from speakers who provided you their remarks.
- If there are lulls in the conversation or comments that should not be tweeted, fill in that space with photos of the audience or speakers.
- Keep the previously created list of hashtags and handles easily accessible for your reference.
- Be sure to use the event hashtag in all your tweets as well as any other hashtags relevant to the conversation.
- Monitor any mentions of your handle and the event hashtag stream and retweet or reply as necessary.



Similar to the introduction tweet, once you have finished live tweeting, let your followers know the event is over or that there will be a lull during extended breaks.

After the Event

Once the event is over, it's important to measure your reach and engagement. One easy and affordable way to measure is through a **TweetReach** report.



TweetReach provides one-time reports on Twitter handles and hashtags, and it will trace back to the last 1,500 tweets. To measure the reach of the full conversation, Spitfire recommends running a hashtag report on the event hashtag. One report costs approximately $20 and will tell you who tweeted using the event hashtag, what their reach was, which handles were the most engaged and how many impressions the hashtag created on Twitter.

Also consider capturing the conversation in a blog post and highlighting some of your favorite parts. **Storify** is a great, free tool that allows you to pull online content from Twitter and other social media channels, add your own narrative and publish that content to your blog or website.

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Are you In or Out?

Connecting to Professional Audiences on LinkedIn

With a membership of over 300 million and a join rate of two new members each second, LinkedIn is rapidly becoming a necessary tool for nonprofits.

Strategize

When considering any new social network, think about whether it is worth your staff time investment to take on the new platform and if the platform will serve your strategic goals. If you are trying to reach professional or academic audiences, LinkedIn might be just what you're looking for. Start by asking: who are your target audiences; where can they be found and what do you want them to do? **Spitfire's Smart Chart®** can help you think through these questions and incorporate LinkedIn into your overarching communication strategy.

Think Outside the Box

LinkedIn has been categorized by many as a job hunting tool. This reputation naturally developed because of the structure of the tool – members are encouraged to list their bio, past job experiences and build their connections with colleagues or companies they know offline. However, this reputation is misleading as many nonprofits do not see the value in LinkedIn and overlook the vast opportunities that exist to gain volunteers, find board members and even secure funds.

Create

The first step to using LinkedIn is to create a "**company page**." A company page is very similar to a Facebook company page in that you can post status updates and share links and photos. The difference is that LinkedIn members can interact on a deeper level with your organization than they can on Facebook.

Encourage

Each time your organization is listed on a LinkedIn members' profile, it helps to position you in front of vast networks of like-minded people. Encourage your current and past staffers and volunteers to include your organization on their profile.

Build

When setting up your company page, list details about your mission, activities and history. Be sure to include your address, skills or specialties, banner image and link to your website and other social media profiles. Check out **these nonprofits** for ideas on how to successfully use LinkedIn.

Connect

There are several ways for your organization to use LinkedIn and they don't require rocket science. Think about how you use your personal networks for your own objectives and apply that logic to your organization's needs.

1. **Post a volunteer opportunity.** Eighty-two percent of LinkedIn's members have indicated that they are interested in volunteering. To reach these members, LinkedIn created the "volunteer marketplace" where members can search opportunities to volunteer in their communities. LinkedIn charges companies a fee to post job opportunities, which can cost up to $400 for 30 days. However 501(c)(3) nonprofits located in the U.S. receive a 90 percent discount.

2. **Map out your connections.** Applying for a grant and want to know if you have any useful connections that could put in a good word? Trying to confirm a dynamic speaker for your annual meeting?

    - Go to LinkedIn and search for the relevant organization, click on the organization link. On the organization's page there is a box on the right saying how you're connected, click "See All." Look for your shared connections. Determine if you are close enough to any of the connections to ask them to put in a good word or connect you directly.
    - Another option is if you know the name of the particular person (potential speaker or decision maker on the funding opportunity) you want to reach. If you do, type their name in the search box and click their profile. Scroll to the bottom to see if you have any shared contacts. If you do, determine if you feel comfortable reaching out to your shared connections with the ask.

3. **Share content.** Reuse the photos, news articles and stories you share on your organization's other social media channels. Don't worry about posting every day, but try to post a few times a week.

4. **Advertise.** Try advertising your page and posts to specific people based on their current job level, company, position or location.

    - Create an ad for your page if you want to raise awareness about your organization. Use your logo for the picture, include a headline and description of your organization.
    - While your status will appear in your followers' newsfeed without an advertising budget – unlike Facebook – sponsoring updates will help you reach the exact people you want to reach. For your posts that you'd like people to take action on or interact with, click "Sponsor Update" and experiment with a small budget to determine what audience targeting works best.

5. **Find board members.** By **posting open board roles**, you can leverage the power of the LinkedIn network to target and identify qualified professionals for your board. The Board Connect program includes free access to **Talent Finder** – a premium account focused on finding top candidates on LinkedIn.

6. **Join groups.** A LinkedIn group is a subset of members with common interests and a place for professionals in the same industry to share content, find answers, post and view jobs, make business connections and establish themselves as experts. You can find groups to join by using the search feature at the top of your homepage or **viewing suggestions of groups you may like.**

Analyze and Listen

As with all digital platforms, evaluate how your audience is engaging with your content and if there are changes that should be made to better meet your objectives. As a page administrator, use your page's Analytics tab to view data about your organization's page. The tab is broken into **three sections**: Updates, Followers, and Visitors. Track each of these metrics on a monthly basis:

Updates

Impressions: The number of times each update was shown to LinkedIn members.
Clicks: The number of clicks on your content, company name or logo. This doesn't include shares, likes and comments.
Interactions: The number of times people have liked, commented on and shared each update.

Followers

Count: Keep track of the number of people who chose to follow your organization.
Follower demographics: A breakdown of who's following your organization using five types of demographic data. Use the dropdown menu on the right to filter with the following demographics: Seniority, Industry, Function, Region, Company Size.
How You Compare: How do your follower numbers compare to other companies? How do you rank?

Visitors section

Unique visitors: A graph showing how many LinkedIn members visited your page. This removes duplicate visits to a single page such as when a member refreshes your page or leaves for a few minutes but returns later.
Visitor demographics: This is a graph showing a breakdown of who's visiting your page with the following demographics: Seniority, Industry, Function, Region, Company Size.

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Winning Hearts and Minds through the Inbox

With a **smart strategy**, email can be a vital communication channel for engaging your supporters and raising money.

Strategize

Establish objectives for your organization’s email strategy first. Your email communications are an extension of your program strategy and must be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound. The **Spitfire Strategies Smart Chart®** can help you think through these questions and incorporate better email practices into your overarching communication strategy.

Research

Research your members and segment them into different lists according to all the information you can gather: interest areas based on response rate, activism level, demographics, location and age. As you learn more about the interests of individual subscribers, you can craft increasingly relevant content. You should treat people who respond to 80 percent of your action alerts differently from those who respond to 10 percent. This personal touch deepens your relationship and engagement with your subscribers, making them more valuable advocates and supporters.

Craft

Subject Lines

The subject line is the most important part of your message. It determines if a subscriber opens or ignores your email. Clearly state what the email contains and make it brief, informative and personal. Make your **headlines** less than 50 characters and avoid spammy and overused words like “free,” “help,” “confirm” and “join.” Better word choices include “opportunity,” “apply” and “connect,” and asking questions can be a great way to get attention. Including a recipient’s first or last name in the subject line doesn’t significantly improve open rates, but using geolocation data to provide tailored information such as a city name, makes a difference. Make sure not to use ALL CAPS or too many punctuation marks. Include a call to action when necessary, but keep in mind that you’ll lose subscribers’ interest if urgency is overdone.

From Lines

Experiment with the From line to assess whether sending an email from staff members or simply your organization’s name encourage more people to open your emails. Send emails from staff members who your supporters recognize and trust, like your executive director, or

Body

Lead your email with the most compelling information and keep it succinct. Recipients will likely stop reading if they're not engaged from the start. Vary the types of emails by incorporating a call to action, relevant news and authentic stories. Include deadlines on your calls to action and end with next steps that stand out in the text and provide clear opportunities to volunteer, advocate, donate or attend pertinent events. Only include one call to action per email and repeat it once or twice in the email. Develop a content calendar to plan for key themes, events and calls to action that support your program or campaign strategies.

Design

To make your email easy to read, use bold headers, bulleted lists, and buttons, rather than hyperlinked text. Limit the number of fonts, text sizes and colors. Underline all text links. Use a template that is consistent with your brand and include compelling images or graphics that support your message.

Perform

Timing

Schedule emails when you know your readers are most likely to read them. Most email users prefer to open email before the work day and during lunch. Studies vary widely on the average email open rate and click-through rate for nonprofits. The **2014 M+R Benchmarks** study reported an average open rate of 13 percent and an average click-through rate of 2.9 percent for advocacy emails and 1.8 percent for email newsletters. **MailChimp** found an open rate of 25.12 percent and a click-through rate of 3.25 percent. Use your email analytics to learn your audiences' behavior and the best time of day to reach them. The highest open rate tends to be within the first hour of delivery but your list may perform differently. It's best to send no more than one email per week and no less than one per month, but your metrics will tell your list's story.

Listen, Test and Improve

Test the timing, frequency, tone and content of your emails to learn what content and messaging resonates with your audiences. Most email providers offer A/B testing, which involves sending one version of an email to a small segment of an email list and a second version to an equal number of subscribers to determine which version performs better. The winning email is then sent to the remaining portion of the list. You can do this with lists that are as small as a few thousand subscribers. Experiment with the subject length, sender and time or day of the week that you deliver your emails. You should check analytics reports after each email campaign to track open, click-throughand unsubscribe rates. Additionally, you can get direct feedback from your subscribers by conducting surveys.

Build Your List

Start growing your email list by inviting supporters to sign up through your website, social media channels, paid search and donor and volunteer forms. To make sharing easy and capture users on your social channels, include a "forward to a friend" link and your social media icons at the top of the page. After a supporter takes an action on your website (i.e. signs a petition or sends a letter to congress), redirect that supporter to a "tell a friend" page where they can share the same action with their friends through social media or email. You can pay for list acquisition services through companies like Change.org and Care2, which typically charge $1.75 per supporter that opts into your list. As you start to grow your list, be sure to follow **CAN-SPAM guidelines** to protect your reputation and email deliverability.

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Reaching your Audience in 160 Characters

If you are trying to reach communities of color or youth, you can't ignore mobile outreach. Studies show that these communities access the Internet and social media channels using their phones at high rates. But they aren't the only ones.

Audience Targeting

Most people, likely including your target audiences, typically have their phones with them for 18 hours each day. So it's no surprise that open rates for text messages range from 97-99 percent, compared to 13-25 percent for email. Higher open rates lead to higher action rates which is why mobile is worth considering for your organization.

As always, start by asking: who are your target audiences; where are they found and what do you want them to do? **Spitfire's Smart Chart®** can help you think through these questions and incorporate mobile into your overarching communication strategy.

Mobile Terminology

Sending mobile messages is immediate and allows an organization to rapidly respond to an issue and quickly mobilize supporters. Before you get started, it is important to understand a few terms when considering a mobile program.

Short code

This refers to the five or six digit number that people text to join an organization's text messaging list. In the image example below, **62227** is the short code. Short codes in the U.S. are administered by the Common Short Code Administration (CSCA). There are two main types of short codes, common short codes and shared short codes.

A common short code is registered to one organization, like NAACP's short code in the example to the left. In this particular case, the short code is a vanity code because it spells out NAACP (62227). An organization that has its own short code can create as many keywords – or words that a mobile phone user would text to the organization's short code to join their list – as they like to encourage their audience to join their mobile program. Common short codes are registered with the CSCA which charges $500-1000 lease fee each month ($500 for a random short code and $1000 for a vanity code).

A shared short code is a type of common short code but is typically registered to a mobile vendor and shared among the vendor's clients. While there are charges for the number of text messages an organization sends, this often saves the organization the monthly lease fee for the code. However, organizations are limited in the number of keywords they can set up since they share the same short code with others.

Keyword

This refers to the word that a mobile phone user would text to the organization's short code to join their list. In the example left, **LEGEND**, is the keyword. Keywords allow the organization to segment their list by the way or reason someone joined the list, which language they prefer or what issue they care about.

Rules of Engagement

Organizations should work with a mobile vendor, in the same way they do to manage their email list, in order to send text messages to their supporters. Unlike email however, mobile is regulated in different ways than a typical email program and it's important to understand these differences:

1. An organization cannot just add someone to their list if they have the person's cell phone number.
2. The user must opt-in by either texting a keyword to the organization's short code, or entering their cell phone number via a web form.
3. If the user joins via a website, they will be sent a welcome text message asking them to confirm that they do indeed want to join.
4. The first text message sent must include guidance on how the person can unsubscribe from the list.

Best Practices

Once you've registered for a short code, use these best practices:

- Avoid long periods of down time between text messages. Subscribers may forget they are on the list. Aim to send a text message to supporters weekly or biweekly but no more than once a week. As with any list, monitor you unsubscribes and action rates. Your supporters may want more or less messages. Every list is unique.
- Always identify the organization or campaign in the text message. The text message appears to be from a phone number in the subscriber's inbox. Identifying the organization in the message will remind them who the message is from.
- Make the messages interactive. Make sure you choose a vendor that allows your users to reply to messages so they don't feel like they are receiving messages from a machine.
- Integrate a sign-up button to join the mobile program on your website or any other online channel with a sign up form.
- Pitch your short code at events to capture the audience and ask them to join. The pitch to join should include a strong call to action instead of a simple "join us."

Ways to Use Mobile

There are a number of ways that an organization can use mobile.

Educational messages: Trivia is a good way of spurring engagement with the list. Send trivia questions to subscribers during down times when the list needs to receive a message and give them multiple choice answers to respond.
Calls to action: Ask list subscribers to make phone calls or sign a petition in support of an issue or campaign.
News/events: Send updates or promotional announcements about upcoming events, encouraging subscribers to attend. An organization can also quickly alert its network to breaking news relevant to subscribers.
Poll your supporters: Interactivity is important for mobile programs. Send a poll to supporters asking them what the most pressing need is in their communities or their opinion on a particular issue.

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Taking Advantage of Free Online Ads and More

Google's nonprofit program offers nonprofits $10,000/mo of free search engine ads. As a member of the program, nonprofits also get added benefits on their YouTube videos.

Google Ad Grants

Through Ad Grants, nonprofits can expand their reach, gain greater visibility and recruit supporters for free. It's important to note that while the ads are free, the space is competitive and they do require time to set up, monitor and optimize. Google ads appear when people enter the keywords you specify into Google's search engine. For example, if your nonprofit works on environmental issues in Dallas, Texas, you'd want to create a Google Ad that directs to your website when people search for keywords related to your organization. You could use keywords like "water quality organization" or "environmental pollution in Texas" and specify the location to Dallas, Texas depending on who you are trying to reach. Put yourself in your target audiences' shoes to think of relevant keywords they might be searching on Google.

Apply

To apply for both Google Ad Grants and the YouTube nonprofit tools, start by joining the **Google Nonprofits Program**. Nonprofits must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in order to access all of the tools within the Program. After you've done this, in order to enroll in the Google Ad Grants program, you must set up a **Google AdWords** account. Bypass the billing information and go through the steps below to set up your first Google AdWords campaign.

Set Up

Think of the Google AdWords term "campaigns" in the same way you would think of your offline campaigns. Your first Google AdWords campaign should promote your organization and link to your website. Other potential campaigns could promote one of your programs or an upcoming event, but you only need one campaign in order to be considered for a Google Ad Grant.

To set up your first campaign, click on "Campaign Settings" and follow these steps:

1. Select "Search Network Only." Name your campaign and select "Standard."
2. Un-check "Include search partners." Nonprofit grantees' ads are not allowed to show on sites other than Google's main search results.
3. Choose your location and language. Select where you want to show your ad and the language you want to display it in.
4. Set your daily budget. The daily maximum for a Google Ad Grant is $329. If you decide to create more than one campaign, the total of all of your campaign budgets will max out at $329 a day. The maximum cost-per-click (CPC) for a Google Ad Grant is $2.00. This CPC limit can be constraining for some organizations wanting to advertise their website with popular search terms or keywords that competitors are using because the CPC for those will likely be higher than $2.00.

Run

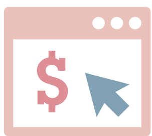
Once you are approved for a Google Ad Grant, you'll want to create a few ads that will appear on the top or right-hand side bar of a Google search for keywords that you specify. You can create as many ads as you want for a given campaign. This will help you experiment and identify the best combination of a headline and call to action. After you create a few ads, use the **Keywords Planner** tool to explore keyword options.

YouTube

With enrollment in the YouTube Nonprofit Program, you'll have access to more tools that will encourage your viewers to take action or donate while viewing your videos.

Apply

If you do not already have a YouTube channel and think YouTube will be a useful platform for your organization, **create a channel.** Next, enroll in the YouTube Nonprofit Program.



Get to Work

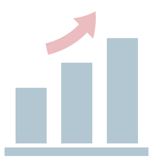
YouTube for Nonprofit allows you to add the following engagement tools:

Donate button: Add the Donate button to allow viewers to donate right from your YouTube videos.

Call-to-action overlays: Place a Call to Action on your videos to allow visitors to click to visit your website or to your donate page.

Live streaming: Stream video footage live onto your YouTube channel. This could be useful for events.

Video annotations: Use annotations or notes on your videos to encourage users to subscribe to your channel or click to visit your website.



Track

A little-known fact about YouTube is that all YouTube channels have access to **excellent analytics reports.** In the "View reports section," you can learn more about your viewers' demographics, how much of each video they are watching and what videos are adriving the most engagement.

Spitfire is here to help. Let us know if you need help or guidance on creating a Google AdWords campaign or help adding YouTube nonprofit functions to your videos. Please note however that we are not Google representatives or partners so we cannot answer questions as to why your organization may not have been accepted to the program.

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Creating a Social Media Policy

Setting Guidelines for your Staff and Communities Online

In this ever-changing landscape of new social media platforms, many organizations hesitate navigating the waters for fear they will lose control of the boat. It's important to set clear guidelines for your staff through an internal social media policy and for your community of supporters through an external social media comment policy so everyone is clear about their roles and expected behavior.

Establish a Team

A good social media policy should protect the organization while at the same time respect its staff. Think about who from your organization needs a seat at the table for this discussion. Ideally, members of your executive staff, communications or digital team, legal, finance and human resources all have a voice in the process. It's important that the team as a whole develop and then roll out the plan so everyone understands how decisions were made and buy in to the policy.

Formal or Informal?

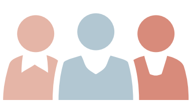
There are no set rules for what a policy should contain. The question is up to your organization. Here are some questions to consider:

- Should it be a very detailed description with examples of the type of posts that are okay and not okay to post online?
- Should it be a strategy to help others think through what's appropriate?
- Will it only govern the organization's social media channels or are you producing guidelines for your staff's personal networks as well.

If your organization is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, it is important to consult with your attorney about what is permissible for your staff to post on their personal channels using organizational computers and cellphones. Whether informal or formal, it's smart to have all staff members sign the policy saying they have read it and understand the repercussions if they do not follow it.

Make Decisions

Take a look at your organization's values and think about how those values play out online. This will help you decide the personality the organization adopts online, the tactics it uses to respond to positive, neutral and negative comments and other answers to necessary questions. Make sure to answer these questions:



- Who will have access to the organization's social media accounts?
- What happens when the person who used their email to create a social media account for the organization leaves? (Note: It's important to instruct creators of an organizational account to use their work email when setting up the account and to transfer ownership of the account to a current employee when they depart the organization)
- Who is responsible for researching, creating and posting content on social media?
- What is the appropriate tone for the organization's social media profiles?
- What is appropriate vs. inappropriate content for the organization's social media accounts? Pay close attention to the laws governing your organization's 501(c)(3) nonprofit status.
- What is appropriate vs. inappropriate content for staff members to share in regards to their work at the organization?

- Who is responsible for monitoring staff's social media accounts and their adherence to the policy? Is this a necessary activity?
- What are the consequences if staff members disobey the policy and who will enforce it?
- What is the organization's response strategy for negative comments about the organization or its leadership?
- What is the organization's strategy for responding to positive and neutral messages? (e.g. How will you promote these to your target audiences and networks?)
- What should the privacy and permissions policy be for sharing potentially sensitive information?
- Do you have permission to share photos of your events? Consider having photo permission slips at all events and don't post photos of children without their parents' written permission.
- How should others share and not share your content (e.g. Are reports to be shared? Do you have a copyright policy that needs to be included in this policy)
- Certain members of your staff and leadership may be influential offline and perhaps online. How can they contribute to an organization's success on social media? (e.g. Should staff be required to add the organization's social media links to their professional email signature? Should they be required to retweet the organization's tweets to their networks?)

Define the Rules for Your Community

Social media platforms allow us to communicate with each other and connect in real time. At the same time, because we aren't face to face, there is also a sense of anonymity that can result in people letting their emotions get the best of them. Establishing simple yet definitive guidelines for your supporters and opponents on each platform provides a way for you to share and exchange thoughts, ideas, images, and other content in a respectful way that fosters constructive dialogue.

Consider these sample points when drafting your rules and make it clear that you reserve the right to delete comments or restrict a user access to the page if they do not adhere to them. Be sure to publish this public policy on your channels so that you can reference it when and if you need to enforce it.

- Personal attacks are disruptive to healthy dialogue.
- Stereotypes are often divisive and offensive, and any such comment will be monitored closely.
- If comment threads are taken over by trolls, people who post comments specifically to start a fight, defame, divide, distract, or otherwise detract from the overall function of the community; we ask that the community refrain from responding.
- Avoid minimizing or denying the importance of comments/posts from others.
- Do not use this social media community for self-promotion.
- Please do not use the comments section to air complaints, whether about a post, a particular comment, or the moderation of our page.

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Sample Social Media Policy

This policy is meant to serve as a guide for you to create a unique policy for your organization. It is not meant to be copied and adopted, as every organization has its own needs and expectations of its staff. Use this to draft your own policy and have your organization's legal counsel review it. If your organization is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, it is especially important to consult with your attorney about what is permissible for your staff to post on their personal channels using organization-owned computers and phones as that aspect is not included in this sample policy.

(Your Organization Name) developed this social media policy to govern the publication of - and commentary on - social media by its employees. For the purposes of this policy, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation blogs, wikis, social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube and new tools as they emerge. This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the Internet.

(Your Organization Name) employees may publish or comment via social media in accordance with this policy. Employees are subject to this policy to the extent they identify themselves as a **(Your Organization Name)** employee.

Notwithstanding the previous section, this policy applies to all uses of social media, including personal, by **(Your Organization Name)** employees who use social media platforms on behalf of the company as their position with **(Your Organization Name)** would be well known within the community.

Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary. Employees should be aware that what they say is permanent.

When using social media, employees are required to follow the same ethical standards they would otherwise use when communicating about our work. All conduct standards stated in the employee handbook apply to any employee's use of social media.

Don't tell secrets

It's perfectly acceptable to talk about your work and have a dialog with the community, but it's not okay to publish confidential information. Confidential information includes things such as unpublished details of current projects, research, and comments shared in confidence during meetings within the organization or any coalition work.

Protect your own privacy

Set your privacy settings on social media platforms to allow anyone to see profile information similar to what can be accessed on the **(Your Organization Name)** website. Set other privacy settings that might allow others to post information or see information that is personal to limit access. Be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see.

Be honest

Do not blog anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names in any personal or organizational capacity. We believe in transparency and honesty. Use your real name and be clear about who you are. Nothing gains you notice in social media more than honesty - or dishonesty. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out. But also be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy. What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and also be cautious about disclosing personal details. If you cannot post something without being dishonest then you shouldn't be posting it in the first place.

Respect copyright laws

It is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others, including **(Your Organization Name)'s** own copyrights and brands. Never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and always attribute such work to the original author/source.

Respect your audience, (Your Organization Name), and your coworkers

The public in general, and **(Your Organization Name)'s** employees and partners, reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Don't say anything contradictory or in conflict with the **(Your Organization Name)** website. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully.

When using social media on behalf of **(Your Organization Name)**, employees must use caution when commenting on topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory - such as politics and religion.

In all social media outreach, employees should be respectful of diverse cultures and points of view (no ethnic slurs, offensive comments, defamatory comments, personal insults, etc.). Use your best judgment and be sure to make it clear that the views and opinions expressed are yours alone and do not represent the official views of **(Your Organization Name)**.

Controversial issues

If you see misrepresentations made about **(Your Organization Name)** in the media, you may point that out. Be sure to check with senior staff about it before responding. If you decide to respond, always do so with respect and with the facts. If you speak about others, make sure what you say is factual and that it does not disparage that party. Avoid arguments. Brawls may earn traffic, but nobody wins in the end. Don't try to settle scores or goad opposition or others into inflammatory debates. Make sure what you are saying is factually correct.

Be the first to respond to your own mistakes

If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so. If someone accuses you of posting something improper (such as their copyrighted material or a defamatory comment about them), deal with it quickly - better to remove it immediately to lessen the possibility of a legal action. If you make an error that has the potential to cause harm or embarrassment to **(Your Organization Name)** or its partners, please alert management, even if you have deleted or modified the post.

Think about consequences

Once again, it's all about judgment: using your blog to trash or embarrass **(Your Organization Name)**, our partners, or your co-workers, is dangerous and ill-advised and may lead to disciplinary action or termination.

Disclaimers

Many social media users include a prominent disclaimer saying who they work for, but that they're not speaking officially. This is good practice and is encouraged, but don't count on it to avoid trouble - it may not have much legal effect.

Wherever practical, you must use a disclaimer saying that while you work for **(Your Organization Name),** anything you publish is your personal opinion, and not necessarily the opinions of **(Your Organization Name)**.

The senior staff can provide you with applicable disclaimer language such as "All thoughts and opinions expressed here are my own," and assist with determining where and how to use that.

Don’t forget your day job

Make sure that activity on social media does not interfere with your job or commitments to projects.

Social media tips

The following tips are not mandatory, but will contribute to successful use of social media.

The best way to be interesting, stay out of trouble, and have fun is to write about what you know. Beware of joining a conversation online if you aren’t familiar with the topic. Don’t just join in for the sake of joining or because it is gaining traction or attention. Bring your perspective to the conversation and explain why it is relevant.

Quality matters. Use a spell-checker. If you’re not design-oriented, ask someone who is whether your blog looks decent, and take their advice on how to improve it.

The speed of being able to publish your thoughts is both a great feature and a great downfall of social media. The time to edit or reflect must be self-imposed. If in doubt over a post, or if something does not feel right, either let it sit and look at it again before publishing it, or ask someone else to look at it first.

When in doubt, ask. If you have any questions about what is appropriate, play it smart and check with a senior staff member before posting.

Enforcement

Policy violations will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination at the discretion of **(Your Organization Name)**.

Email **digital@spitfirestrategies.com** and we’ll send you a customizable social media policy template.

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SPARK CHANGE