



**20 WAYS TO**

# **INCREASE VOTER ENGAGEMENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

**Strategies for Political Campaigns to  
Maximize Organic Reach and Engagement**

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# Introduction

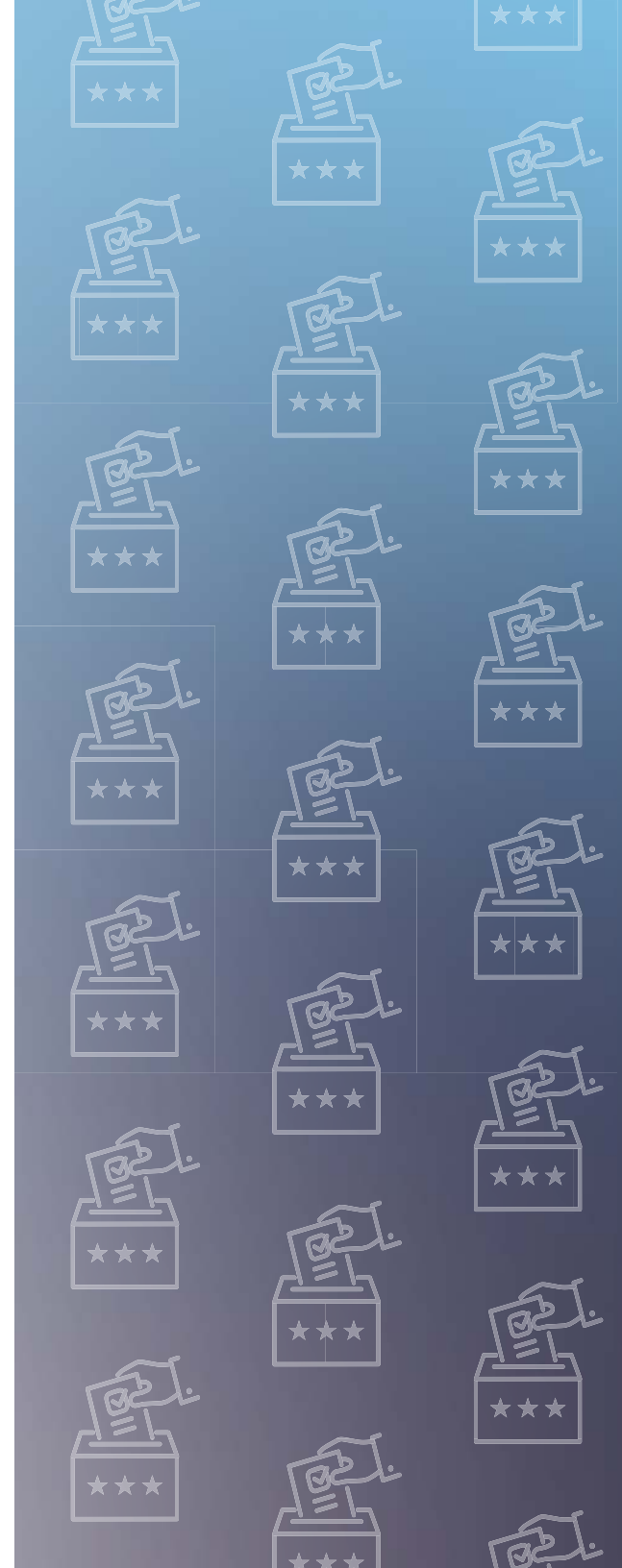
Over the last several election cycles, winning campaigns have executed compelling and novel social media strategies. Social media is even more critical for 2020.

As many U.S. voters continue to shelter at home, rallies and door-to-door canvassing have all but disappeared, and [social media consumption has skyrocketed](#). Social platforms have become focal points for reaching voters, but outreach challenges remain on these networks.

Candidates are fighting for attention on unmoderated social platforms, while organic reach on campaign and candidate channels has become more limited, and subject to the whims of platform algorithms. At the same time, paid social advertising campaigns have been impacted by [more rules on how social networks](#) are treating political ads. Some networks, like Twitter, have banned political ads outright. In addition, [voters are demanding more political advertising transparency](#), and seek more honesty, authenticity and trust in candidate messages.

Most influential campaigns are rethinking their social media strategies to drive higher candidate awareness, support and endorsement. Innovative campaign teams are using the power of personal endorsement to break through the noise on social media without using ads. In this way, they can amplify their messages in a much more authentic way, and potentially reach **three to five times more voters**.

This election, it's your turn to drive a significant increase in meaningful organic reach and connect with more voters where they're spending their time: on social media.



# Ideas & Inspiration

Win the battle for attention in voters' feeds and stories. Here are 20 actionable tips, tactics and ideas to help your campaign make the most of social media this year.



# Take Social Media to the Next Level

1. **Use Mobile Video Intentionally.** In 2020, mobile video has transformed our country. Video taken on mobile phones has more credibility when users see it, and that veracity makes the message and substance stick. But a look at the social media accounts for political campaigns on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram (or other social platforms) finds almost no video that looks like it didn't come from a campaign commercial or a broadcast news segment. Ad agencies love to produce these rich (sometimes costly) videos, but the public trusts them less and less. They are edited to tell a story, but such raw, unvarnished and personal video is not. The perception of these videos is that they're more credible.

The pandemic has only accelerated our collective appetite for mobile video. There are thousands of people who support or work for candidates that can provide real, raw video for use on social media. Scroll a competitor's campaign or candidate profile pages and count how many 'real' videos they have. It may take a while to find even one. That's an opportunity to stand out and be seen as different, more authentic and more trustworthy.



2. **Employ Calls To Action.** Campaigns are ultimately about asking voters to take action. Calls to action work well on social media, too. All of the individuals (whether paid or volunteer) supporting the campaign are advocates. They're engaging with a campaign or candidate page on social media, and *want* to find ways to lend their support. An effective CTA in the copy can help them do so. On Instagram, prompt users to 'tag' someone in the comments, answer a question posed in the caption, share a post to their Instagram Story, save a post to their collection, send a post via private message to someone that should see the content, and swipe up or click to learn or read or watch more. Consider the potential CTAs across platforms to drive more viral reach and organic engagement.
3. **Engage and Enlist Current Advocates.** Social networks are teeming with potential surrogates, supporters and campaign ambassadors — and likely many are already advocating on a campaign's behalf. Advocates are Facebook Group leaders and the most active members, the Redditors, and the influencers on Instagram that regularly engage with the campaign's content or express their support. Reach out directly to these individuals and bring them closer to the campaign.

After identifying a person as an active advocate, amplify their efforts even more. Contact them directly through direct messages and engage: Let them know the campaign recognizes and appreciates what they've done so far, and wants to empower them to do more. Then, share your latest messaging and media with them regularly, using a brand advocacy platform like [Greenfly](#). They will feel special, like they're part of the team, and generally will go out of their way to help. When they are provided with media, they can stay on-message and continue to amplify within their community. The return on investment in increasing the effectiveness of these eager advocates is well worth it.

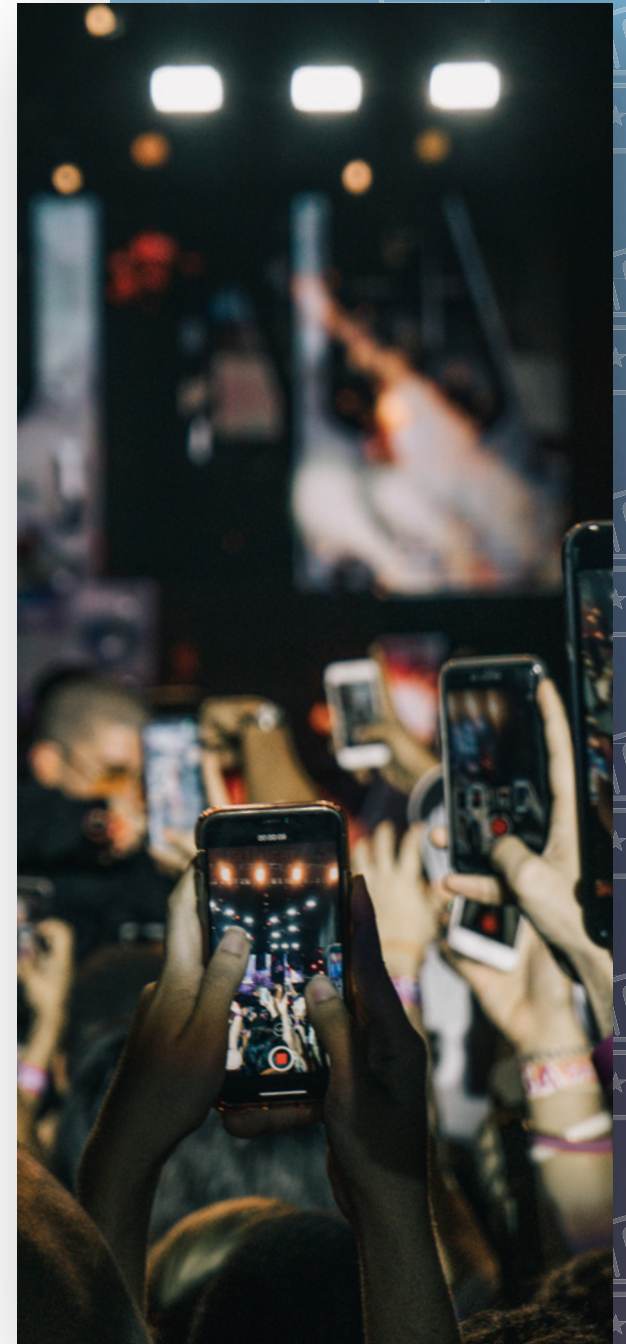


- 4. Create for Each Social Platform.** The audience, consumption patterns, content expectations, and the type of content that succeeds is not the same on every social network. When content is produced specifically with a single platform in mind, the campaign's message will be more powerful and will benefit from increased organic reach.

Stories can be told with quick cuts and playful tension on TikTok, attention-grabbing video and imagery accompanied by meaningful copy on Instagram, or personal narratives with 'show and tell' on Instagram Stories. And it's different for Facebook, Reddit, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube and every other platform. One size does NOT fit all, and the audience will notice.

It's not just the content execution, but the specs and size, too. To make this easier, have a [checklist of specs](#) needed for each platform and galleries or folders to ensure the right content goes to the right platforms. Creating content intentionally for the platforms can make a significant difference.

- 5. Use the Feed for This and Stories for That.** Stories — on Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat — are an opportunity to engage followers on social media every day. Stories are where followers can become fans. But unless users are frequently sharing Stories content through direct messages (see #2 above), Stories are not the best place to find new people. Most users don't explore Stories from other users they don't follow; this happens more in the Feed. In the Feed, engagement like comments and shares can lead to virality and discovery, while tagging others can help even more. So, both have value and are worth using, but be strategic about it. For example, it would make more sense to share the candidate's response to a specific critique using Stories, whereas sharing a general video about the candidate's platform is more fit for the Feed.





# Supercharge Stories

- 6. Amplify Positive Coverage.** Perhaps there's a great article in a national publication about the candidate. Or a noteworthy interview or news feature on TV or an online media network. Most campaign social channels today will post a link to the story and that's that.

But it shouldn't stop there. Every story is an opportunity to grow the candidate's base, not just publish another link to captive supporters. When there's a third-party outlet speaking positively and objectively about a candidate, that should be appreciated and utilized to the maximum value. Prompt campaign staff, surrogates, volunteers, and supporters to share that content, whether it's posted to their timeline or texted to a couple of friends or family members.

Particularly in this age of short attention spans and rare reading beyond a headline, it's essential to seize upon those positive stories and find a variety of ways to package them for each social platform. Create a few excerpts, whether it's a minute or two of video or notable pull-quote text. Then, deliver this derivative content to advocates, who can distribute it directly to their networks, reaching more voters.



- 7. Empower Surrogates to Promote the Campaign's Message.** Every day dozens, hundreds, even thousands of individuals speak and post (to social media) positively about their favored candidate. These people are raising their voices and their hands in a desire to support the candidate to win. Their efforts are appreciated, but all sides would benefit from more direction and instruction, keeping advocates on-brand and on-message.

These advocates' ability to authentically spread a candidate's messages, stances and promises transcends anything the campaign can do on its own channels. Give their passion a boost and some direction so that these advocates can a) be fully informed on all the issues and where the candidate stands, and b) equipped with quality content, so they have the fuel they want to fill their feed with content in support of the campaign.

In practice, campaigns can make it easy for these advocates to access infographics, stats visuals, quote graphics, and video explainers that clearly spell out where the candidate stands on given issues and their plans to improve or enhance the status quo. Access to on-message content will also help them speak more intelligently about the campaign platform at all times, whether on digital channels or face-to-face conversations. It's great to have supporters singing the candidate's praises. It's even better to have supporters spreading correct information and messaging about the candidate, equipped with appealing, related content to share.





8. **Break Through With Real People and Real Stories.** Almost every political campaign includes the candidate talking about real people they've met and the personal stories they've heard; stories that have served to inspire their campaign and reinforce their mission and messaging.

These are great narratives to tell, but seeing is believing and in 2020, that's more important than ever. A candidate's social channels can be teeming with such raw, emotional stories and videos. Campaigns can solicit these stories from real people that support the candidate. These advocates can lend great credence and connection to a candidate (and their platform) by telling their story and why they're supporting the candidate for election. These personal accounts break through, are sharable, and can affect the electorate's hearts and minds more than any other digital and social content.



# Amplify Events and Appearances

- 9. Collect More Authentic Media From Events.** Events aren't just an opportunity to address a large group of supporters and raise money; they're a source of content that can help amplify a core message well beyond the group in attendance. Events are sources of quality content for digital and social channels. Even better, events are populated by the candidate's most ardent advocates, who are willing and wanting to help the campaign.

Turn these supporters into voluntary content producers — all they need is their mobile device. Campaigns don't need a large staff of photographers. Refer back to strategy #1, reinforcing that raw content captured on mobile devices can be more powerful than anything polished, especially for social media. Event attendees can capture photos, videos, and even interviews and selfie videos about the candidate and campaign (refer back to #8!). A live event is a spark that can be set ablaze across digital and social channels by mobilizing those passionate supporters in attendance.



**10. Augment Event Attendees' Content.** Individuals attending campaign events (and, really, people doing anything anywhere) feel compelled and inclined to share on social media what they're doing and where they are. In doing so, each post has value for the campaign, enhancing the value and reach of the event. So help them out! Create filters they can use and make the event social by telling attendees to tag their posts with the location or a specific hashtag. Set up a photo op site where a photographer can snap pics to send back to them to post, or create quote graphics from the candidate's speech that supporters can share (remember #7?). Helping these individuals post at the event can also increase their activity on social media in general, leading to more opportunities to facilitate their active support of the candidate on social media. Every event is an opportunity and the winning campaigns make the most of each one.

**11. Partner With Event Hosts.** If the candidate is holding a (socially distant) rally at a school or university, or leading a fundraiser in a hotel ballroom, these venues should be proud to host such an event. Many of these facilities have considerable social media reach of their own, which campaigns can harness to augment their activity.

Campaigns can provide content to the hosts in advance of the occasion to help promote it, such as video, graphics, and a link to a Facebook event to post. Then, equip them with photos and videos during and after the event to celebrate the candidate's appearance and fuel their social feeds with engaging content. Such a proactive partnership benefits both parties and sets up the event for success, helping to drive attendance and reach more people before, during, and after. There are mutual benefits for collaboration and cooperation for campaigns and the venues and organizations that host them for events.





- 12. Source Content for the Media.** It's hard enough for campaign staff to keep up with all the events, rallies and public appearances. It's not any easier for the media covering each race. Provide an extra service for the media and give them a simple and easy way to access raw media to enhance their own coverage — and ultimately, the campaign's.

When reporters, editors and producers can have videos and photos from events at their fingertips — and know they're 100% unique and don't have to send a crew — many will appreciate it. When newspapers and local TV news desks can cover more and their jobs are made easier for them, they will have a stronger inclination to report the campaign's events. This publicity drives more awareness for the candidate and their energy, and greater reach for the campaign and the event itself. Break down roadblocks and challenges for reporters that may want to cover the campaign's events by distributing unique videos and photos — it's a win for everybody.

- 13. Plan for Live Events.** The candidate may be making an appearance on TV for a debate, an interview, or color commentary. Or perhaps they are doing a live town hall on social media or other non-linear media network. These live events are valuable but can be even more so with a plan going in to maximize each one's reach and awareness.

To take full advantage of each live event, the campaign team must prepare to post or create social media content on the fly to complement and amplify the event, statements, and meaningful points made by the candidate. A system to cut clips in real time or near real time to distribute across social channels should be in place. And staff can even compose skeleton social media copy in advance to save time in the moment. A distribution system for all this content must be set up, too, so advocates and advocate groups can enhance the live event's reach even more. Every live event is a chance for the candidate to shine and for the campaign to carry, but it's the winning campaigns that will seize those moments and have a game plan in place to make the most of them.



# Capitalize on Landmark Moments

- 14. Plan for Unexpected Opportunities.** It's easier to prepare for the predictable: planned appearances, debates and interviews. But the world moves a mile a minute now and the windows of opportunity close quickly in the social media world. Run through scenarios: amplifying an unexpected endorsement, reacting to a failing of the candidate's opponent, approaching a trend or meme, and implementing crisis communications on social media should the need arise. It's these moments that can be pivotal turning points for campaigns.

Such urgency necessitates efficiency and thinking through not just messaging but also workflows in the moment. Put together a checklist or playbook for each envisioned scenario. These should include the group responsible for messaging, the social media manager[s] that will produce and post the content, and the arsenal of tactics such as ads, partnerships, and all of the digital touchpoints potentially at the campaign's disposal. Central campaign teams can integrate the campaign's regional or local leaders to tap into their platforms and people for help in the moment. It's hard to plan for the unexpected, but preparation is essential because campaigns and candidates can rise or fall in the blink of an eye on social media.





- 15. Empower and Educate Advocates.** When game planning for expected and unexpected opportunities, consider how the campaign's organizers and surrogates can play an amplifying role. Help all those campaign supporters do what they want to do — support the campaign — and do it better. It's great to distribute content to them, but they need to know how to effectively put it to use. Just because they've shown they're active on social media, doesn't mean they're power users.

Teach the campaign's supporters and volunteers how to post an Instagram Story, use a hashtag, and share a photo, video, sticker, filter or GIF. This knowledge can empower these advocates to post more on social media and create more value for the campaign. The strength of the campaign's most passionate supporters directly correlates to their ability to put that passion into action. That's why empowering and educating can be so essential to ensuring the success of a campaign's social media strategy.



# Embrace Social Media for Donations

- 16. Treat Social Media Support Like a Donation.** Think about this: The campaign is buying ad media regularly, but it's like free advertising when other people spread the campaign's message.

The campaign's ad team is likely budgeting for digital and social ads (i.e., CPM or CPC) and content production costs. When advocates post about the campaign to their followers (which by nature is more authentic than an ad), those impressions have real value for the campaign. The same applies to those advocates who raise their hand to be amateur content producers, collaborating to co-create photos, videos, etc.

To create this media would typically involve an ad agency or photography team, the time of a paid staff member, or hiring freelancers. It doesn't cost a dime when supporters 'donate' their time and effort to help. Don't stop fundraising, but also do not confine 'donating' to only sending in money when there are so many more ways advocates can support the campaign.



- 17. Help Volunteers Raise Money Directly on Social Media.** While [political campaigns are not eligible](#) for native [fundraisers on Facebook](#) and Instagram Stories (only 501(c)(3) organizations are), supporters can still carry the fundraising message across social media. And, as noted in #16, their donations can be direct cash, or yield a lot more if they compel their friends and followers to donate.

Give them the language, links, or SMS #, and visual content to post a fundraising CTA post on social media. Armed with the right media and instruction, a single individual can raise a significant amount of money even if they don't donate directly. In this time of social distancing and sheltering at home, when social media is a critical communications tool, advocates can do a lot more, a lot faster, to help raise money and sway voters than knock on doors and make cold calls. Turn social media into a fundraising machine by activating avid supporters looking for a way to help

- 18. Experiment With Shoppable Posts.** Many campaigns [these days](#) sell apparel and 'swag'. Supporters are eager to show their support by purchasing merchandise. They love wearing t-shirts, donning caps, and drinking out of coffee mugs that tout the candidate. Supporters can now buy these products directly from Instagram posts without leaving the app. Once Instagram Shopping is set up on the account, products can be 'tagged' in Instagram posts in the feed, making them "shoppable." ([Get a primer on how to set this all up.](#))

Now, when individuals engage with the campaign's posts on Instagram, they can also 'shop' them, purchasing products right there in the feed and helping build the campaign's war chest. Advocates are already eager to support the campaign as much as they can. They'll feel like they're a part of the campaign's movement when they buy a t-shirt or two while scrolling the Instagram feed and know the proceeds of their purchase are going back to help the campaign.





- 19. Give Fundraising a Human Touch.** Donating to a campaign shouldn't feel transactional. What happens after a supporter submits a donation now? What would make it an exceptional experience? The easiest way to go from impersonal to personal is to use video.

An impactful video can transform the post-donor experience. Campaign staff could take turns recording personalized messages to send to donors hours or a day after their donation. Or the candidate could record a general or select personalized thank you message. These videos can conjure great emotion and gratification for a donor. They carry a 'surprise and delight' effect, and sending such authentic responses shows mutual support and gratitude.

Videos like these keep on giving. They provide a story worth sharing for the donor. The campaign will benefit even more when they share the videos on their social media profiles or tell their family and friends about these unique experiences. There's a feeling of togetherness within a campaign and its advocates, and that unity is only strengthened when there are faces put to fellow supporters.

- 20. Be Human.** People trust the people they know, admire and respect. As citizens become inherently more skeptical of ads, political agendas, and even products without online reviews, they're sniffing for any air of inauthenticity in every message. When a campaign leverages real stories, authentic content, and, most importantly, real people telling those stories, there's far more trust and credibility in the campaign, the candidate and their message. Over-produced, glossy media, ads, videos and photos can be spotted a mile away. When the media appears too contrived, that content sticks out, and not in a good way.



## Final Thoughts

**If you only try just one strategy outlined in this guide, do this:** Take a moment to look over all of the campaign's media, content and communications. Do a gut check on how human, authentic and real it feels and looks. Would you trust it if you had no relationship with the campaign? Would you share it on your own Facebook or Instagram profile? The ability to get a campaign on the right side of that evaluation can make all the difference.

Every digital marketer understands the importance of social media. Official social profiles are critical, but they don't have the reach they used to have. This year, innovation comes at the convergence of mass communication and grassroots advocacy.

Innovative campaigns now don't just focus on their own social media pages — they mobilize the feeds, stories and mobile cameras of their supporters that actively want the campaign to succeed. Leveraging that power can be the difference between winning and losing elections in 2020, and in the years to come.





# Discover Greenfly

Greenfly, the leader in brand advocacy, enables organizations to fuel brand love through authenticity. The company's brand advocacy platform and mobile apps enable organizations to transform their advocates into brand builders by harnessing the power of authentic content.

Sports, media, entertainment, social cause, and political organizations depend on Greenfly to both share media galleries as well as collect original photos and videos from advocates. This authentic content helps both the advocate and the organization build deeper, more personal connections with followers on social media.

If you're considering launching a digital advocacy program for your campaign, let us know. We'll be happy to help!



[hello@greenfly.com](mailto:hello@greenfly.com)



[+1 \(310\) 620-8565](tel:+13106208565)



[www.greenfly.com](http://www.greenfly.com)