Online Advocacy
Building Online Advocates

Sustaining Passionate Online Supporters

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Agenda Overview

- We'll cover some BIG picture perspectives today and go over two specific experiences relating to:
  - Caveats for Organizing Online
  - Defining Online Activists
  - Engaging and Sustaining an Online Activist
Caveats of Online Organizing

- Never forget who's left out by "e" strategies
- Trust relationships are best built in person
  - Online organizing is most effective when it leverages established social networks and communities.
- Each community, campaign, and cause is different
- Respect for local wisdom, culture, & customs needs to remain intact in online engagement
What is an Online Activist?

- A supporter of your cause
- Responds to your requests
- Views you as a trusted source on an issue
- Promotes your issue/cause using online tools
What do Online Activists do?

- Read Emails
- Take Online Actions
- Tell People About You
- Attend Events
- Create Content about you or your Issue Area
- Organize Local Events or Meetings
- Influence and motivate others

Register
DONATE
Activist Engagement Cycle

- Collect Contact Info
- Alert to Actions & Progress
- Deepen Engagement
- Maintain Care and Feeding
- Track Activity
- Rinse and Repeat
Frames of Engagement

- **Encourage Online Activity**
  - Make it the “easy choice” to get involved
  - Reduce barriers on your end (less clicks, small asks, fame for getting involved, remove login, language)

- **Provide clearly defined asks**
  - Users should take action to effect change or offline work through online tools and activities that you provide
Online Engagement Asks

- Your role is to define ways for your different audiences to plug in.

- How are you engaging strangers? fans? funders?

- Prep work is key.
- Define your lists of “Asks” or ways to engage ahead of time.
Online Engagement Asks

- Contact Decision Makers/ Influencers
  - (Letters to Congress)
- Pledge Support
  - (Petitions, Endorsements)
- Donate Money
- Contribute to an Art project
- Join an Online Contest
- Volunteer
Online Engagement Asks

► Shape Campaign Decisions
  ► (Poll, Voting, Discussion Forum, Letters to the Editor)

► Recruit Others
  ► Social Networks
  ► Site Badges
  ► Shout Outs
  ► Blog
Frames of Engagement

- Offline Activist: An on-the-ground supporter who you can count on to organize/attend local in-person events and meetings and to be leaders.

- Engaging Offline Activists “Online”
  - Provide opportunities to attend or organize real world action using online tools you provide.
  - Coordinate organizing or research tasks in a decentralized manner through online tools.
Offline Engagement Asks

- Gather Info or Research
- Events
  - Day of Action
  - Movie Screenings
  - House Parties
  - Flyer Days
- Phone Banking
- Local groups/chapters
  - Start/Find, Volunteer Management, Updates
Project: Building Youth Online Activists

- **Who**: Organized group of young people in Richmond, CA

- **What**: How can activated young people use online advocacy to support their on-the-ground community efforts?

- **Partnerships**: Richmond Youth Organizing Team; [http://www.canfit.org](http://www.canfit.org); [http://www.rysecenter.org](http://www.rysecenter.org);
Organizing Youth Online

YOUTH E-ADVOCACY
SOCIAL MEDIA LEADING
COMMUNITY CHANGE

A Facilitator’s Guide and
Best Practices for Using Online
Advocacy and Social Media
to Create Sustainable Youth
Leadership for Community Change

CANFIT

AspirACTION
Learnings: Youth Online Activists

- Core principles of youth development MUST be a part of any campaign, online or offline.
- Ah-ha moment: “I can talk about my community work online and not just my personal life.” “in my voice, in my story without the usual filters.”
- It still takes a lot of work to recruit people, regardless of the platform.
- Move away from assumptions about youth and social networks, and still create a plan.
Learnings:
Youth eAdvocacy Video

What Is E-advocacy?

SOME OF
thought
hashtags were
USELESSS

Better Tools for a Better World
Online Organizing is an Ongoing Conversation

- Primary Goal: Establish Trust with your audiences.
  - Trust empowers mobilization.
- Too many orgs use online to BLAST their audiences “THE SKY IS FALLING TODAY”
- Review the narrative over time, not just the “Asks”
Online Organizing is an Ongoing Conversation

- Arguably the most important part of online outreach is managing responses
  - Reply to Replies
- Pick up a phone every once in awhile
- Consider where your online supporters are moving in their technology choices (Cell Phones, Social Platforms)
Care and Feeding of your Online Activists

- Keep the Momentum
- Shine a Light
  - Two P's and Two F's
- Consistent story rather than just asks
  - Target ACTIVE people with more asks
  - Target ACTIVE people with offline engagements
Activist Engagement Cycle

- Collect Contact Info
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Summary

- Definitions of Online Activism vary
- Online activists can mirror and bolster your offline engagement
- Engaging online activists is a continuous cycle, rather than a streamline or blast
- Conversations and storytelling are critical parts of your online activist strategy
Thank You!

▶ Questions?  ✔  Comments?

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