

5 ways to use social media if you're a grassroots campaigner

Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, can help you build support for your campaign, attract local and national media attention and sway decision makers. This guide will teach you the basics of how to use social media, and then how to supercharge your campaign using social media.

The basics

What is social media?

Social media is a new, powerful way for people to connect, share and read news stories. Websites and applications such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are the most popular social media platforms.

Why use social media in campaigns?

If used correctly, Facebook and Twitter can massively amplify your voice, help you meet other people interested in your issue and help you attract media attention.

Social media also has the potential to unleash a whole new wave of activism as it's free to use and accessible to anyone with a computer or smartphone, including people who are often housebound - e.g. people with specific disabilities, carers, elderly people and those with young children.

Which platform should you use? Facebook? Twitter?

An impressive [79%](#) of internet-using adults regularly use Facebook, making it by far the most popular social media website. You can use Facebook to organise your campaign, build a community of supporters and make your voice heard to 100s (or even 1000s!) of new people.

Fewer people use Twitter and it's slightly harder to use, but it's better for connecting with journalists, decision makers and other campaigners from across the globe.

How frequently should you post?

An effective social media presence requires time, planning and organisation. Tweets have an average lifespan of 3 seconds! Try to Posting at least twice a day and use the tips below.

We recommend that campaigners run social media channels as a team and sets aside regular time to develop your Facebook Pages and Twitter content.

If you're feeling really ambitious, you could try using [Hootsuite](#) or [Facebook Scheduler](#) to programme your social media posts in advance.

Top ways to use social media in your campaign

1. Create an engaging Facebook Page or Group

Once you've [created a Facebook account](#), you can [create a Facebook Page](#), which is a public webpage specifically created for your campaign. People can "like" your page and get updates on your campaign.

[Facebook Groups](#) are like online bulletin boards where people can organise together, share opinions and post photos, interesting articles and videos that are relevant to your campaign.

When you [create a group](#), you can make it publicly available for anyone to join or private.

Facebook Page

Pages are good for sharing specific information related to the campaign, especially if you have a small budget for paid advertising. You will have total control of the content but you will need to work hard to build the number of people who 'Like' your page. You can set up a Page [here](#).

Facebook Groups

Facebook Groups are good for more interactive campaigns. You can collect testimonials, evidence and media stories using a group (e.g. If your campaign was to try to save a park in Hackney from being closed, you could collect testimonials from the parents who use a playground). There are instructions about how to set up a Group [here](#).

2. Writing an attention-grabbing Facebook post

A Facebook 'Post' is a paragraph of writing that you publish through your Page or Group. You want to write something that will catch people's attention while staying honest and 'on point'. If people enjoyed your post, they will click 'Like' and maybe 'Share'. You want to aim for as many 'Likes' and 'Shares' as possible because it means more people will see what you've written.

Here are some top tips to grab people's attention:

Include calls-to-action and make it time sensitive

"Share this post to show your support"

"Follow this Facebook Page for updates!"

"We need 2000 signatures before Friday to ensure the Council debate next week, sign and share today!"

"We're meeting John Smith MP on Friday, please urgently sign and share"

Use an image

Facebook posts are *twice* as likely to be shared if they contain images ([source](#)). You can find an image by searching [Google Images](#) or you could be creative and create a [meme](#), [infographic](#) or [graphic](#).

Keep it short and use numbers

- Keep it as short as possible, using bullet points if necessary
- Spread out the text over a few lines (use the space button)
- Include numbers and stats, e.g - "45 people have been killed on A107 since 2006."

Tag others

- Tag organisations and individuals that might support the campaign and ask them to share your Tweet or Facebook post
- If appropriate, tag the decision maker so they're aware of your campaign
- You can tag up to 50 social media accounts on a Facebook picture. This is a really good way of spreading a message and grabbing people's attention
- Tag @38Degrees, @CampaignBootcamp and they may share your post on social media

Hashtags are essential

- Use your city, town, village or borough hashtag, e.g #Bristol #Hackney
- Identify and use subject hashtags, e.g. #Renewables #Everydaysexism
- Create your own hashtag and ask everyone to use it, e.g. #SaveTauntonLido

Ask questions and get people to share their stories.

"We want to end street harassment in Bristol. Have you been street harassed? Can you share your story in the comments below?"

Be responsive

Always write a quick response to comments, such as 'Thanks!' or hit the Like button.

3. Spread your message on Facebook

Boosted Posts

If you have some budget and you've set up a Page, the most effective way to spread your message is to pay for a [Boosted Post](#). You can choose the location, age and interests of your audience or you can choose to share the post with people who have liked your page and their friends. It will cost anything from £10, depending on how many people you want to target. We recommend Boosting a Post that has already attracted some attention on your Page.

Join similar Groups

We recommend that campaigners find and join other Facebook Groups that are either geographically close (e.g. Mums and Dads of Hebden Bridge) or cover similar topics to your campaign (e.g. Save the Bees - Yorkshire). Create a list of these groups and post regularly in them about your petition. They are gold dust for local campaigns.

Message similar Pages

You could also Private Message similar campaign Pages to ask if they could share your petition or post.

4. Build momentum by organising a social media action

Social media actions are coordinated tweets/posts/comments on Twitter and Facebook that target decision makers.

You could ask all of your supporters to leave Facebook comments on a relevant Facebook Event - e.g. if you were running a campaign about poor rental conditions, you could ask your supporters to write comments on an event page by the Landlord's Association. Or you could create a hashtag and ask your supporters to Tweet their MPs about a particular issue, on a particular date.

Example: thousands of 38 Degrees members Tweeted and Facebook messaged a company called 'Mooboo' about their poor employment practises and the campaigners won! There's a short video about the campaign [here](#).

5. Share an event on Facebook Live

Facebook Live is a relatively new function on that allows you to stream live video to your followers. Are you organising an exciting event? Use Facebook Live to engage people from across the country!

How? Download the [Facebook Pages Manager app](#) in order to stream live video to your Page. Tell your followers that you will be going Live in advance. Stay Live for at least 10 minutes (you can stream for up to four hours!)

Why? Because it's a fun way to engage people with your event and campaign. On average, users comment over 10 times more on live videos than regular videos. Live videos rank higher than any other type of content in the news feed.

There are lots more information and tips about Facebook Live here: <https://live.fb.com/>

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