



expanding economic opportunity

Online Communications Guidebook

Planning for Online Success:

A guidebook for effective online
engagement

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GENERAL ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS PHILOSOPHY

DON'T RELY ON YOUR AUDIENCE TO COME TO YOU

On a crowded web, organizations can't assume that their natural constituents will find them. It's vital that you bring your message to your audience, be it through social networks, marketing, or email content or video that is circulated among networks, and draws them into your web community.

THE INTERNET IS A TWO-WAY COMMUNICATIONS MEDIUM

The most common misconception of online communications strategies is the assumption that the Internet is a broadcast medium. For example, just because you think of something as a "bulk email" doesn't mean recipients won't reply; and a blog isn't really a "blog" if readers can't participate in a conversation by commenting. Online communication strategies are about building interactive relationships with you audience.

THE INTERNET IS A MULTICHANNEL MEDIUM

Because the web can support print, images, audio and video, you have the potential to create more interesting programming, which reaches different constituents in different ways according to their tastes.

PLANNING MATTERS

On the surface, the web is immediate. You submit a comment on a blog and it goes live to the world. Your followers see a message the instant you hit send on Twitter. You send an email and somebody opens it. But the reality is, it takes quite a bit of preparation and infrastructure development to use web communications channels effectively for rapid-response programs. Foresight and planning make it easier to act and react swiftly when the moment is right.

ONLINE AND OFFLINE ACTIVITIES SHOULD WORK HAND-IN-HAND

It is crucial to success for an organization to coordinate online and offline efforts to ensure they support and complement one another. For example, offline earned media should be channeled to drive participation on online programs; direct mail should be preceded or followed by email where it makes program sense; online programs should reference positive offline press; and so forth.

MEASURE WHENEVER POSSIBLES (THEN ADAPT AND TRY AGAIN)

Unlike more traditional advertising and marketing activities, much of what you do online can be measured. Traffic, click flow, open rate, ROI – all of it should be monitored and then appropriate changes should be made to improve subsequent performance. We encourage you to vigorously test messaging, graphics, layouts and more on an ongoing basis to determine what formula will best deliver on their objectives.

DO FEWER THINGS, BUT DO THEM BETTER

An anemic Facebook page or YouTube channel, or an empty online forum with tumbleweeds blowing down a deserted street, will online turn off potential supporters. Especially for smaller organizations with limited staff time, it's important to be honest about what you can afford to take on, and how you can creatively support a healthy, broad-spectrum program without making commitments you can't fulfill. Some things (such as basic social networking) may be possible to delegate to enthusiastic volunteers or junior staff.

PLANNING YOUR ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN

The internet is transforming the way nonprofits organize, energize and mobilize activists in support of a cause. It's a low-cost way to reach more activists quickly and inspire more of them to act. Using the internet for grassroots advocacy can be highly effective. Social media is about engaging with a loyal community of constituents who can help spread your message. Just like any other campaign, planning is essential to see positive results.

IDENTIFYING YOUR GOALS

Understanding what you want to accomplish is an important step in the planning process. Different communication tools have different strengths, so it is important that you define your goals to make sure you are being effective. Goals should be specific:

- Increase registration numbers for an event
- Disseminate information about an issue or topic
- Solicit donations for your organization
- Get 500 people to take action around a particular policy issues

DEFINING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Determining the specific audience you want to reach is an often overlooked step when it comes to social media, but it's a critical one. Not all communication tools reach the same audience so it is important to segment them out. Twitter may be the best way to reach journalists and like-minded organizations, where as you may be able to get more people to take action on a specific issue on Facebook.

LISTEN TO THE CONVERSATIONS ALREADY HAPPENING

Like all conversations, the key to social media begins and ends with listening. Social media is an ongoing conversation, so it is important to "listen" before jumping in. Listening is also a great way to start in the world of social media and develop an understanding of how it all works. Start by researching and "listening" to:

- Key public figures
- Mentions of your organization
- Popular advocacy sites around your issues
- News groups
- Blog comments
- Organizations like yours

By taking the time to find out what is already being talked about online about your organization or issues, you'll get a better understanding of how your organization is perceived, what online communities you should join, what targets and influencers you should engage and what key messages you should continue using – or maybe not use.

Tools like Google Alerts, Technorati and Twitter Search are helpful to see what is already being said around issues important to you. Feed readers like Netvibes and TweetDeck can pull all of your searches into a single interface known as a Listening Dashboard.

MEASURING SUCCESS

When it comes to anything you work on, if you can't measure it, it is impossible to know if it is working, if it is worth your time and what you can do to improve on it. Measuring the return on investment from your communication efforts can tell you a lot about who you are reaching and if your message is spreading.

ONLINE METRICS TO MEASURE

Views: Through measures like the pages views on a blog or your Facebook views, you can see how many people you're reaching, which can be useful if your primary goal is to spread a message. Expanding your audience is great, but if none of these people choose to follow your information, engage with you or act to help your organization, then increasing your reach may not be useful to the organization as a whole.

Followers: By looking at the number of Twitter followers, people who "like" your Facebook page or those who subscribe by RSS to your blog, you can see the size of your online supporter base. It's also the number of people you're able to readily get in touch with in order to spread a message or ask for help. But it doesn't matter if you have a million Facebook fans if none of them takes action for you.

Engagement: Comments on your blog, posts on your Facebook page and retweets on Twitter show how many people are involved in your cause. Counting the people who actively participate on one of your online channels confirms that you're saying the types of things people want to hear, and effectively encouraging them to be involved. These metrics provide a great way to track your progress.

MEASURING SUCCESS ON FACEBOOK

Success is relative. But there are several metrics by which success on Facebook can be measured. Having 100 supporters on Facebook is unlikely to equate to one or two donations in the same way that 100 supporters on an email list might, but it's a great way to help spread your message and get people to take action.

Facebook Insights is an analytics tool that allows page administrators to monitor total interactions, comments, wall posts and likes over time. Analytics can also be broken down by age and gender demographics. Facebook has also created a "post quality" metric that measures "the percentage of your fans that engage when you post content to your Page. It is calculated on a rolling seven-day basis. The number of stars depends on how your Post Quality compares to similar Pages."

MEASURING SUCCESS ON TWITTER

The first and easiest measurement would be the number of followers and the rate of growth over time. But an organization should also quantify success by tracking the number of Retweets and @ replies it receives – gauging the reach of the messages. There are many websites out there that will measure how many people you have reached through a single tweet like TweetReach. You should also use URL shorteners like bit.ly, which not only shorten a long URL so you can easily include the link in a Tweet while not using up too many characters but it also tracks how many people clicked on the link and who is doing the clicking.

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL NETWORKING

Social networking websites are the shiny new toys of online activism. The mainstream is paying attention - perhaps a little too much - and every organization wants to ensure they have a presence. Social networking pages can be incredibly effective if executed properly and with concrete objectives, such as:

- Increasing awareness of the organization and its issues.
- Increasing homepage and video views.
- Strengthening relationships with existing constituents.
- Potentially facilitate donations and email list growth, but has proven significantly more difficult in practice.

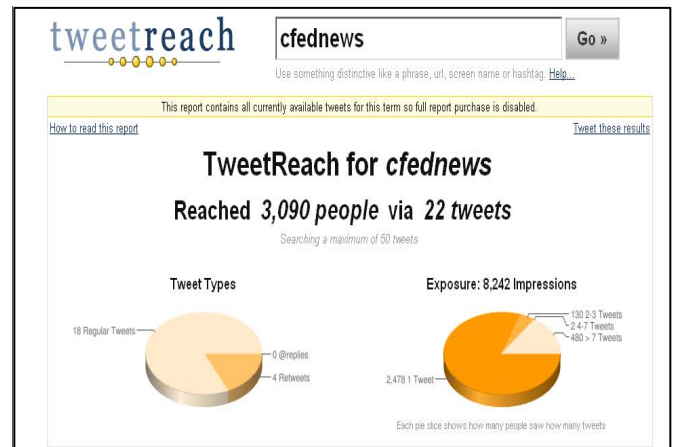
BASIC CONVENTIONS OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

- It's all about conversation and participation.
- The rules of each social network differ.
- Failure to follow the rules can lead members of the network ignoring or acting against your interest (even if they fundamentally believe in the cause).
- Exchanges are frequently briefer than in other media.

WHICH SOCIAL NETWORKS ARE WORTH PAYING ATTENTION TO?

Despite the proliferation of social networks, only a few truly matter. The gold standard social network is Facebook. Virtually every campaign, organization or corporation should have a presence on Facebook. Similarly, Twitter, due to its rapid growth and population with influential early adopters and activists, can be powerful tools for most organizations. YouTube and Flickr are only worth using if a client had a critical mass of compelling video and picture content.

There are also a handful of niche social networks that should be utilized when trying to reach specific audiences -particularly minority populations. Hi5, MiGente and MySpace Latino, (Latino) and AsianAve and Bebo and Black Planet (African Americans), QQ and Mixi (Asian Americans) can work well for very targeted campaigns.



FACEBOOK

Facebook is the premiere social networking site in the United States. It receives the most page views and traffic. It also has the most active users. It is useful for increased feedback and discussion; driving traffic to your website and spreading information and getting people to take action.

Facebook has more than 500 million active users with 50% logging in to Facebook any given day. The average user is connected to 80 community pages, groups and events, and creates 90 pieces of content each month. In the U.S., while young adults (18-25) lead the way with a combined 27 million users, the 26-34 group is close behind with 21 million users. There are 18 million people over the age of 45 active on Facebook.

Fan Pages

Facebook “fan pages” are the best way for organizations to reach their target audience. They are better than group and cause page for a variety of reasons, but primarily because the feed news items into other users’ news feeds, spreading their reach. The news feed is the first thing that Facebook users see when they log in and it’s the most consumed type of content on the platform.

The main difference between a Facebook fan page and a personal page include:

- Multiple users can administrate a fan page while only one user (email address) can manage a personal profile.
- Fan pages cannot send out messages to Facebook inboxes. However, fan pages can send out updates, which go to a subsection of the inbox, but this is a largely ineffective means of communications.
- Pages have fans, personal profiles have friends.

Facebook allows you to set up a profile, and post updates, links, conversations, events, photos, videos, petitions or even collect donations online. Users who choose to “like” your organization see updates without needing to navigate to your page and can get involved in discussions with other supporters. It’s particularly good at increasing the level of feedback and discussion you have with supports, driving traffic to your website and attracting people to specific events. It’s likely to take two-to-four hours a week to manage your Facebook account.

TWITTER

Twitter is a conversational social network where each individual message is limited to 140 characters or less - about the same amount of space in a standard text message. These individual posts are known as “tweets” and collectively can be referred to as microblogging. Twitter is one of the fastest growing social networks in the world with an average of 370,000 new sign-ups per day.

Twitter is seeing 90 million tweets per day with 25% of those tweets containing links. Recent estimates say that one in ten Internet users utilize Twitter. Similarly, one in five 18-34 year old is already on the site. Twitter users are predominantly young and educated. Its user base contains thought leaders, journalist and others on the cutting edge of technology. However, as the popularity of the social networking website grows, the demographics are coming more inline with the demographics of the Internet as a whole.

People can choose to “follow” your tweets, and if they particularly like one they can “retweet” it (post it again so their own followers see it), potentially exponentially increasing your audience. Twitter is particularly good for connecting with like-minded organizations and the media, asking questions and providing very frequent updates. Expect to devote about two hours a week to manage your twitter feed.

BLOGS

Blogs are an online site where one or more people post fairly frequent updates about what’s going on in the organization, told from a personal perspective. They can be particularly useful to showcase your organization’s expertise, educate people on a particular topic, engaging people with stories of your work or promoting resources on your website. Expect a relatively skilled writer to spend three to eight hours per week updating a blog.

Blogs are useful to publicize your expertise; promote your cause or educate people; tell stories about your day-to-day work; engage people in your decisions or work; promote your website and online information.

Blogs can be helpful if you have staff who can eloquently and relatively frequently advocate for your cause, tell stories about how you’re serving your mission on a day to day basis.

Typically blogs are updated at least once a week and require about three hours a week. Those with more active successful blogs devoted four to eight hours per week.

BEST PRACTICES: HOW TO WRITE ONLINE CONTENT

SIMPLIFY

All writing must be concise and easy to understand. Remember, this is text for the web, not for a newspaper or a magazine. People have fickle attention spans online and we need to do everything we can to capture and hold their attention.

- Break up long sentences.
- Write for the masses and avoid five-dollar words like “bifurcate.”

KEEP PARAGRAPHS BRIEF

On the web, even one sentence is an adequate paragraph length. Use bullets and numbered lists if you’re describing something with multiple facets, steps, etc. Divide posts into sections with unique titles. These titles should clearly describe the content that follows. Remember, people scanning the page will use these titles as guideposts and it may be the only content they read. Make sure they’re working to advance your message.

PUT TIME AND EFFORT INTO PRESENTING STATIC CONTENT.

Static content is the text on your site that rarely changes. Generally, this is your “about us” section, policy pages and so on. Many organizations make the mistake of dumping or cutting and pasting content onto these pages. This can be a huge misstep. It is crucial this content is as clear, concise and web-friendly as possible. It should also be engaging.

- Lay out policy in digestible piece: let bullet points do the heavy lifting.
- Always have an ask: learn more, contribute to the Annual fund, forward this page to a friend, and so on
- Multimedia is good. Liven up these pages with videos about your organization.

USE BLOCK QUOTES

Quotes over a sentence should always be set in block quotes. Presumably, these quotes will contain important information. Setting them apart will make it easier for visitors to read and more likely to draw their attention.

MAKE A SPECIFIC ASK AND EARN IT

Quality web content works towards building a community of supporters and provides them multiple opportunities to act. It should spur people to action whenever possible, whether it is signing up, forwarding content, donating, or volunteering. Earn each ask by providing inspiring content that builds up to the logical conclusion of participation. Asks generally fail when they’re unearned. In fact they can be annoying and turn off people from content.

EXPLAINING AN ASK WILL YIELD POTENTIAL RESULTS

Be explicit and tell visitors how their involvement will directly aid the cause of your organization.

USE HYPERLINKS AND LINK TO ACTION WORDS

Link to relevant sites and cited web content when possible, even if it’s your own content, but do so within reason. Hyperlinks should be gems or gifts to visitors to your site. These links should enhance their Internet experience and provide further reading if you believe something will pique their interest. Keep your hyperlinks short, make sure they’re obvious and link action words when possible.

LINK TO STATIC CONTENT ON INTERNAL PAGES OF THE SITE.

These pages should contain all the vital information about your organization and your cause. It’s important the website directs people to these pages whenever appropriate.

THE INTERNET IS A MULTIMEDIA EXPERIENCE, PERIOD.

It's not always enough to link to relevant information. Embedding videos and photos will create a richer experience for Web users. This will also keep users on your site rather sending them elsewhere to see what you're talking about. Writing about an event, embed a Flickr photo stream so visitors can browse snapshots from the evening. Just got a mention on television, great, now embed the video on your blog or news feed. Think of embedding as show-don't tell for 2.0 content.

TELL PERSONAL STORIES WHILE CONTINUING TO EDUCATE AND ADVANCE THE CAUSE.

In our experience, there is no more powerful and effective way to illicit action than through personal stories. No matter the organization or cause, you should be able to tell personal stories. Look for supporters, people working on the frontlines, anyone who can provide an opportunity to connect on a personal level to your work. Then use this content to drive visitors to sign up to learn more, donate, sign a petition, share their story and so on.

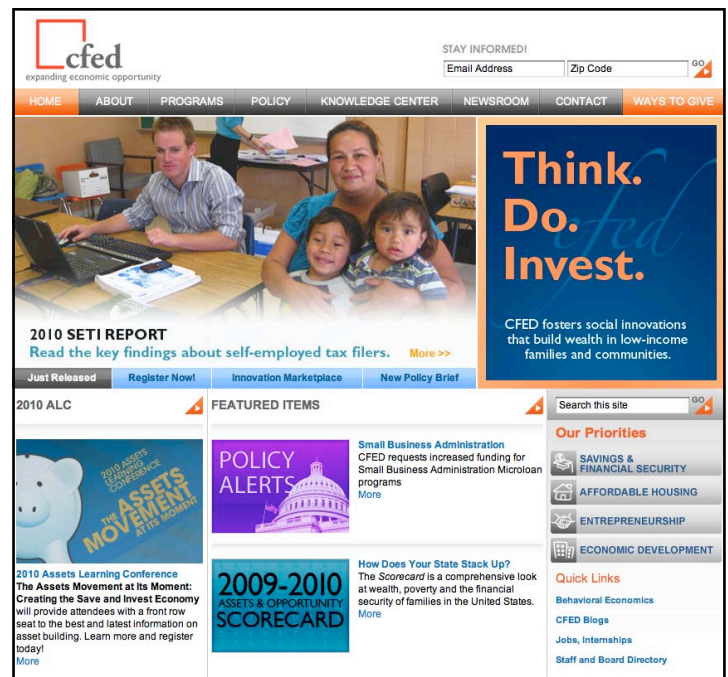
BE MINDFUL OF F-SHAPE READING PATTERNS.

Generally, users browsing web pages scan content, paying closest attention to the top content then quickly working their way to the bottom of a page. If they're reading like this, organizations should post content accordingly.

- Frontload the top two paragraphs or, in newspaper speak, don't bury the lead. It is crucial the top two paragraphs contain all the key information to be conveyed by a content page, blog entry, events page, etc.
- Don't expect a close reading of your content.
- Start titles, subheads, paragraphs and bullets with informative words. For instance:
 - Not recommended subtitle: A great and exciting Immigration Reform proposal.
 - Better subtitle: Immigration Reform proposal promises to be great.

USE NUMERALS.

Rather than spelling numbers out (five), numerals (5) are more apt to grab the attention of visitors to your site. Numerals represent facts, dates or rankings, and visitors are generally seeking those out.



BEST PRACTICES: EMAIL CAMPAIGNS

Emails enhance what you're doing elsewhere online – and offline. Email, e-blasts and e-newsletters are quick, cost-effective communication tools to your supporters that helps you spread your message, announce breaking news, events and new reports, activate and empower your members, and raise money.

WHY PLAN YOUR EMAILS

- To make them part of a larger campaign, such an annual drive, lead-up to an event or policy initiative
- To ensure you are reaching the right audience
- To have more time to write better emails
- To have time for production, video, content, etc. to make better content
- To ensure that you have consistent messaging throughout all your communications

PLANNING

First Question

What is your organization trying to accomplish?

- List growth?
- Fundraising?
- Driving a news story?
- User generated content?
- Events?

Third Question

What is your organization trying to accomplish/announce?

- Event's (speakers, conferences, dinners).
- Reports
- Videos, ads, other offline materials.
- Policy success

Second Question

What are your resources?

- Email list?
- Friendly bloggers?
- Allied organizations?
- Video capabilities?
- Other tech abilities?

Fourth Question

Is this time specific?

- Are there deadlines you must meet?
- Hearings?
- Delivery date?

EVALUATION

- What was successful?
- What didn't work?
- What emails worked best?
- What would you have done differently?
- What goals did you achieve?
- What goals did you throw out the window?
- How did your campaign plan change along the way?

BEST PRACTICES: WRITING AND SENDING SUCCESSFUL EMAILS

A FEW KEY PRINCIPLES

- Email is part of a communications strategy.
- Every email is part of a larger conversation, narrative.
- Email is results driven.
- Even if you're not a campaign, you can write "campaign" emails.

SO HOW OFTEN SHOULD ORGANIZATIONS SEND EMAILS?

There's no such thing as too much email, just too much bad email. You do want to make sure you are keeping in touch with your constituency on a regular basis, however if you send too many emails, you risk people unsubscribing from your email lists. A good balance would be somewhere in between two emails a week to once a month.

EMAIL BEST PRACTICES

Keep it short. People don't want to read an essay – they are skimming what you are writing

Think about your subject. This is the most important part of your email. Be concise, grab attention and be creative.

Include only one "ask" per email. If you ask people to do too many things, they'll be less likely to do any of them. Every email should have one, and only one, request of the recipient – make a donation or attend an event – not both.

Include only one link per email, directing people to answer your "ask." Because each email should only have one "ask," that means each email should include only one link - to the landing page where recipients can do whatever the email is asking them to do. Insert the link two or three times throughout the body of the email so people will have many opportunities to click.

Keep it conversational. You don't send formal letters to your friends or coworkers by email, do you? Use voices and personalities in your email to start a dialogue with supporters.

Get to the point quickly. Don't bury the main point of your email halfway down the body of the email. The opening paragraph or two should be a way to hook the reader and draw them in. Then the email should go straight into the "ask." Your reader's time and attention is limited, and you may lose them if you take too long getting to the point.

Use a call-out box to make it easy for people to take action without reading the entire email. The call-out box – on the right side of the body of the email – should sum up the request you're making in the email. It should include a colorful, prominent button saying "Take Action: Send a letter to your Senator" or "George Lopez wants you to watch this video" (or whatever your desired response is).

Make it personal. The most successful emails – ones that prompt people to donate or take action – are the ones that engage readers on a personal level, inspiring an emotional response that prompts them to act. That means emails should be informational, use colloquial language and focus on the people/cause the reader will help if they take action. A person, not an organization, should always sign emails.

Make it specific. You're trying to paint a picture for the reader of why it's so important that they help. To make that picture easier to see, include as many tangible details and example as you can to describe the impact your reader can have by taking action. For example, "Each dollar you donate goes directly into books for children in our nursery school." or "Seats are limited for the conference, reserve yours today."

If possible, tell the story of a real person. It's an easy way to forge that personal connection and give people a sense of impact they can have by helping.

Invoke a sense of urgency when you can. People will be more compelled to act immediately – and click on that button to make a donation now, rather than making a mental note to do it later and potentially forgetting – if you make the case that time is of the essence. If you don't have an organic deadline you can play up, you can create one with a monthly or quarterly "donation goal" or contest with a firm deadline.

Have a goal. If you can create a goal for your fundraising or action drive that people can help meet, it can help create a sense of urgency and give readers a sense of the tangible impact they make by taking action. It can also inspire people to participate by making them feel that they're part of a larger movement.

BASIC STRUCTURE OF AN EMAIL

1ST Sentence/Paragraph

- Try to keep it to one sentence – one line, when possible.
- Sample: "We can't thank you enough for participating in our mission to find the Jewish Community Heroes near you. With nearly 300,000 votes cast so far, we've been overwhelmed by the tremendous response!"

2ND Sentence/Paragraph: Summary of why you're sending the email

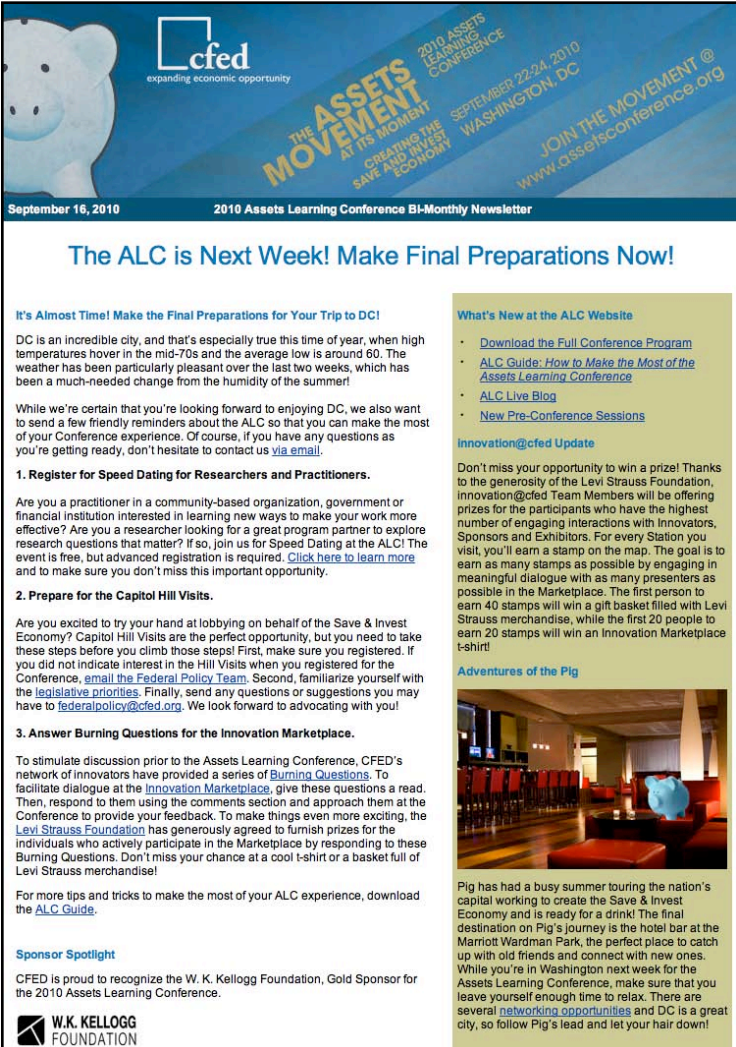
- Don't include too many details, facts, quotes, etc - that's what the rest of the email is for.
- Sample:
- "Will you forward this video to your friends and help us reach 350,000 votes cast by next week?"

3RD - 4TH Paragraph: Take Action

- Explain what you want people to do.
- Link to the action url [above the fold].

Links

- Links should be stand-alone links (not as part of another paragraph).
- Should you use hyperlink text to written-out url's? It depends – use hyperlinked text when you're using sloppy looking or long links.
- Don't bold tons of random text.
- Don't just use pictures and graphics as the only links; always have a link in the text of the email.



The ALC is Next Week! Make Final Preparations Now!

It's Almost Time! Make the Final Preparations for Your Trip to DC!

DC is an incredible city, and that's especially true this time of year, when high temperatures hover in the mid-70s and the average low is around 60. The weather has been particularly pleasant over the last two weeks, which has been a much-needed change from the humidity of the summer!

While we're certain that you're looking forward to enjoying DC, we also want to send a few friendly reminders about the ALC so that you can make the most of your Conference experience. Of course, if you have any questions as you're getting ready, don't hesitate to contact us [via email](#).

- 1. Register for Speed Dating for Researchers and Practitioners.**
Are you a practitioner in a community-based organization, government or financial institution interested in learning new ways to make your work more effective? Are you a researcher looking for a great program partner to explore research questions that matter? If so, join us for Speed Dating at the ALC! The event is free, but advanced registration is required. [Click here to learn more](#) and to make sure you don't miss this important opportunity.
- 2. Prepare for the Capitol Hill Visits.**
Are you excited to try your hand at lobbying on behalf of the Save & Invest Economy? Capitol Hill Visits are the perfect opportunity, but you need to take these steps before you climb those steps! First, make sure you registered. If you did not indicate interest in the Hill Visits when you registered for the Conference, [email the Federal Policy Team](#). Second, familiarize yourself with the [legislative priorities](#). Finally, send any questions or suggestions you may have to federalpolicy@cfed.org. We look forward to advocating with you!
- 3. Answer Burning Questions for the Innovation Marketplace.**
To stimulate discussion prior to the Assets Learning Conference, CFED's network of innovators have provided a series of [Burning Questions](#). To facilitate dialogue at the [Innovation Marketplace](#), give these questions a read. Then, respond to them using the comments section and approach them at the Conference to provide your feedback. To make things even more exciting, the [Levi Strauss Foundation](#) has generously agreed to furnish prizes for the individuals who actively participate in the Marketplace by responding to these Burning Questions. Don't miss your chance at a cool t-shirt or a basket full of Levi Strauss merchandise!

For more tips and tricks to make the most of your ALC experience, download the [ALC Guide](#).

Sponsor Spotlight

CFED is proud to recognize the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, Gold Sponsor for the 2010 Assets Learning Conference.

W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION

What's New at the ALC Website

- [Download the Full Conference Program](#)
- [ALC Guide: How to Make the Most of the Assets Learning Conference](#)
- [ALC Live Blog](#)
- [New Pre-Conference Sessions](#)

Innovation@cfed Update

Don't miss your opportunity to win a prize! Thanks to the generosity of the Levi Strauss Foundation, Innovation@cfed Team Members will be offering prizes for the participants who have the highest number of engaging interactions with Innovators, Sponsors and Exhibitors. For every Station you visit, you'll earn a stamp on the map. The goal is to earn as many stamps as possible by engaging in meaningful dialogue with as many presenters as possible in the Marketplace. The first person to earn 40 stamps will win a gift basket filled with Levi Strauss merchandise, while the first 20 people to earn 20 stamps will win an Innovation Marketplace t-shirt.

Adventures of the Pig

Pig has had a busy summer touring the nation's capital working to create the Save & Invest Economy and is ready for a drink! The final destination on Pig's journey is the hotel bar at the Marriott Wardman Park, the perfect place to catch up with old friends and connect with new ones. While you're in Washington next week for the Assets Learning Conference, make sure that you leave yourself enough time to relax. There are several [networking opportunities](#) and DC is a great city, so follow Pig's lead and let your hair down!

BEST PRACTICES: GROWING YOUR EMAIL LIST

So you're sold on the idea of communicating with your supporters via email? But, sending the emails and creating the content is only half of the battle – first you need a list of people to receive and read it.

Always have growing your email list in mind. You will undoubtedly have opportunities to grow your list in your everyday activities. The successful way to proceed is to layer in an online and list growth element to everything you currently do to maximize sign ups from your work. Here are some straightforward suggestions on ways to keep your email list growing.

ON YOUR WEBSITE

- **Make signing up easy.** Put your sign-up form in your website template, so it appears on every single page. The best place is where it can be seen easily – top right hand corner above the fold of the page.
- **Create incentives for supporters to join.** Offer special downloads, videos, access to events, etc. to people on your email list. People always like to feel they are getting something special that is not open to everyone, so think about offering them content and opportunities that only you can offer.
- **Ask your list what they think when they join your email list.** Why did they join? What interest them about your organization? Where did they hear about you? Chances are if you get a lot of signups from one channel – e.g. a blogger who mentions your organization – then you will be able to think of ways to maximize that return through-out program of engagement and/or appropriately targeted advertising.
- **Splash pages drive sign ups.** Get a well designed splash page which draws visitors' attention to an important message such as an approaching deadline, critical update, latest release, news, slogan etc. but most importantly draws visitors to sign up for your email list or get involved in your latest campaign. A word of warning on this: do make it straightforward for visitors to navigate to the main site so you don't lose them and cookie them to ensure they can bypass the splash page next time they come to your site.

IN YOUR EMAIL CAMPAIGNS

- **Offer great content.** Fairly straightforward and obvious - nothing will work better to ensure your current list does not unsubscribe.
- **Put your list to work.** If your current list enjoys getting your emails then the chances are their friends, family and work colleagues will too. If you have the "tell-a-friend" functionality on your site, then regularly ask your email list to ask their friends to join the list. Or ask readers to forward your email to their friends - and be sure to include a link to your sign-up form in each email so those friends can sign-up directly.
- **Respect all unsubscribers.** It's better to lose a subscriber than to have that person report you as a spammer.
- **Put a link in your sign-up form in your organization's personal email signatures.**
- **Try partner sends from allied organizations.** Most organizations do not exist in a silo; they co-operate and partner with allied politicians, community groups and other similar minded organizations. The same people you would consider partnering with on a report or event are people who should be asked to send an email on your behalf.

Here's how it works: your partner organizations will send an email, from their normal email sender, saying "I support this organization's petition – and you should too. Take action now." Please note: partner sends do not mean stealing email lists. They mean encouraging people to opt-in to receive another organization's email.

COLLECTING EMAIL ADDRESS OFFLINE

- **Use online forms at events**, which require people to sign up using their email address. It is important to have a plan in place to collect email address at all events, then get that data entered online as quickly as possible. Following up with someone online days after he or she has attended an event, rather than weeks or months later when they've lost the energy and excitement around the event, will ensure a stronger email list.
- **Audit all of your paper forms**. Make sure you are asking for an email address wherever you would ask for a phone number or mailing address.
- **Collect business cards** when you make presentations. Get in the habit of regularly email supporters after you meet them asking if they would like to receive information from your organization.

SOCIAL NETWORKING

- **Facebook**. Social networking is a tricky way to build an email list. On Facebook, in particular, most people who are on Facebook want to stay on Facebook. People may be willing to join a group on the website, but getting them to leave the site to sign a petition is more difficult. That said, those that are willing to leave Facebook to sign up to your email list will be a valuable member.
- **Twitter**. The recent emergence of Twitter has changed the impact of social networking on list building – but the evidence is still coming in. Twitter is extremely useful for spreading links and attempts should always be made to encourage people who took action on the website to tell their friends about it on Twitter.

BEWARE BUYING/SELLING/STEALING LISTS

- People won't have asked to receive your emails, so their response rates will be low. It is better to have an email list of 10,000 who organically joined themselves and always take action, rather than a stolen email list of 100,000 people who never do anything.
- As people won't know how they got on your email list, they're very likely to mark your emails as spam. If an email provider receives too many spam complaints, they're likely to blacklist your emails from going out to anyone – which means you're being blocked from talking to both your stolen list and your organic list.
- Stealing list can be illegal.

BEST PRACTICES: COMMUNICATING WITH SMALL DONORS

RECOGNIZE THAT ONLINE OUTREACH HAS TREMENDOUS BENEFITS

- The Internet provides another medium to connect with supporters – and their wallets.
- Empowers members to take ownership of your campaign or cause.
- Helps you paint a more vivid picture of why you need the money – and what you want to do with it.
- Online content and emails offer greater opportunities for testing messages and quick turnaround for performance data.
- Experimenting with messaging, graphics and links online and in email has a relatively low opportunity cost compared to direct mailing or traditional forms of outreach.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE?

- A good story – a compelling ask
- A clean website – easy to use donation and signup forms
- The foresight and planning to have the infrastructure in place to quickly capitalize on a favorable break – fact sheets and media-friendly resources posted online, multiple canned emails written to address multiple outcomes, etc.

SEGMENT YOUR ASK

Don't send everyone the same email. Segment based on:

- Interest
- Donors vs. non-donors
- Highest previous contribution

PLAY WELL WITH OTHERS

Pulling together the strategists in the development, communications and online teams can elevate your efforts and dramatically improve your strategy. Online donor strategies should not stand alone. Working closely with communications and outreach teams gets you:

- Great stories to tell.
- Opportunities to build your list: partner with other non-profits, use celebrity surrogates to participate in outreach.
- Reinforced and amplified messaging and no conflicting messages.
- Multiple opportunities for donors to give both online and offline.

DON'T ASK FOR MILLIONS

- One time donors are far more likely to become repeat donors. Just get them in the door.
- When you do get them in the door, the optimum time to ask them to donate again is within 6 weeks.
- Try asking for \$25 and if they give \$25, next time ask for \$45.
- If someone has come to an event and is yet to donate, send them a welcome email, some information about your organization and within 4-6 weeks, offer them their first opportunity to donate.

BE TRANSPARENT

Donors want to know: why do you need my money? Why does your organization need more than every other group who asks? And remember: You are in a highly competitive market.

- Tell donors what you do – and what you want to do.
- Tell them what it's going to cost.
- Let them help you decide how to spend the money.

GOALS AND DEADLINES WORK

- Even if it is an internal goal or deadline, let constituents on your lists believe they're participating on a well-defined task with a clear end.
- Goals and targets lend a campaign a sense of urgency, prompt action and provide a natural email arc or reason to reach out to constituents.
- Organizations don't have to use a dollar amounts to generate dollar amounts. Why not kill two birds with one stone? Ask supporters to grow the list and raise money. For instance, the campaign might ask constituents to bring 1,000 new donors into the ranks in a three-month period.
- Set realistic goals and deadlines. Neither received the goal, but which sounds better?

NEW SUPPORTERS DONATE

The longer someone is on your list, the less likely they are to donate.

- Keep building your list: petitions, outreach, offline event, online advertising and so on.
- Get offline supporters on your list as soon as possible.

CLEAN YOUR WEBSITE

Many people do bad things to their sites:

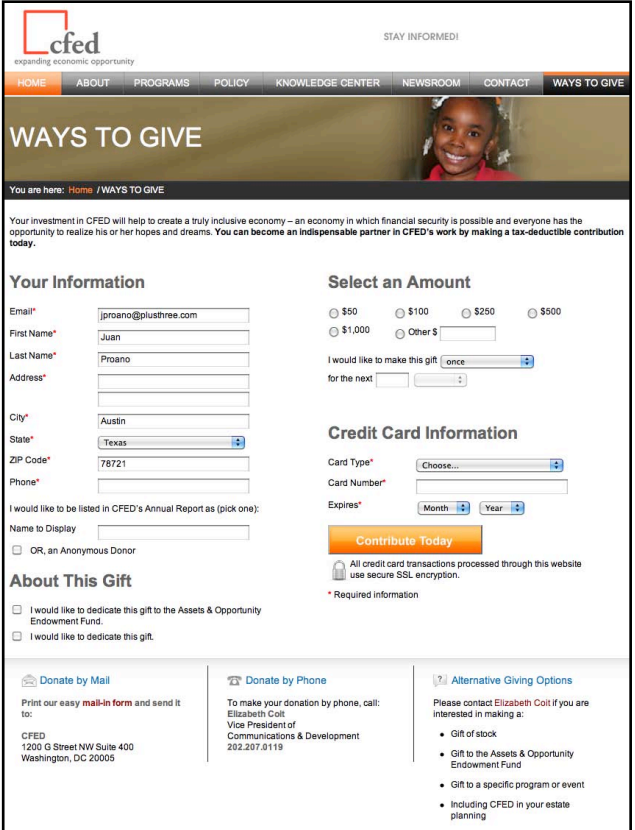
- Clutter the site with technology: videos, buttons, flash graphics
- Design in isolation.
- Misuse social networking tools.
- Make it difficult to find out how to donate.

EVERY ORGANIZATION HOME PAGE SHOULD HAVE THREE THINGS

- An email sign up form.
- A BIG donation button.
- Compelling video or content that tells your story.

EVERY DONATE PAGE SHOULD BE

- Simple and clean.
- Straight forward and concise.
- As few steps as possible to complete.



STAY INFORMED!

HOME ABOUT PROGRAMS POLICY KNOWLEDGE CENTER NEWSROOM CONTACT WAYS TO GIVE

WAYS TO GIVE

You are here: [Home](#) / [WAYS TO GIVE](#)

Your investment in CFED will help to create a truly inclusive economy – an economy in which financial security is possible and everyone has the opportunity to realize his or her hopes and dreams. You can become an indispensable partner in CFED's work by making a tax-deductible contribution today.

Your Information

Email*

First Name*

Last Name*

Address*

City*

State*

ZIP Code*

Phone*

I would like to be listed in CFED's Annual Report as (pick one):

Name to Display

OR, an Anonymous Donor

Select an Amount

\$50
 \$100
 \$250
 \$500
 \$1,000
 Other \$

I would like to make this gift: for the next month(s)

Credit Card Information

Card Type*

Card Number*

Expires*

[Contribute Today](#)

All credit card transactions processed through this website use secure SSL encryption.

* Required information

About This Gift

I would like to dedicate this gift to the Assets & Opportunity Endowment Fund.

I would like to dedicate this gift.

Donate by Mail

Print our easy [mail-in form](#) and send it to:

CFED
1200 G Street NW Suite 400
Washington, DC 20005

Donate by Phone

To make your donation by phone, call: Elizabeth Coit
Vice President of Communications & Development
202.297.6119

Alternative Giving Options

Please contact Elizabeth Coit if you are interested in making a:

- Gift of stock
- Gift to the Assets & Opportunity Endowment Fund
- Gift to a specific program or event
- Including CFED in your estate planning

BEST PRACTICES: FACEBOOK

WHAT TYPE OF CONTENT SHOULD BE ON A FAN PAGE?

A Facebook fan page should aim to succinctly tell people visiting the page the basics of the organization - similar to an “about” page on a website. The most effective fan pages conform to the norms of personal Facebook profiles. This means that posts to Facebook walls shouldn’t exceed more than about 200 characters. Organizations should also post a rich array of content: pictures, invitations to events, interesting news stories about the organization, blog posts, compelling videos and status updates.

An effective fan page is not an apparatus for posting press releases or a static profile an organization can create and then walk away from if they want to see any positive results. It is important to provide content that fans find useful and intriguing.

External news stories and organization-created blog posts are a good option, especially when there is little else to post, but over reliance on such sources of content will cause fans to pay less attention to the client’s news feed items.

Perhaps most important, organizations need to directly engage with its audience on Facebook fan pages. At the most basic level, this means responding when users post on their wall. However, this also means posting interesting status updates that engage fans.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD NEW CONTENT BE POSTED?

Staff-time permitting, content should ideally be posted at least once per day and, in general, no more than five times per day. However, during important events – during critical advocacy campaigns for instance – organizations should update their Facebook page as frequently as possible with quality content. Posting for the sake of posting is strongly discouraged.

Facebook page updates (the equivalent of messages – as opposed to status updates) aren’t particularly useful so organizations shouldn’t devote a significant amount of time to developing and sending them. Emails sent out to an organization’s list can be repurposed as an update, but in almost every other circumstance, status updates should be used over updates. At most, updates shouldn’t be sent more than once every week.

HOW DO YOU INCREASE NUMBER OF FANS?

Compelling content. As with any venture on the web, the best way to attract more users to a site is by providing quality content visitors find interesting and useful. This can lead to a magnifying or echo effect: Motivated fans will recommend or share an organization’s content, which will then populate their friend’s news feeds while expanding the organizations reach. Specific ways to increase traffic to Facebook fan pages include:

- Promote mentioning, linking and encouraging users to follow the fan page through other media – websites, Twitter, email campaigns, etc.
- Interact: acknowledge fans when they write on organization’s wall by writing on the fan’s personal wall.
- Privilege fans: hold a contest via Facebook only for fans of the organization or provide similar fan page–only content.
- Outreach: reach out to and coordinate with administrators of related fan groups.
- Keep outreach informal, similar to how the organization would conduct blog outreach.
- Quid pro quo: All social networking relationships are give and take – build goodwill and help other organizations and fans when possible.
- Don’t spam: Facebook will call your account in question if you send out a lot of unsolicited messages.

GETTING FANS TO TAKE ACTION OUTSIDE OF FACEBOOK

Ultimately, the organization's most effective actions are going to be hosted on their own website, not on a social networking page. The most effective asks on Facebook require adapting to Facebook's norms, just as with content creation. Posting a status update with a request for action accompanied by a hyperlink to an external page can be effective. It is important, however, not to overuse fans and ask too much of them (remember it's give and take, and an organization's fan page is providing a service for the fans first and foremost). The vast majority of an organization's content must satisfy users – valued insights helpful links, making fans feel informed, etc. – before they see a return on their investment: signing a petition, signing up for an email list, participating in asks, etc.



The screenshot shows the CFED Facebook page interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Profile', and 'Account'. The main content area features several posts from CFED and other users. A prominent post from CFED discusses the 2010 Assets Learning Conference, mentioning that it is kicking off a week and asking for attendees. Another post shares a link to a news article about student-run credit unions. Comments on these posts include expressions of excitement and interest. The right sidebar contains advertisements for 'Texans Click on Kirk' and 'American Latino Museum'. The left sidebar provides information about CFED, including its founding year (1979), a list of people who like the page, and a list of favorite pages.



National Community Tax Coalition Treasury announces new pilot initiative that will allow taxpayers to directly deposit their tax refunds into low-cost bank accounts!

2010-9-2-10-15-53-3134: Treasury Announces New Pilot to Help Deliver Safe, Low-Cost Financial Account

www.ustreas.gov
 WASHINGTON Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury announced that it will launch a new pilot program to help capitalize on tax refund season as an opportunity to provide unbanked and underbanked Americans with access to safe, low-cost financial accounts. This pilot will deliver targeted offers t...

September 2 at 4:50pm · Comment · Unlike · Share · Report

You, Lucy Mullany and 3 others like this.

Write a comment...

BEST PRACTICES: TWITTER

TERMINOLOGY

Tweet: A message of 140 characters or less

Follower: A person who subscribes to your Twitter feed

@ Reply: A public response to another twitter users (@cfednews)

Direct Message: A private message than can only be sent between mutual followers (d cfednews)

Hashtags: A tag that allows for easy searching and organization of tweets on one topic (#alc2010)

Retweet: Repeating what another twitter user tweeted, generally to show you agree, support or care to comment on a view point. Twitter user types “RT” for “Re-tweet” and “@ <screen name of Twitter account they’re quoting>” then pastes the tweet into their RT @cfednews <<QUOTED TEXT>>

HOW TO MANAGE YOUR TWITTER FEED

As with other social networks, organizations must commit to adapting to the social principles of Twitter in order to have a successful presence. Just as conversations on Facebook are different from that of an email, Twitter accounts must follow in accordance with how people use the social network. An organization must be willing to regularly update their feed – not just with news, but by participating in the conversation its followers are having.

As such, it can be necessary to tweet something to a parent who says that their child is sick – wishing that they feel better – or to responding to specific questions about a policy stance. Twitter demands a two-way genuine conversation; it shouldn’t simply be a sounding board where the organization broadcast message or marching orders. To ensure success and authenticity, an organization should follow every account that follows them. This does not mean the manager of the twitter feed needs to read every tweet by all of its followers – but it needs to publicly show that they care what their followers are saying.

SET UP COMPREHENSIVE TWITTER SEARCHES

On Twitter there are many ways to monitor conversations about an organization and its cause. First, an organization should use Back Tweets to search for Tweets when Twitter users linked to their site. Back Tweets [backtweets.com] is the best tool for this because it not only searched for every page on the site, but also searched URL shorteners (bit.ly or tynyurl.com) that are often used to keep tweets under 140 characters; regular url links can be upwards of 50 characters long and would monopolize a great portion of a tweet if entered as is.

Similarly, an organization should follow the top 5-10 words or terms that are related to their work. This list should certainly start with the name, all nicknames and abbreviations for the organization. In addition, a quick brainstorm of terms and key phrases used to discuss an organization’s major issue should be searched. If an organization is running search engine advertising, then it should be run searches for its most popular terms. Search.twitter.com will create an RSS feed for any search terms, as will Back Tweets. Organizations should subscribe to these feeds and check them 2-5 times a day to keep pace with their terms on Twitter. TweetDeck is a great listening platform for Twitter.

Especially during the launch of a new Twitter account, an organization should follow the most prominent users who appear in their comprehensive search terms. Frequently, these people will follow the organization’s feed reciprocally. It is also worth following the Twitter accounts of prominent journalists.

TWITTER: CONTENT TYPES

Events coverage

Live-tweet conferences, meeting and other events using short, customized hashtags (#alc2010). Report it all from a first-person perspective, making personal observations, reporting results in real time, and employing services like TwitPic and Twiddeo to take photos and video clips at the event and post them to Twitter feeds.

- Keep hashtags simple and easy to remember.
- Before broadcasting, search for a desired hashtag and confirm it's not being used for another topic event – hashtags are first come, first serve.
- Hashtag usage can be tracked on hashtags.org.

Solicit opinions

Take polls over Twitter – ask people who should be at an upcoming event, for example. Then take action according to what followers suggested, and let them know their input made a difference.

User-generated content

User-generated media campaign over Twitter can be very effective. For example, ask followers to send TwitPics of themselves at an event. Encourage participation by selecting a random entry to be highlighted on the blog.

Conduct Interviews over Twitter

Twitter based interviews can be very successful in gaining media attention, growing your follower base and engaging preexisting supporters. It is as easy as it sounds. Have a conversation with a donor, politician or journalist who is highly regarded in your field.

Sign in with Twitter

Sign in with Twitter is a new feature that allows websites to pull information from Twitter and subsequently post tweets to user's feeds, much like Facebook Connect does for the popular networking site. After authorizing the service, users will be able to send a tweet from a third-party website with the link at the bottom. This means that every time someone gives a donation, signs a petition or hosts an event, they can be promoted to send a notice – in 140 characters or less, or course – their Twitter feed. This is a great way to increase Twitter activity with little effort.



CFEDNews
Location UT: 38.920787, -77.0222
Web <http://www.cfed.org>
Bio CFED expands economic opportunity by helping Americans start and grow businesses, go to college, own a home, and save for their economic futures.

619 following 493 followers 56 listed

Tweets 494

Following

GCN_Coast See CFED's Assets & Opportunity Profile on Savannah – <http://bit.ly/cCNaXp> On Step Up Savannah's site under "Recent posts"
11:26 AM Sep 17th via web
Retweeted by CFEDNews and 1 other

WOHOHOHO! The #ALC2010 program is here! Start planning your week now at the agenda page: <http://bit.ly/bXfRmE>
11:28 AM Sep 17th via web

We're making final preparations for #ALC2010. Are you? <http://bit.ly/9dQrY0>
10:11 AM Sep 17th via web

povertynews U.S. Poverty Rate Jumps To 14.3 Percent, census reports. [#poverty](http://n.pr/alaACI) (pls RT)
7:28 AM Sep 16th via HootSuite
Retweeted by CFEDNews and 20 others

lisakeske Counting the days to #ALC2010! Best brightest in building assets. <http://ow.ly/2Fab3>
5:31 AM Sep 16th via HootSuite
Retweeted by CFEDNews

Feeling lonely? Enjoy deep conversation about asse out Speed Dating 4 Researchers for Practitioners! [#ALC2010](http://bit.ly/9RrWuL)
8:51 AM Sep 15th via web

Check out Mindy Hernandez's latest blog post - ab #ALC2010 - at Applying Behavioral Sciences in the World! <http://bit.ly/9XVFIQ>
8:49 AM Sep 15th via web

OKPolicy Only 8 days left 'til the asset-building convenes at #ALC2010 to Create the Save & Invest
1:39 PM Sep 14th via Twitter for iPhone
Retweeted by CFEDNews and 1 other

CFSInnovation Busy times at CFSI: #FCIF RFP is speakers ready for #alc2010, Innovators Roundtab month= all talking #underbanked
7:03 PM Sep 14th via web
Retweeted by CFEDNews

Citi CEO Vikram Pandit will speak at #ALC2010. Check out to see who else! <http://bit.ly/bpUgcf>
about 1 hour ago via web

Great questions! MT @latnoc01: Three burning questions that we'll be posing at CFED's #alc2010 are: LEDC recently... <http://bit.ly/9aACoW>
about 5 hours ago via TweetDeck

Have you register for speed dating at #ALC2010 yet? There's limited space so sign up today! <http://bit.ly/9RRWuL>
about 6 hours ago via web

We recommended improvements to CRA's coverage, ratings, performance & public outreach. Read them here: <http://bit.ly/9b7Gwaw> Do you agree?
12:55 PM Sep 7th via web

Only 2 weeks left 'til the asset-building field convenes at #ALC2010 to Create the Save & Invest Economy! <http://bit.ly/9yGyAR> #C1 @CFEDNews
11:00 AM Sep 7th via JustCo2

Check out the pig's latest adventure to HUD, helping more than 30 million Americans own homes since 1934! <http://bit.ly/9L2OC6>
10:51 AM Sep 7th via web

BEST PRACTICES: ONLINE VIDEOS

Online audiences want content that is fresh, authentic, and unlike that they see on TV. Canned, staged and over-scripted videos are fake, cheesy and boring – no one will want to watch them and no one will believe them. A good web video is not just a long version of a TV as – the audience is different and the form is different.

Successful online video projects embody your values, promotes your online and offline goals, and get seen by the relevant audience. The appeal of gimmicks quickly fades online and “viral” doesn’t necessarily mean your videos are being seen by the right people.

Organizations should create the content that will sustain viewers’ attention and engagement over the long-term. These videos might be long, short, sad, funny, whatever – your videos are a gift to your audience, so make something that they’ll find interesting.

YOUTUBE

We recommend using YouTube as your video player because it offers a few key advantages over other services. First, as the most popular online video service, almost 40% of all videos watched online are watched on YouTube, which makes the service a great way to distribute your content where viewers already are. Secondly, YouTube has become the most intuitive video interface, and easily allows viewers to share, email and embed content. Third, YouTube offers terrific internal analytics, so that organizations can track how users are discovering their content. YouTube also offers opportunities for user-dialog (comments, video responses, related videos), but these are optional and can be disabled if desired.

Our team recommends both establishing a branded YouTube channel and building a video page on your site using the YouTube API.

Some helpful tips when using YouTube:

- Make your title interesting; put a hyperlinked URL in the description; tag the video thoroughly.
- Brand your YouTube channel accordingly with your website or issue specific microsite.
- Be sure your logo appears as your user profile. This is often overlooked, but the thumbnail for your channel is important in driving users from video searches and random video playing. It reinforces your brand.
- Update your page frequently by either adding friends or thanking/approving comments. An active page includes not only uploading video, but correspondence and maintaining online relationships.



DISTRIBUTION

Online video is only successful if it is viewed and the success of an online video program will depend on consistent integration with blog outreach, email communications and other PR efforts. Your videos should be content you’re proud of and excited about, that you’d be eager to distribute to your supporters and the press, and that they’ll be encouraged to share with others.

BEST PRACTICES: BLOGGING

IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU

The blog is about the movement and the cause. By all means, cultivate a voice but remember: This is not a personal blog or a soapbox. Avoid using the word “I” when possible.

AUTHENTICITY MATTERS

Many people have grown up bombarded by marketing. They're savvy and know a repurposed press release or marketing lingo when they see it. Sincerity is at a premium when advancing a cause, building a brand or promoting a candidate.

Staffers must blog under their own name – no ghost writing, no posing as someone else. Stand-ins may work for email campaigns, however, the pace of blogging and familiarity established over a series of posts makes this impossible to maintain.

TELL SUPPORTERS' STORIES

One of the best ways to produce authentic content is to tell in-depth stories of supporters or those you impact.

If you profile someone, make sure to conduct the interview over the phone or in person instead of via email. Calling a supporter will yield a richer, more detailed profile. Easiest way to start off an interview with a supporter:

- What inspired you to get involved?
- Always go for details: never stop asking “why?” Never fail to ask follow up questions.
- Always ask for a picture – post with images feel more authentic.

Let supporters tell their stories in their own voices. Feel free to quote them extensively. However, use quotes that reveal personality, thought and opinion rather than generic talking points.

ADD LINKS

- Avoid overloading posts with links. Instead support each entry with a link or two to engage and inform the reader.
- Link to relevant static (evergreen) content on the site whenever possible. Many visitors only read blog posts and won't explore important static content (issues pages, etc.) unless they're directed to it.
- Link to other bloggers. Engage with other bloggers. There is no better way to build goodwill on the web.
- Link to your own pages: get visitors to learn more about work on your static pages, reports you've written, or to take action on a signup form you've created.
- Have all links to external sites open in a new window.

APPEAL TO POPULIST IDEAS

The Internet is a democratizing medium. In order to build a movement, rhetoric should reflect that.

LIGHTEN IT UP

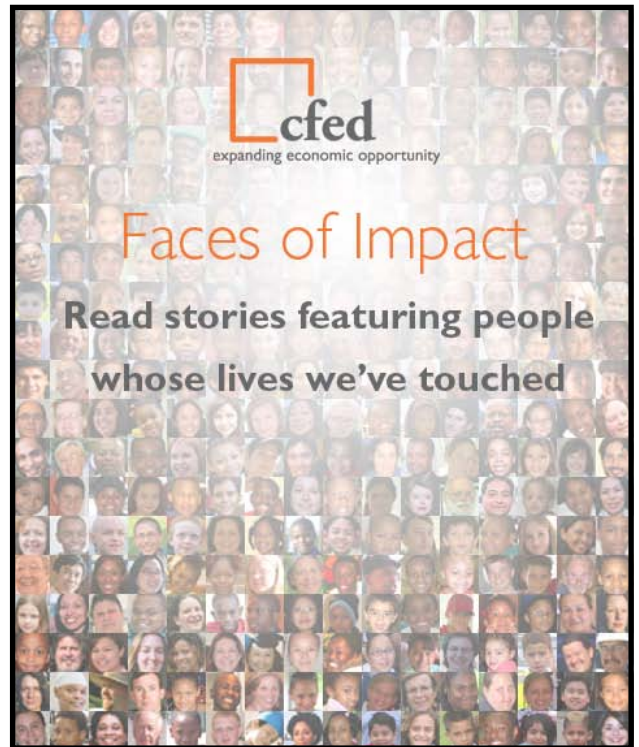
Compliment text with pictures, graphics or a video whenever possible. Use a Flickr slideshow if you're posting more than a handful of pictures.

Don't be afraid to post random fun entries to lighten up the blog: Amusing things that happened at one of your meetings.

GENERAL GRAMMAR & WRITING GUIDELINES

General rules to follow:

- Get someone else to proofread anything you write. Good writers need good editors.
- Show, don't tell. This includes embedding multimedia.
- Use the active voice. "Andrea Levere delivered a speech in Washington" is stronger than "The speech was delivered in Washington."
- Describing in detail what occurred is far more interesting than slapping together the event details and throwing in some adjectives.
- Good web editing includes checking links – be sure to click them.
- Save the exclamation points for the truly shocking. Avoid over exclaiming! You only get five exclamation marks in your life. Use them sparingly. Failure to do so could make your blog read like an over-enthusiastic pre-teen wrote it.
- The same should be said for bold or italics or capitalized words – use them sparingly.
- Avoid clichés. They're cliché for a reason and should be avoided in most cases.
- Write SEO (search engine optimization) friendly. Key names and terms people would search for should be in the title and in blog posts. Within reason, be specific:
 - Not recommended: CFED continues to improve social networking outreach.
 - Recommended (*italics for emphasis only*): CFED continues to improve Facebook and Twitter outreach working with state policy coalitions.



RESEARCH BLOGS AND REACH OUT TO BLOGGERS

Probably the single most important (and easiest) way to build a blog list is to find the top 5 blogs in your subject area, and then mine the "blogrolls" of each of those sites.

Google blog search

Good old-fashioned Google search (make sure to try "top <<your topic>> blogs" – chances are someone has already written about what you're looking for.) Search your main topics and causes in Google, but use the "search blogs" option located under the more option at the top of the results.

Technorati search

Technorati offers great insight into which bloggers are writing about what topics. From the Technorati site:

Technorati was founded to help bloggers to succeed by collecting, highlighting, and distributing the online global conversation. As the leading blog search engine and most comprehensive source of information on the blogosphere, we index more than 1.5 million new blog posts in real time and introduce millions of readers to blog and social media content.

RESOURCES

Idealware

The Nonprofit Social Media Decision Guide

<http://www.idealware.org/reports/nonprofit-social-media-decision-guide>

Beth's Blog

How Networked Nonprofits Are using Social Media to Power Change

<http://www.bethkanter.org/>

Mashable

The Social Media Guide

<http://mashable.com/>

We Are Media

Social Media for Nonprofits

<http://www.wearemedia.org/>