

Simple Strategies,
Remarkable Results

CHANGE YOUR COMMUNITY



Simple Social Media Strategies To Help
You Reach The Right People

ETHAN WILKINSON

CHANGE YOUR COMMUNITY

Simple Social Media Strategies To Help You Reach The Right People

*For councillors, City and Regional Mayors,
Police and Crime Commissioners and
members of devolved legislatures*

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PREFACE

THE AUTHOR



Ethan Wilkinson has spent the last eight years working with various political parties on General Elections, European elections, devolved elections and mayoral elections, on campaigns for various groups, candidates, political organisations, think tanks and influencers to help increase their reach, share their story, grow their community and produce viral content.

Ethan has worked in Cardiff, London and Brussels for some of the most influential organisations in politics. He is passionate

about sharing what he has learned about creating social media campaigns with those standing for, or elected to, public office.

He believes that everybody should have access to the tools and be able to learn the techniques that help people change their community.

WELCOME

The purpose of this eBook is to teach **councillors, City and Regional Mayors, Police and Crime Commissioners** and **members of devolved legislatures**—*anybody either standing for or elected to local, regional or devolved public office*—how to change their community through social media campaigns.

This eBook will help you:

- Create a social media campaign from scratch.
- Build your brand.
- Develop and maintain an online community.
- Create content that is short, simple and shareable.
- Make digital content that people want to watch.

CHANGE YOUR COMMUNITY

This eBook will teach you the *WHY* and *WHAT* of using social media to connect you with your community.

If you want hands-on experience in *HOW* to create social media campaigns, I have also launched a '30 Day Plan' using instructional videos and interactive activities to guide you as you put together your very own social media campaign.

[ENROL NOW](#)

**ARE YOU READY TO LEARN HOW TO
SHARE YOUR STORY AND REACH THE
RIGHT PEOPLE SO THAT YOU CAN
CHANGE YOUR COMMUNITY?**

THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Ever since the birth of social media, the landscape for political campaigning has changed. Around the world, even in countries with limited digital penetration, there has been a scramble to harness the potential of online influence. This has led to international debates on the power exercised by Dot Com giants and the social responsibility of those managing information dissemination on their platforms, and has seen the introduction of new legislation on data protection while the executives of Twitter and Facebook appeared in front of Parliamentary committees in the UK, USA and beyond.

There can be no doubt that knowing how to exploit social media in a responsible and legal manner is vital for anybody in public office.

European Elections 2019: A Brand New Party Tops The Polls In Just Six Weeks

The 2019 European Parliament elections were not supposed to happen. Yet as soon as the announcement on the unexpected ballot took place, mere weeks before people went to the polls, a new political party appeared and went on to dominate the results, becoming the largest national party across the entire continent in the Brussels-based parliament. It took little over six weeks to garner over five million votes, representing over 30% of the national total.

How does a brand new political party go from launching, to winning an election, in such a short time? Social media.

Short, simple and shareable messaging and a deep understanding of their audience helped the Brexit Party get 51% of all shared content on Facebook and Twitter during the campaign, despite only producing 13% of the content.

Captain Tom

On Friday 10th April 2020, Captain Tom Moore, with the help of his family, decided to create his own campaign. Tom's cause was to help the "brave heroes" who work in the NHS by walking 100 laps of his garden before his 100th birthday to raise £1,000 for the NHS. What started as a modest ambition went on to become an international phenomenon, raising a staggering £32 million.

In just 24 hours from launch, Tom met his initial target and increased it to £100,000.

Following an appearance on BBC Radio 2, this jumped to £250,000. Two days later he staggered the nation by hitting a total of £1,000,000 in donations. On Thursday 16th April, as Captain Tom Moore completed his final 10 laps, over a million supporters had helped raise over £25 million for the NHS, with money still flowing in.

In the days that followed, he was honoured with a Royal Mail postmark, a RAF flyover, became the first centenarian to top the music charts and opened a new NHS hospital. His campaign is the largest total raised on JustGiving, the fastest growing campaign on the platform, and attracted donations and media coverage from around the world.

This incredible, heart-warming story shows the true potential of social media.

Social media gives every single person, politician, brand and organisation powerful tools to share their story and reach the right people, with a potential audience of billions.

THE POTENTIAL OF SOCIAL MEDIA

#Obama2008

When Barack Obama announced his US Presidential candidacy in 2007, Twitter had just launched and there wasn't a single iPhone. However, in the 2008 US Presidential Election, the Obama campaign used social media to create a movement that raised money, established local groups and created an effective 'Get Out The Vote' strategy. All online. Campaigns have never been the same since.

In 2012, Obama already had a vast database of highly engaged supporters, so didn't need to spend too much time on building his brand or creating a community. Instead, they focused on sharing his story and reaching the right people on social media, a big factor in his re-

election.

#UKGeneralElection

In the UK, the 2010 General Election was supposed to be *THE* internet election. But it wasn't. Candidates only had small social media followings while political parties had even smaller teams of digital experts. More money was spent on TV advertising and billboards.

Fast forward to the 2015 General Election and social media had become a key battleground. By now around 53% of the UK population, spread evenly around the country, was using Facebook. Parties created content targeting specific audiences with clear calls to action. The Conservative Party, for example, leveraged the power of people sharing social media content through 'gamification' and

email lists.

If 2015 was the UK's first digital election, then the 2016 vote on UK Membership of the European Union was the first digital referendum. Both the official leave and remain campaign groups used key aspects of Barack Obama's tried and tested social media strategy: Big data mining, data analytics, micro-targeting and shareable content to identify and mobilise supporters; both online and offline.

The debate surrounding the role of online campaigns during the referendum still rages today, showing how important public-facing use of social media is in relation to credibility, with online interaction a constant target for investigation and criticism from political opponents.

#MAGA

“Without the Tweets I wouldn’t be here” said Donald Trump, shortly after winning the 2016 US Presidential election. Trump’s ability to craft short, shareable messages on Twitter, combined with a large, engaged, online following, meant that he was regularly trending. America’s first ‘Twitter President’ became renowned for using the platform to express his thoughts and break major news stories, even communicating with other Heads of State via this new brand of Digital Diplomacy. His ‘digital first’ campaign allowed him to reach tens of millions of people across America and conduct what his team called “A/B testing on steroids”—*creating two versions of the same message to see which one resonated with the target audience.*

Donald Trump’s digital director, Brad Parscale,

confirmed that social media was the reason they won the election. “Twitter for Mr Trump and Facebook for fundraising”.

Creating A Movement

What do Bernie Sanders in the US, M5S in Italy and Podemos in Spain have in common? They successfully combined online support with offline grassroots activism to spread their message and share their mission to create a powerful movement. This is a model that the Labour party adopted in the 2017 General Election, combining the largest party membership in Europe with a highly engaged grassroots movement, Momentum.

In 2017, around 63% of the UK population was using Facebook, allowing political parties to target messages to tens of millions of potential voters across the country. The

big difference in Labour's digital strategy between the 2015 and 2017 General Election campaigns was video content. Not just in terms of vastly improved quality, but the sheer quantity of videos shared. **More videos mean more engagement.** Labour had learned the lessons of the digital revolution happening in politics around the globe and aimed to put them to good use to motivate and mobilise particularly young voters who tend to support their cause and are highly active online.

WHAT ARE THE LESSONS WE CAN LEARN FROM THESE CAMPAIGNS?

#ChangePoliticsForGood

The unexpected 2019 European Parliament elections showed that:

- Strong performance in social media in a previous election does NOT guarantee strong performance in the next election.
- The importance of understanding what your audience cares about and focussing on those issues. Anything else can be a distraction.
- The importance of knowing who your opponents are and how they are likely to target you.
- The importance of keeping messaging clear and concise.
- It's not about how much money you spend on targeted ads. *It's how you spend it.*

During the six weeks leading up to election day, the Brexit Party:

- Gained more followers than every other party combined.
- Generated more shares than any other party.
- Attracted more comments than any other party.
- Received more Facebook reactions than any other party.

Their social media operation had very clear purpose and strong messaging, showing deep understanding of their audience and the importance of keeping things simple in order to cut through, allowing them to outmanoeuvre the established parties hampered by more confused messaging.

#GE2019

The 2019 General Election campaign saw a massive up-tick in the use of memes and viral videos shared across WhatsApp and Facebook Groups. By experimenting with posting schedules, content type and targeted ads, digital campaigners were able to work out exactly what worked, and were able to execute it efficiently and on time. Each of the major political parties took social media very seriously, producing slick videos on a daily basis.

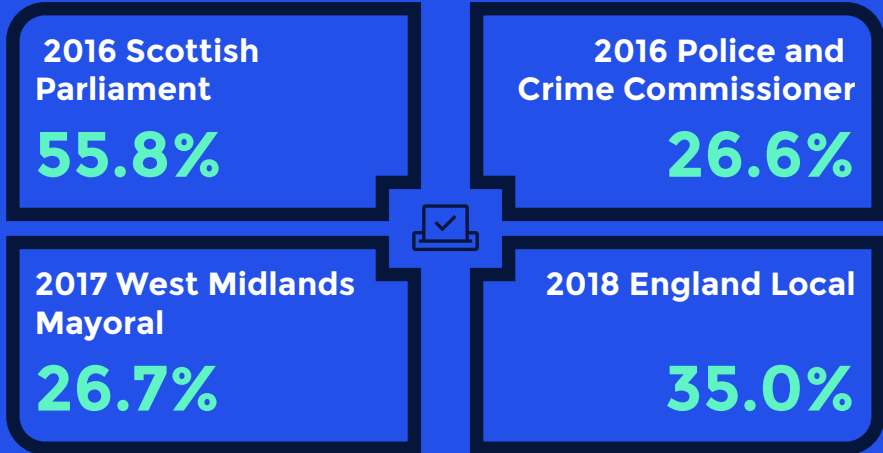
Recent figures show that 67% of the UK population, or 45 million people, are now active social media users.

96% of these users visit a social media network or messaging service every month with 77% actively engaging or contributing.

The power and potential of social media to create campaigns and connect with constituents is enormous. You have the power to build your own brand, create an entirely new community of supporters or leverage the potential of existing communities of engaged activists.

THE DIGITAL DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT

TURNOUT (%) AT RECENT UK ELECTIONS



The State Of Local And Regional Democracy

Turnout at local, mayoral, police and crime commissioner and devolved elections is consistently and quite considerably lower than at a General Election. Despite the substantive powers each of these public offices has over policy and budget, turnout has been low for years. Analysis shows that low turnout is due to a mixture of

apathy, a belief that nothing will change, disillusionment with politics, a lack of party affiliation and a lack of understanding of the different levels of governance and their responsibilities.

“Many of the people we speak to feel there is a disconnect between politics and their everyday lives. Everyone has issues they care about, from local planning and leisure facilities to bin collections and schools, but it can be difficult to identify how local councils operate and affect these issues”
- Rachael Farrington, Voting Counts.

The State Of Social Media

It's not just turnout at the ballot box that's low, the quality of social media campaigning at local, regional and devolved level is often limited. Candidates for local public office may not have the personal time, the budget nor the available resources that national candidates and parties enjoy. As a result there's a big digital divide between the general public and their local representatives. Some councils introduce apps or platforms that must be downloaded in order for local people to engage with democracy, while many candidates still persist with petitions that require handwritten support.

But if we want people to engage with local democracy, we must also go to where the people are. The numbers show they are on social media.

If you want to change your community, you have a democratic responsibility to make it as easy as possible to get informed and get involved.

CHAPTER 1

Looking At The
Local Landscape

LOOKING AT YOUR COMMUNITY

While you know the various responsibilities of your public office, most members of the public will not. A great many voters don't know which level of governance is responsible for which public service; but want to know that somebody, somewhere cares about the community and is working hard to make it better, whether it's school places for their kids, pothole-free roads, world class healthcare or regular rubbish collections and safer streets.

Being able to communicate your role and responsibilities to local residents will help you to better serve your community and be able to identify their needs. Combining traditional offline campaigning such as canvassing, leafleting, surveys, street stalls and hustings, with online campaigning methods, such

as Facebook Live streams, local Facebook Groups, Twitter Q&As, Instagram Stories and easy-to-navigate websites, will help you to formulate your pledges and mobilise a movement of people who support your ideas.

Knowing who lives in your area and how they usually vote will help you to understand what kind of content to create and the best social media platforms to use. You can look at historical voting data, review your area's demographics, ask for any data held by your political party (if you are affiliated to one), or simply speak with local people.

LOOKING AT YOUR COMPETITORS

Once you know who lives in your community, what their priorities are and how they've voted in recent elections, it's time to look at who you're up against. Typically each election will have candidates from the main political parties as well as independents who may be well-known local figures. A quick search on Google, social media, political party websites and local media platforms, will help you learn who the other candidates are.

Once you have identified the various stakeholders, it's time to work out what they are doing. A *competitive analysis* helps you find out what the strengths and weaknesses of their social media campaigns are, and compare them to your own.

This analysis will also help you:

- Know which social media platforms they are using and how.
- Understand how well their social media strategy is working.
- Benchmark your results against theirs.
- Identify potential threats to your strategy.
- Find weaknesses or gaps in your own social media strategy.

Researching the following information will help you formulate your own social media strategy:

- What social networks do they use?
- How large is their following?
- How do they engage with their community?
- How often do they post?
- What kind of content do they post?
- What is their engagement rate?

- Which hashtags do they use?

Once you have gathered all of this information, you can start thinking about ways to improve your campaign and potential hazards along the way using a *SWOT* analysis.

This format helps you to take a look at what you and your competitors have been doing and identify:

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats

Knowing what your competitors are doing will help you formulate your own social media strategy and finalise your political campaign plan.

SWOT	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
What your competitors are doing	Strengths	Weaknesses
What you are doing	Opportunities	Threats

Looking at your competitors' strengths and weaknesses will help you to identify the opportunities and threats to your strategy.

FINDING YOUR 'WHY'

“Branding is what people say about you when you’re not in the room” - Jeff Bezos, Amazon founder.

As a candidate for local public office with limited resources, you cannot talk to every single person in your local area. Most people will see your leaflets and social media posts without ever meeting YOU.

First impressions count.

Election campaigns are brand platforms and as the candidate you are your own brand. Every Tweet you compose, every video you record and every story you upload, all form part of your brand.

Every successful brand has a powerful purpose behind it. Before you even think about what your slogan will be, what stories you will share, what your logo will look like, or what your campaign pledges will be, you need to ask yourself these four questions:

1. Why are you standing?
2. What differentiates you from the other candidates?
3. What problems do you want to solve?
4. Why should people care?

Formulating clear and concise answers to these questions will allow you to explain to voters why you should be entrusted to change their community. After all, there are plenty of people with good ideas.

IF YOU CAN'T ARTICULATE WHY YOU SEEK PUBLIC OFFICE BEYOND THE STANDARD "TO SERVE THE PEOPLE" (THE MINIMUM RATIONAL STANDARD FOR ALL POLITICIANS), HOW WILL THE VOTERS KNOW WHO TO FOLLOW?

Once you can explain why you are standing, you can show people:

- how you are different,
- explain the pledges you wish to promote
- and persuade others why they should believe in your vision, values and background.

BUILDING YOUR BRAND

Now that you know *WHY* you are standing for public office, what sets you apart from the other candidates, the problems you will solve, and why local people should care about all of those things, you can start to think about what your brand will look like.

If you're standing for a political party, it is highly likely that the party will provide you with templates and branding guidelines, especially when it comes to offline campaign literature. However, you might be given more creative licence when it comes to creating content for social media, so it's important to understand the emotions and meanings behind colour choices, fonts, shapes, slogans and more.

If you're an independent candidate, then you will have a blank canvas upon which to build your brand from scratch.

WHO ARE YOU?

You're going to need to enlist the help of someone who knows you pretty well (a spouse, partner, election agent, work colleague, mentor or friend) to help you complete the following activity.

Choose five adjectives that best describe your personality:

ACCESSIBLE APPROACHABLE BOLD
CALM CARING CASUAL CHARISMATIC
CHEERFUL COMMITTED COMPETENT
CONFIDENT CONSERVATIVE COOL
CREATIVE DETERMINED EFFICIENT
EMPATHETIC ENERGETIC ENTHUSIASTIC
FAIR FAMILIAR FORMAL FRIENDLY FUN
HONEST KNOWLEDGEABLE LIBERAL
INNOVATIVE MATURE MODERN OPEN-
MINDED OPTIMISTIC PASSIONATE
PATIENT PERSUASIVE PROFESSIONAL
QUIRKY REASONABLE RELIABLE
RESILIENT RESPONSIBLE SERIOUS
SINCERE STRONG TRADITIONAL
TRUSTWORTHY UNCONVENTIONAL
UNIQUE VERSATILE WARM WISE

Now that you have a list of five adjectives, you can choose colours that reflect who you are and what you believe. For example, have you ever wondered why PayPal's branding is blue? Cool colours evoke feelings of trust, loyalty and stability: all things we would expect from a worldwide online payments system.

We are going to use UK political parties as case studies to explain the message and meaning behind their brand identities, to help you better understand how to connect your target audience with your story. Regardless of your political affiliation, it's helpful to examine each case study to understand the psychology behind the chosen brand identity.

Political parties are presented in order of vote share percentage in the 2019 General Election.



CONSERVATIVES

The Conservative Party's logo is an oak tree, the national tree of England, representing strength, renewal, growth and endurance; very fitting for the one of the oldest political parties in the world and complemented by the colour blue which evokes stability, reliability, security, success, competence, trust and loyalty. The scribbled foliage denotes modern, less formal and more approachable.

The current font in use is a very popular and super easy to read sans serif font. It is also traditional in Europe for left wing parties to choose the red normally associated with socialism and those on the right, blue.

During the 2019 General Election campaign, the Conservatives had a snappy slogan and experimented with a variety of fonts, colours and media types, in a bid to appeal to a wider base.

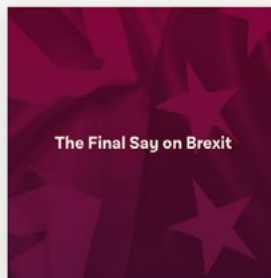
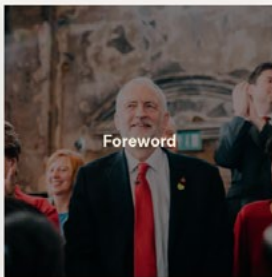


LABOUR

When you hear “the Labour Party” the symbol you think of is the rose and the colour that comes to mind is red. The rose is a symbol of anti-authority from the Middle Ages, the national flower of England and has long been associated with socialism. The colour red means power, passion, energy, strength and excitement.

Recently the Labour Party has complemented the iconic red colour palette with an array of modern, vibrant colours and tones. It has also started using a highly-readable sans serif font and an extensive library of modern icons. *The result is clear and clean.*

During the 2019 General Election campaign it wanted to look competent, but also needed to appeal to people who had been long-time supporters and had always seen Labour as “a bit alternative”. It tried to tick both boxes: not looking too commercial nor too establishment, but also trying to look like it knew what it was doing.





LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

The Liberal Democrats are known for their orange/gold (officially “amber”) and black, iconic diamond shaped campaign posters and its ‘bird of liberty’ emblem. Birds usually represent freedom and combined with the yellow-orange colour, the party branding represents confidence, creativity, cheerfulness and friendliness.

During the 2019 General Election campaign, the Liberal Democrats incorporated lighter shades of colours of their rivals, alongside their traditional amber and black. Green, red and blue, with their yellow, felt less establishment, more millennial and gave the impression it was trying to scoop up all of

the anti-Brexit votes, regardless of traditional voter affiliation. Unlike previous campaigns, the Lib Dems also decided to make its leader the face of the campaign, to challenge the strong characters of the Conservatives and Labour.



The Scottish National Party's symbol cleverly combines two Scottish symbols: the saltire (the flag) and the thistle (the national flower of Scotland), and includes the party name in upper case, making the logo bolder and louder, all giving the impression of heritage, culture and dignity.

The SNP applies its branding very consistently on all its campaigns, which plays to its advantage. The sans serif font is distinctive and easy to read. The yellow and black colour scheme projects power, freedom and development.



GREEN PARTY

Believe it or not the Greens use the colour green, a pretty obvious choice for a party focussed on environmentalism. The colour green also invokes feelings of sustainability, durability, freshness and wealth.

The logo is very clear in its intentions: a green earth surrounded by sunflower petals, symbolising their desire for a healthier, more unified planet, working as part of a global partnership.



PLAID CYMRU

The colours yellow and green help to represent modernity, freshness and growth. The combination of hues in the Welsh poppy (although lots of people think this looks more like a daffodil) helps Plaid establish themselves as a movement for positive change in Wales. The green represents nature (the poppy reinforces this idea) and growth, and the yellow gives an image of confidence and optimism for the future.

Dropping the Cymru and focussing on Plaid in the logo is a clever choice, as it looks less cluttered, completing the idea of a new, forward-thinking, alternative in Wales.

BIGGER THAN YOUR BRAND

Your slogans, the way you write your pledges and the words you use will also reflect your personality and your priorities. Remember that your branding is about you, but also about them.

In a world of marketing, ads and soundbites, it's important that political candidates have a strong brand that their target audience connects with. Your branding will help voters to relate to you and trust you.

Whether you are standing for an established party and have branding guidelines, or not, you are standing for public office because you believe YOU are the best person to represent your local community.

You want to share your story, your background, your values and your vision, and show your constituents why they can trust you. **And remember, trust = votes.**

CHAPTER 2

How To Reach
The Right People

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR VOTERS

In order to get the right message to the right people at the right time, you need to know who your voters are. In the last chapter we mentioned how looking at the demographics for your local area can help you better understand your target audience. This information is essential for you to start creating profiles of potential voters in your community; understanding who they are so that you can tailor messages specifically for them.

From finding your “brand voice” to publishing relevant pieces of content, understanding your target audience will help you to create content that speaks to the different members of your community, or in other words, help you to connect with all of your voters, whether

they are Instagram-using Millennials, Gen Xers who like to hang out on Facebook or people who are not as digitally confident.

Consider the different social media content you would craft for the following two potential voters:



VOTER 1

Age: 26
Sex: Female
Status: Single
Education: University
Preferred Social Platform: Instagram, Facebook
Issues: Environmentalism, social justice, human rights

Age: 55
Sex: Male
Status: Married
Profession: Financial Analyst
Preferred Social Platform: Twitter, Facebook
Issues: Economy, Tax, NHS



VOTER 2

Knowing as much as you can about your voters makes it much easier to not only create appropriate social media content, but also attract people who are likely to become your voters.

Although you can find most of the information you need by looking at local demographics, or from your social media platform analytics, never neglect the simple act of asking questions, through website surveys, telephone polls, or simple social media posts. **Your audience's responses will provide valuable insights.**

GROWING A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORTERS

MESSAGE + MISSION = MOVEMENT.

Now that you've worked out why you're standing, what makes you different to the other candidates and why voters should care, *you need to build a movement*. It might seem a little extravagant—after all you're not promising to stop climate change.

But even if you are committed to big, important issues, these begin with change in your community.

You know what people's priorities are in your local area and they should be starting to hear about what your passions are and seeing how you can help. Climate change or

homelessness might be big issues in your area, and you believe that *you* can help to solve them.

But in order to start tackling pressing issues, you need people who are just as committed to your cause to help you spread your message, in order to build a movement.

Building a community of supporters is essential in both offline and online campaigning; from delivering leaflets and conducting surveys on the doorstep, to sharing social media content and moderating comments.

The most effective way to create a brand new community or contribute to an existing one in order to build your movement, is via Facebook Groups.

FACEBOOK GROUPS

As a candidate you will want to do two things to help build your movement:

- 1. Search for, join and contribute to existing Facebook Groups in your local area.** *Do not use this as an opportunity to directly solicit votes, rather see what issues are being reported and what solutions are being offered by those affected. See how these problems match your pledges. **Engage with the comments, but spend more time listening, than typing.***
- 2. Create your own Facebook Group, linked to your candidate Facebook page.** In this Group, you will begin to grow your movement of supporters by asking questions, sharing updates and using Facebook Live videos.

Facebook Groups offer you organic reach. This means that content posted in your Facebook Group is more likely to be seen by your followers in their newsfeed than what you post on your Facebook page. Facebook Groups help you form meaningful relationships built on loyalty and connect with people in your community on a more personal level.

How do you ensure you're making the most of your Facebook Group and opportunities to engage with your voters, in order to build your movement?

Here are 5 tips:

1. Make your rules and expectations crystal clear. Ask yourself: what are my goals for the Group? What do I expect members to post? What are my guidelines for how

members should interact? Detailed rules go hand in hand with meaningful, high-quality conversations.

2. Prioritise daily discussions. Posting on a regular basis is definitely a commitment, but you can use themed discussions and ask moderators and admins to help lead discussions.
3. Let your Group know you're listening, but don't talk too much. Keep a close eye on your notifications and replies. If you're asked a question, respond. If you're tagged in a comment, react. **But you need to find a balance between listening and talking.**
4. Avoid direct selling. Or in your case, asking for votes. Nobody joins a Group to be spammed with links or sales pitches. Yes you really want votes, but what you want more is to make your community better. If Group members believe in your message

and share your mission, they will join your movement.

5. Experiment with different posts and content formats. Experiment with user-generated content (ask members to upload images or videos of what's going on in your neighbourhood), do Facebook Live videos when you've got an update, use polls, share images and ask for recommendations. **Use all the different features available to you.**

Your supporters will begin to trust you when they believe you're driven by things other than just chasing votes. **You have to earn trust by communicating and demonstrating that you share the same values and beliefs.** You have to talk about your *WHY* and prove it with *WHAT* you do.

Remember: Message + Mission = Movement.

ORGANIC CONTENT VS. PAID ADVERTISING

When it comes to running a social media campaign for local, regional or devolved public office, one of the decisions you will need to take is how much money to spend on targeted social media ads. As a candidate you won't spend anywhere near the amount national political parties spend during a General Election campaign, so if you do decide to allocate some of your budget on boosting your content on social media, you will want to make sure every single penny is well spent.

You should consult with your party and with your election agent to ensure that you follow the Electoral Commission's guidance and rules on campaign spend limits.

I want to let you in on a little secret: if you want to make the most of your paid ads, you need to make sure you are creating and publishing good organic content (any content that you upload to social media platforms without paying).

A foundation of content that gets good engagement and reaches your followers WITHOUT you paying a penny in advertising, will make sure that when you do part with your cash, the ads will reach both your followers and those you pay to target.

But, if you do wish to allocate some of your budget to targeted advertising on social media, make sure you meet the following criteria:

YOU KNOW:	YOU ENSURE:
What your objective is	The content is high quality
Who your audience is	There's a clear call to action

CHAPTER 3

How To Share Your Story On Social Media

THE POWER OF STORYTELLING

In a world of information overload, noise and hype, well-crafted stories cut through the clutter to get the message across and influence people.

Politicians love to use facts and figures to prove their point:

“Reaching Net Zero by 2050 with investment in clean energy solutions and green infrastructure to reduce carbon emissions and pollution.”

“Our first priorities in the next parliament will be...raising £7 billion a year in additional revenue by putting 1p on Income Tax, with this money to be ringfenced for spending on the NHS and social care.”

BUT facts don't sell.

Welcome to the power of storytelling. Whether you are talking to a single young mum, or a retired ex-serviceman, sharing a great story means you can make a bigger impact. **Understanding the power of storytelling and how to tell a good story will help you to deliver the right message, to the right people, at the right time.**

During the 2019 General Election, political parties and news broadcasters published social videos that amassed millions of views and reached people all over the country.

CASE STUDY



The Labour party generated over 13 million views on a Facebook video called “Rob Delaney on the NHS”. The combination of a celebrity, a personal experience from the past and a poignant personal experience helped Labour to articulate their pledges on the NHS. Instead of using facts and figures, graphs and projected models, they used the power of storytelling to share part of their manifesto.

Powerful stories trigger emotional responses by humanising an important issue and inspiring the audience to take action. We need to share stories more than we share stats.

Logic doesn't always lead to votes but emotion can.

DELIVERING THE RIGHT MESSAGE, TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE, AT THE RIGHT TIME

Every time you create content and share it on your social media, you expect something to happen: videos to be watched, press releases to be retweeted and people to engage with your posts. Although social media platforms have algorithms that prioritise content based on different ranking signals (*your newsfeed will be generated by the popularity of posts that you have engaged with*), the reach and engagement of your content is determined by how well you do this:

**“DELIVER THE RIGHT MESSAGE, TO
THE RIGHT PEOPLE, AT THE RIGHT
TIME”.**

We will talk about how to create compelling content for social media in the next chapter, but in order to create this content you need to be able to answer the following questions:

1. What is your objective?
2. Who is your target audience?
3. What are the consequences?

Welcome to 'OTAC' (Objective, Target Audience, Consequences).

Objective

Whenever you plan any offline or online activity, the first question you need to ask yourself is “*why am I doing this*”? **Asking yourself WHY will help you properly consider the time, budget and resources available to you, and help you understand if this activity will help you reach your overall goal.** Can you achieve this objective and is it clearly

quantifiable? The chosen objective will also inform any ‘call to action’ associated with this activity.

After all, words may inspire, but only action creates change.

Examples of clear objectives could be:

- Driving 25% more traffic to a website.
- Signing up 50 more people to a newsletter.
- Getting 10,000 views on a Facebook video.
- Asking 500 residents to complete and return an offline survey.

Target Audience

The second question you need to ask yourself is “*who am I trying to reach?*” **Working out who you’re talking to will help you finalise your objective, choose what kind of content to create and which platform to use.**

Consequences

The third question you need to ask yourself is “*what will be the ramifications*”? **If you create and publish a particular piece of social media content, what will be the positive and negative outcomes of this activity?** This third and final step is essential in helping you to make an informed decision about the time and resource commitment of this activity.

You may find that the negative consequences outweigh the positive ones and decide to change or even cancel your approach.

It's helpful to try to list at least two positive and negative consequences and consider the following categories: local people's reaction, opposition reaction, local press reaction and the bigger picture.

For example:

- Could local people misinterpret what you're trying to say?
- Could the opposition accuse you of something?
- Could the local press pick up the story and how would they spin it?
- Have you misread the situation, or misunderstood some of the key arguments and risk being accused of being out of touch, or your information out of date?
- Might you be regarded as exploiting a bad situation or not behaving tactfully?

Remembering WHY you are standing and HOW you're going to spread your message and share your mission so that you can build your movement, will help you decide WHAT you are going to do to win.

The OTAC framework will help you create content that will hopefully resonate with your local community and garner you support.

CREATING CAMPAIGNS THAT CONVERT YOUR COMMUNITY

Regardless of how long your social media campaign is going to be, you will want to break your political campaign down into micro campaigns. These micro campaigns will allow you to contribute to trending topics and events, collaborate with other candidates and provide a focussed objective around which you can create content that will convert your community into supporters.

So how do you create a campaign that will help grow your movement?

There are three components to creating campaigns:

1. Seeing an opportunity.
2. Seizing an opportunity.
3. Sharing on social media.

Seeing An Opportunity

The movement you have created will help you identify opportunities to create campaigns.

Remember the local Facebook Groups that you have joined and the one you set up?

These forums will be full of people who are posting about issues in your community and in the comments, you will find possible solutions and supporters who can join your cause.

It's important to constantly monitor the local news, community WhatsApp groups and to sincerely ask people how you can serve

them. Remember to constantly check what your competitors are up to and if you are a member of a political party, make sure you check what campaigns your colleagues are creating.

Another way to find campaign opportunities is to see what's trending on social media, particularly on Twitter.

There are two ways to effectively use trending topics on social media:

- There are topics that are trending right here, right now. These are usually related to events happening at the time e.g. the Government announces a new policy that affects your local community, or something relevant breaks in the news and trends. These campaigns are reactive, and you need to be able to quickly assess if and how you will create content.

- There are events and holidays that happen on the same day, or occur during a planned week, every year. There are even hashtags that trend on the same day, every week, that you can plan content and campaigns around. For example, you can use *#MondayMotivation* or *#WisdomWednesdays* to jumpstart your campaigns. There are existing social media campaigns like *#WorldEnvironmentDay* on 5th June, or *#WorldTourismDay* on 27th September. It's then up to you how you will seize these existing campaigns to create *proactive* content.

DOWNLOAD A FREE SOCIAL MEDIA CALENDAR HERE.

Seizing An Opportunity

Using the OTAC framework you can quickly assess which issues align with your cause and if you have the time and resources to create a campaign. Establishing a clear objective, defining your target audience and considering all of the consequences will help you to create a campaign that will capture the hearts and minds of your community.

Sharing On Social Media

This is where you leverage the power of social media to share your story in a micro campaign. Whether your objective was to gain signatures on a petition or get 200 views on a Live stream in your Facebook Group, **social media will play a vital role in amplifying your message, developing your mission and growing your movement.**

CASE STUDY

How did Captain Tom Moore raise so much money for the NHS and become a national treasure?

Tom knew exactly WHY he wanted to do WHAT he did. He believed the people who worked in the NHS were heroes. He had clarity of vision when it came to *why*, discipline in knowing *how* and consistency in delivering the *what*.

He saw an opportunity to create a cause founded on his belief that the NHS is full of extraordinarily brave people who could do with help during a global health emergency. Unlike most people, he decided to do something and created a campaign with a very clear objective.

Leveraging the power of social media, he was able to share his message, spread his mission and create a movement that captured imaginations all over the country and brought them all together through a common cause.

Children sent him birthday cards, artists drew illustrations of him crossing the finishing line, soldiers formed a Guard of Honour and he was asked to be the guest of honour at the new NHS Nightingale hospital in Harrogate.

Captain Tom saw an opportunity, seized it and shared it on social media.

WHEN AND HOW TO USE PROACTIVE AND REACTIVE CONTENT

Now that you:

- Have discovered trending topics
- Have tapped into your community to generate plenty of campaign ideas
- Understand how to use the OTAC framework to quickly and confidently assess which campaigns to create or contribute to,

It's time to learn the difference between proactive and reactive content.

Political campaigns are fast-paced and are often without vision or strategy, as candidates usually spend most of their time reacting to what is happening around them.

But one of the main reasons you wanted to run for local, regional or devolved public office was because you believe YOU can make a change in your local community. **You should spend your time telling people about *your* message and *your* mission so that you can build *your* own movement (*proactive*), not tell people why the other candidate's ideas are not as good as yours, or simply send out press releases to respond to criticism from other candidates (*reactive*).** So, *how do you do it?*

The 70% Rule

It would be naive to think that you won't need to respond and react to things happening around you. The opposition making a policy announcement, a tragedy in your local community, or something happening nationally that affects you locally. Working with your colleagues and supporters, you

will need to be able to quickly react to what's going on. The OTAC framework will help you assess the time, budget and resources you have available so that you can create the most effective reactive content you can.

You will also want to allocate time to respond to what other candidates are doing or saying. Local people will want to know what you think about certain ideas or proposals. **But don't spend more than 30% of your time, budget and resources producing reactive content or campaigns.**

CASE STUDY



Click the thumbnail to watch the video.

Despite producing a 104 page manifesto, creating very slick and simple social videos, and appearing on TV and radio debates all over the country, the biggest criticism of Labour's 2019 General Election campaign was that people didn't really know what Labour was offering.

Their slogan was "it's time for real change", but it wasn't clear what that change was or who should champion that cause.

To combat these claims, straight after Labour

launched its manifesto, Jeremy Corbyn did a video in which he summed up some of the party's most prominent policies in 60 seconds.

This short, simple and shareable video was a piece of very effective reactive content, produced to counter the claims that voters didn't know what Labour was offering.

70% of your time and resources should be dedicated to creating proactive content and campaigns. This is content that allows you to get ahead of the agenda, share your story, build your brand and grow your community.

Create campaigns and offer solutions BEFORE the problems manifest.

Do this via content that you can plan, schedule and share, irrespective of what's happening in the news. *Take the initiative to build your movement, rather than let your competitors control the narrative.* You can create content such as:

- A Facebook poll asking what people think about your proposals.
- *Ask Me Anything* chats on Twitter.
- Behind-the-scenes shots of community interaction on Instagram Stories.
- A Facebook Live stream with local business

owners.

- A video series that help to illustrate your pledges.
- An infographic of useful information to help people access public services in your community.

The list goes on!

CASE STUDY



Click the thumbnail to watch the video.

A good example of proactive content is Conservative candidate during the postponed 2020 London mayoral election, Shaun Bailey's #MakeLondonSafe campaign.

After polling and speaking with people all over London, it was clear that crime was at the top of their list, specifically that people want to see police stations in their local communities. Shaun gathered together his supporters and headed to a closed down police station to make a passionate speech about WHY he believed this policy would make a difference.

It is important to bear in mind that good quality videos can share a story with pictures alone.

He clearly explained how he would deliver his plan and what it would mean for Londoners in a short, simple and shareable video.

This was a micro campaign, part of his bigger #MakeLondonSafe campaign, in which he uses news coverage, graphics, animated videos and social videos to connect with communities and build his movement.

You may find that there's some overlap between *proactive* and *reactive* content, or that some of your proactive campaigns come about due to reactive content.

Using both types of content will help you stay ahead of your competitors, see, seize and share campaigns that will help you create stories that trigger trust.

Trust wins support.

HOW TO NAVIGATE A CRISIS ON SOCIAL MEDIA (LIKE COVID-19)

While COVID-19 was not the first crisis to affect normal life, nor will it be the last, it was one of the most disruptive in terms of global impact. Many lives tragically lost, schools closed, as well as millions of employees furloughed and elections postponed.

As social distancing increasingly isolated us by restricting visits to family and friends, the concept of connection took on a new meaning with the roles of social media and technology critical.

Social media drives a lot of conversations around any emergency as people turn to their favourite social media channels to share experiences, information and feelings about

what's going on.

We are able to see the power of social media when these conversations turn into a community of connections between distant individuals reaching out to help others and create meaningful relationships virtually.

As a candidate for local, regional or devolved public office, where do you fit into a crisis like this and how can you use social media for good?

Here are five tips to help you navigate a crisis on social media:

1. Assess the online situation. What is the current mood on social media? What are people talking about, how are they reacting and what hashtags are trending? Social media will provide you a real-time snapshot of how things are on the ground. While it can be difficult to postpone campaigns or cancel certain content, carrying on with business as usual, even when well-intentioned, could look tone-deaf. **Monitor both your movement and the media at large so that you understand what is going on in your community.**
2. Work out if there is a place for you. Once you have assessed the situation and the state of play on social media, determine what role you and your movement can play, and if your audience wants or needs

anything from you.

3. Do NOT turn a crisis into a platform to promote your campaign. Often nearly every aspect of life changes due to a crisis. It might be tempting to find new, creative ways to use social media to promote your campaign while it is abuzz with conversation. **However, a word of caution: people can smell opportunistic politicians who are exploiting a crisis from a mile away and won't be scared to call you out!** If you have decided that you can't provide any help, it is better to publish a simple message expressing empathy with the situation. If you are really unsure how to navigate a crisis, stay quiet while you formulate a plan. It may be worth checking your scheduled content and consider whether to pause those campaigns until calm has been restored.

4. Communicate with your community.

Humans crave connection and you have the opportunity to open yourself up to conversations within your community to forge bonds. **This isn't a time to solicit votes, but a time to show with words and deeds the care you have for your community.** Use your Facebook Group to find out what help is needed and where, to make connections between relevant services and individuals in the community, or help to connect people to one another

5. Lead with empathy, not fear. During a crisis

people want to know that we're all in this together. It can help if we are able to show others how we feel. Use shared experiences to make your content and campaigns authentic and relevant. **Use this time to serve your community with positive action, not to capitalise on fear and anxiety, even if**

you see potential for political point scoring.

There will be a time for reflection and case studies, but during any crisis, consistency and dedication to serving your community during uncertain times will better help your audience trust you.

CHAPTER 4

How To Create Compelling Content

TWO RULES TO REMEMBER

When it comes to creating compelling content for your social media channels, there are two simple rules you need to remember: The WHAT and HOW of social media content:

WHAT	HOW
INSPIRE, EDUCATE, ENTERTAIN	SHORT, SIMPLE, SHAREABLE

1. WHAT: Create content that will INSPIRE, EDUCATE or ENTERTAIN.
2. HOW: Create content that is SHORT, SIMPLE and SHAREABLE.

Using trending topics, telling a story and building a movement through the OTAC framework will help you work out what content to make and how.

When people come to watch your Facebook Live stream, swipe through your Instagram Stories or scroll through your Tweets, they are looking for at least one of three things:

1. To be inspired.
2. To be educated.
3. To be entertained.

When you're breaking your campaigns down into micro campaigns, or when you're creating standalone content, you should consider which one of these three WHATs you are adding to your objective.

Inspire

Imagine if one of your campaign pledges were to eradicate homelessness in your community and your solution was to first provide temporary accommodation, secondly to provide skills workshops and training courses, and thirdly work with local employers to guarantee interviews.

Your campaign objective could be to sign up local B&Bs to provide accommodation, the local college to provide special workshops and courses and local businesses to offer job interviews or sponsor the campaign.

Knowing that your audience consisted, say, mainly of females aged 25-34, you might decide to do a Facebook Live stream explaining your idea: Why you believe this solution will work, how you will deliver it and

what you will do, before asking viewers to share the video and tag friends, family and colleagues who may be able to help.

You might also work with the local press and ask your community of supporters to share the Live stream with their network. **Using the Message + Mission = Movement model and the power of storytelling, you would hopefully be able to inspire your local community to help you to take action.**

Educate

Your local council has made changes to waste and recycling...*again*. People in your local community might not have received a leaflet through the door informing them about their new bin collection day, or what goes in which bag or box. This is your opportunity to offer a public service announcement on social media

channels, informing people of an important change.

Your campaign objective would be to let as many people know as possible that their weekly bin collection has changed. Knowing that your audience consisted of an even spread of age ranges, you might choose to create social media infographics optimised for each channel. If there were complex changes to bins and bags, you could post a quick video explaining what goes in each box or bag, and when and where to leave it for collection.

You could share this content in Facebook Groups, other community groups, collaborate with local colleagues and your local party to distribute your message and ask supporters to tag a friend in the comments. Make sure you keep post titles clear and to the point,

attracting as many viewers as possible.

Entertain

Some of the issues in your local community will be serious and complex, and will require sensible solutions and mature social media content. The OTAC framework will help you get the messaging and mood right.

But there are times where you can share important messages that also entertain your audience. The city government in Round Rock, Texas, created effective educational content that also had the objective of entertaining followers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For example:

TEXAS CORONAVIRUS PREVENTION

Wash your hands like you just got done slicing jalapeños for a batch of nachos and you need to take your contacts out.

(That's like 20 seconds of scrubbing, y'all.)



A QUICK GUIDE TO SOCIAL DISTANCING

6 FEET, Y'ALL!

11 REGULAR-SIZED DONUTS + 1 TEXAS-SIZED DONUT

0FT 1FT 2FT 3FT 4FT 5FT 6FT



★ HOW TO **TEXAN** RESPONSIBLY ★



Maintain at least 6 feet separation from other individuals not within the same household.

REMEMBER WHEN SOCIAL DISTANCING,



EVERYTHING IS

BIGGER

IN TEXAS



ACT LIKE ALL OF YOUR ~~EXES~~
REALLY DO LIVE IN TEXAS



STAY 6 FEET APART



ROUNDROCKTEXAS.CO

YOU: "Alexa, what is there to do in Round Rock today?"

ALEXA: "Aren't you supposed to be staying at home? I mean, like, you can go out to perform essential activities, but remember, practice social distancing (6 feet) and keep washing those hands."



Sometimes well-judged humour means people want to share the message more. Such creative content is a great way to both engage followers and entertain them through education. But think carefully before you try to be funny. Not everyone may get your humour or may think you are trivialising an important matter. **It's always a good idea to check with a range of people of all ages whether you have judged the mood correctly and got the tone just right!**

Now you know WHAT type of social media content may compel your community to take action, HOW should this content be presented?

SHORT, SIMPLE AND SHAREABLE.

When crafting your social media messages, you should make ALL of your content as short, simple and shareable as possible.

Always remember your objective, your target audience and the consequences (OTAC) when creating your campaigns so that your message is fully understood.

For example:



CASE STUDY

This graphic is short, simple and shareable. Of course this policy announcement needs more detail, so further information is provided in the post description.

CASE STUDY

Even though this graphic has more text than the last, each word has been chosen carefully so that it still meets the short, simple and shareable criteria. The design is also simple, clear and very effective.



Remembering the **WHAT** and **HOW** of creating compelling content will help you share your story and reach the right people, every time. Very often, **LESS IS MORE.**

HOW TO USE HASHTAGS

The hashtag was born in the summer of 2007 on Twitter and has since become one of the most recognisable and widely used symbols of our time, and not just on social media.

Hashtags were intended to be useful, fun and simple and have since been used:

- To group together related content on social media, making it more searchable.
- To add commentary to a topic—serious, satirical and everything in between.
- To spark social movements.
- To start global conversations on a wide range of complex issues.

Hashtags allow you to see what is happening around the world, to understand what people are talking about, to contribute to conversations and to discover topics, events

and movements. Hashtags are not just for Twitter anymore and are effective on other social media platforms. They can help increase the engagement and reach of your posts and help your followers to see how you are contributing to the debate. They can also help you add context to a post, especially when you're trying to keep your caption short.

HASHTAG BASICS

- **They always start with the # symbol, but they won't work if you use spaces, punctuation or other symbols.**
- **Don't string too many words together - the best hashtags are usually short, simple and specific.**
- **Make sure your social media accounts are public, otherwise your posts won't be seen by non-followers.**
- **Use relevant and specific hashtags - remember your content needs to INSPIRE, EDUCATE or ENTERTAIN. Your hashtags should add value to your content.**

- **Limit the number of hashtags you use - more is not always better as it can look like spam.**

Which Hashtags To Use

Go back to the SWOT analysis you did when you were evaluating your competitors' digital presence and review the hashtags they are using. Do you have any content that you can contribute to that conversation? How well were those hashtags received by members of your community? Make note of which hashtags they use most often and how many hashtags they use in each of their posts. Identifying their keywords may help you to understand a different perspective on the key issues.

Twitter has a tool to help you find trending topics and Instagram has a powerful search

feature that helps you discover the most popular or most recent content on the platform. **The more you engage with content on social media platforms, the more you are able to see related content that will help you plan your own campaigns.**

Keep track of which hashtags you have used on past posts and analyse which have received the most engagement. You may want to consider using these in the future if there is a positive trend and higher levels of engagement.

How To Use Hashtags On Each Social Media Platform

f FACEBOOK

Use 1-2 hashtags per post, although they are used more to increase searchability by marketers, or to add sarcasm by other users.

- You can search for hashtags.
- You can click on a hashtag to see related content.
- It can be challenging to see the total reach and engagement of hashtags because of user privacy settings.

@ INSTAGRAM

Use 5-10 hashtags per post (although you can add up to 30!)

- You can search and follow hashtags.
- Consider posting the hashtags as the first comment, so that the focus is on your caption.
- Include hashtags in comments on other people's content.

TWITTER

Use 1-2 hashtags per Tweet for best practice.

- Use hashtags anywhere in your Tweet to show emphasis.
- You can include hashtags in a comment, when you Retweet, in replies and even in your Twitter biography.
- If you are creating a new hashtag for your movement, do some research to see if and how it is already being used.

YOUTUBE

Use 2-3 hashtags per video.

- You can add hashtags in your video title or description.
- You can click on a hashtag to see related content.
- Hashtags can increase rankings and discoverability.

When it comes to using hashtags, remember: short, simple and specific. The more specific you are, the more likely you are to attract your target audience and to add value to the right conversation.

Don't be afraid to use popular hashtags like #MondayMotivation or #ThrowbackThursday even though they are saturated with content, but make sure you are creating content consistent with your movement.

THE TOOLS, APPS AND SOFTWARE YOU NEED

As a candidate for local, regional or devolved public office you have three constraints on your social media campaign:

- Lack of time.
- Lack of resources.
- Lack of budget.

However, whether you want to create a square, captioned video for Facebook, a template for Instagram stories or a landscape graphic for Twitter, there are tools, apps and software available for every budget.

The power of visuals: Visual content, in the form of both graphics and in particular video, will help you grab attention and drive engagement.

Just think about the kind of content that makes you stop scrolling in your newsfeed.

Creating content can be as simple or as complex as you want to make it.

Brand Identity

Whether you are creating graphics, infographics, animated videos or templates for future campaigns, you need to use apps that will allow you to implement your brand identity. **Remember: the fundamental building block of brand is consistency. It takes around five to seven impressions for people to begin to recognise your brand.**

So, choose apps that have your colours, your fonts and let you upload your logo.

Graphics

One of the most important principles of good design is maybe so obvious that it's too easy to take for granted: legibility. **If you want your message to be understood, make sure it is easy to read.** Bolder fonts and stronger colours can help things stand out.

When creating graphics for social media remember that people skim read when they scroll and you're trying to grab their attention.

Everyone reads top-down and most cultures read left-right, so think about your layout carefully. Bolder fonts and strong colours can help things stand out.

Consider which feelings or "reactions" you want to evoke. Once you have decided on the emotion, mood and tone, choose the appropriate colours. Some apps can help you

play around with professionally designed colour palettes and help you choose colour groups that create harmony and balance.

Remember that content needs to be created for each platform individually, so it's important to choose apps that allow you to quickly resize your graphics for each social media channel.

DOWNLOAD A LIST OF THE BEST GRAPHICS APPS HERE.

Videos

Video is the most successful type of social content so the next chapter is dedicated to helping you to harness it, however, let's consider a few features now that you want in an app to help get you started.

You need to be able to quickly edit clips, put clips together in a sequence, rearrange clips, add titles, add text, add captions, maybe some animation, perhaps some background music, an outro, or just your logo and then export that video in portrait, landscape or square, depending on the social media channel.

DOWNLOAD A LIST OF THE BEST VIDEO APPS HERE.

Stock Media

You won't always be able to get a photo or a video of a recycling centre, or a youth hostel, so you will need to turn to a stock photo or video site. Although you won't be able to always find localised content, you can make it clear that you're talking about your local community with text and other visuals.

If you are using stock photographs, ensure that they are generic enough not to be recognisable as a particular person or place. Using a photograph, say, that is identifiable as NOT the particular factory you are talking about could easily be noticed by somebody, somewhere, and leave you feeling rather

embarrassed. Make sure that you understand the licensing and usage of each image you use.

DOWNLOAD A LIST OF THE BEST *FREE* STOCK WEBSITES HERE.

Let's consider each of these tips and look at a case study.

CASE STUDY

How did the Brexit Party win an election six weeks after launching as a brand new political party?

The Brexit Party used short, simple and shareable social media messages and created compelling, content-driven campaigns to win the online battle.

The Brexit Party consisted of people who knew the power and potential of social media. The leader, Nigel Farage, was already one of the most followed politicians and sought to recruit other people with existing profiles who could bring their own followings. They understood that social media would help them to build their movement and rapidly grow a community of supporters by already having many of the necessary elements in place.

The Brexit Party knew exactly who their audience was and tailored their messaging to them. Their branding was so clear that at no point did they need to articulate their

position in social media posts. In fact, there weren't many posts about specific policy issues, such as immigration, climate change, or the environment, all issues relevant to the election that other parties spent too much time focusing on. They read the situation perfectly, knowing that the European elections were more about whether or not the UK should reverse the referendum result, not about other objectives of potential ongoing membership.

Each piece of content had a clear objective and was targeted to their audience. They understood what their audience cared about and focussed solely on those issues: protecting democracy, attacking the other parties' failure to deliver on the referendum result and showing the UK as being humiliated during negotiations.

The Brexit Party's movement contained supporters who were owners and contributors of already established, very active pro-Brexit, cross-party Facebook Groups. Engaging with Facebook Groups such as the "*Jacob Rees Mogg: Supporters' group*", "*I'm a*

***Brexit*er” and “Buy British for Brexit” helped to increase the reach of The Brexit Party’s Facebook posts. It’s important to note that The Brexit Party didn’t have its own Facebook Group, it just used the Message + Mission = Movement model and allowed its supporters to leverage the power of existing Groups.**

The majority of The Brexit Party’s social media content was negative, encouraging people to “react” with the ‘Wow’, ‘Sad’ or ‘Angry’ emoji buttons (‘reactions’) on Facebook. This tapped into the frustration many of their prospective voters felt.

It is vital to read the mood of a campaign to determine whether messaging should be positive or negative. The Brexit Party managed to balance this content with a fresh, modern aesthetic, a cross party group of varied spokespeople and positivity during broadcast engagements on the hopes and ambitions for the UK’s future.

Can you see that during the 2019 European Parliament election, the Brexit Party successfully implemented the social media strategies contained in this eBook, just on a much bigger scale and with a far bigger budget? However, the principles are the same, so it's a good idea for you to:

- Look at the landscape in your local area.
- Create compelling content.

This will help you to reach the right people, share your story and persuade your audience to trust you.

FACEBOOK - WHICH FEATURES TO USE AND HOW

Regardless of the demographics of your local area, Facebook is the most popular social media platform in the UK, so will be an essential tool in your campaign.

The following content ideas will help you to increase engagement on Facebook.

Remember Who

When you click on “create post” on Facebook, you are presented with a variety of options.

What you choose will be a result of the OTAC framework and the content or campaign that you are creating. Who you are targeting will influence what you choose to create.

What Content

Facebook allows you to upload photos and videos, create events, notes, polls and include a lot of data in your post; for example, location and how you are feeling, or what you are doing. You can even just write a post and include backgrounds to make it more eye catching.

Whatever it is you decide to create, just remember that when people are scrolling they need to know as much information in the shortest amount of time possible. Feel free to experiment with different types of content.

For example, an informational post about bin collection changes could be broken up into:

- A short, animated video explaining the changes
- A live stream explaining how to implement

the new changes

- An informational graphic
- An educational infographic
- A short post
- A note with further information
- A short post with an external link to further information
- Sharing your local council's post about the changes
- A collaboration with other local councillors or organisations to explain the changes together
- A poll gauging people's feedback
- A Facebook Story and experiment with the stickers, effects and other features

It's important to think about what you want people to do as a result of consuming your content, so it's a good idea to also include a call to action, whether you want people to

share the post, tag a friend, or message you with requests or information.

Remember you are here to actively engage with the public you want to serve and not just act as a public information system. So consider asking questions, showing “behind-the-scenes” style content, discussing trending topics, telling stories and just experimenting with maintaining lots of variety.

Remember: keep it short, simple and shareable.

When To Post Content

A simple rule when it comes to creating content on Facebook and indeed other social media platforms is: **Posting consistently is good but posting content for the sake of it is not good.** In other words, know when to stop!

Reach for quality over quantity.

Post engaging content that adds value regularly, have a posting schedule for when you are creating campaigns, but crucially check your analytics (insights), to see what is doing well, and when. Here, you can check to see when fans and followers are online and see which post types are engaging the most people. Build your strategy on the evidence available.

When it comes to posting content on Facebook, keep it short, keep it simple and keep it shareable. Experiment with all of the features available. Monitor comments to see what people like, and check your insights to see what people don't like.

INSTAGRAM - WHICH FEATURES TO USE AND HOW

Instagram is much more than just sharing photos. There are now over 24 million people in the UK using the platform to share and view photos, videos and 'Stories' creating an extremely engaged community. *Having an engaged community is the key to success on Instagram.* Interacting with your supporters across Stories, the Feed, IGTV (longer-form videos) and Live will help keep the conversation going and create meaningful connections to share your message, spread your mission and grow your movement.

Remember Who

While Instagram is most popular with females, especially those under 24 years old, the truth is that a huge variety of people use

the platform to share content with family and friends, follow influencers and be entertained, inspired and informed.

What Content

If you were a Police and Crime Commissioner explaining how the government's pledge to recruit 20,000 more police officers would affect your region, you could create the following content on Instagram:

- Share an infographic explaining what the changes are: the numbers, the priorities and the areas that would benefit. Remember to design the graphic to suit the platform - in the case of Instagram the borders should form a square. You could use the swipe feature to show up to 10 graphics, breaking down the changes into bite-sized chunks. **Remember: keep your content simple, short and shareable.**

- Upload photos (and experiment with the filters) of police officers doing their job. You could collaborate with individual police forces and local neighbourhood groups. Tag each other and “regram” - increasing the reach of your content.
- Upload a video (less than a minute long), in a square format, briefly explaining the pledge and how it will affect your region.
- Create behind-the-scenes style photos of your campaign and upload them to the Stories section.
- Share the Feed posts on Stories and experiment with stickers, filters and effects, particularly Q&As, polls, Quiz, Countdown. Try to judge carefully when using stickers and emojis to get the tone just right.
- Go Live to explain the pledge and answer your community’s questions. It’s essential to promote your intention beforehand so

people know to log in at a particular time in advance!

Don't forget to engage with your followers. Liking and replying to their comments shows that you are listening and creates stronger connections.

When To Post Content

According to the data, Wednesdays and Fridays are the best days to post in terms of maximising engagement, but you will need to think about when your local audience would be online and look at your analytics. There are two ways to approach your posting schedule on Instagram: either through creating content and posting it “in the moment”, or creating content (photos, videos, boomerangs etc.) and posting it later on in the day.

When it comes to Instagram you may find yourself agreeing with *The Guardian* that:

“If political Twitter feels increasingly like hard work, Instagram is one of the few places politicians still allow themselves to be playful.”

You can more easily connect with harder-to-reach audiences like young people, get creative and show the non-political side of your life. But remember, the internet has a memory. As your political career advances, posts that you make today will stay with you so make sure you are not leaving something embarrassing or something that might not ‘age’ well when viewed in a future context. And try to keep the posts positive. **Entering arguments online is almost always a bad idea.**

TWITTER - WHICH FEATURES TO USE AND HOW

You may legitimately ask yourself whether or not Twitter matters during your campaign. After all, Twitter is only used by 13.6 million people in the UK, relatively small when compared to the number of Facebook users.

An England flag and a dead fox will prove that Twitter does matter.

The England Flag

At 3:12pm, on 20th November 2014, Emily Thornberry hit “Tweet”. At the time she was serving as the Shadow Attorney General and as MP for Islington South and Finsbury, when she posted a photo of a house in Kent with three English flags flying. She simply wrote: “Image from Rochester”. At 6:15pm she

Tweeted again to apologise for “any offence caused by the three flag picture” and that “people should fly the England flag with pride”. By 10:30pm she had resigned from the front bench.

This was the beginning of the ‘Twitterstorm’, now a routine worry for politicians of all stripes, as journalists scour their Tweets and turn them into front-page features.

The Dead Fox

On 26th December 2019, a British lawyer with a large following on Twitter, announced he had killed a fox with a baseball bat. Yes, it was a quiet news day due to the Christmas break, but this single Tweet turned into front page news for the *Financial Times* and the *Daily Mail*.

If you are looking to forge relationships with journalists, it is important to keep up-to-date with local or national politicians and engage with those in your community who use Twitter. This platform can help you to discover, and contribute to, conversations that people are having right now.

Remember Who

Twitter gives you access to more power and influence than the size of its user base would suggest. It is the principal online hangout of journalists, politicians and members of the public wanting to check trending topics and actively scroll for more information and comment on news stories. You can create content that will help you connect with both your community and with influencers who can help you to grow your movement.

What Content

People are in a ‘discovery’ mindset when they’re on Twitter, so you want to create content that is relevant to conversations happening right now, that adds something new to the narrative. **Twitter moves very quickly, so you will need to act fast if you want to contribute to a conversation.**

Here are five best practices to help you create Tweets that will spark conversations and engage your followers:

1. Keep your Tweets short. **Keep each Tweet focussed on one specific message, rather than trying to convey multiple things.**

After all, you’ve only got 280 characters.

Remember: short, simple and shareable.

2. Use visuals in your Tweets. Adding an image, video or even a GIF can help to increase engagement and show your

personality. **People are three times more likely to engage with Tweets that contain videos and photos.**

3. Insert relevant hashtags. Hashtags are a powerful tool that allow you to expand your reach and become a part of relevant conversations. Best practice recommends using no more than two hashtags per Tweet.
4. Ask questions and run polls. Asking questions is an effective way of interacting with your audience and running polls makes sure you are creating campaigns that will benefit those you seek to serve.
5. Retweeting relevant content and replying to Tweets are great ways to maintain a Twitter presence and be responsive to your community. Avoid long or heated exchanges and use Direct Messages to resolve any complex issues rather than

enter a heated argument or private conversation in full view. **Remember, Twitter is a platform where there is proportionately a lot more political hostility so be careful of anything you commit to writing. Even deleted tweets can be kept and used against you.**

When To Post Content

There's no right or wrong when it comes to the number of times you should Tweet each day, or at what times. Instead, focus on creating a regular cadence of content that's relevant to your target audience and authentic to your campaign.

You might want to be aware of local press deadlines if your objective is to get a story out, or look at when you get the most Tweet engagement if you want to run a poll with

your local community. Search “Trending Topics”, check your notifications and see where you can add value.

YOUTUBE - WHICH FEATURES TO USE AND HOW

When it comes to social media, the platform least understood and most underestimated in election campaigns is YouTube. YouTube is everywhere. Ofcom says that 95% of adult internet users visits YouTube regularly.

YouTube is particularly popular with young adults. In 2019, Ofcom reported that the entertainment platform most watched by young adults is YouTube, with a viewing average of 73 minutes every day per person. However, political parties and individual candidates just aren't creating compelling content that this audience craves.

If YouTube is the new TV, then putting paid ads on the platform is the new billboard.

For example, during the 2019 General Election a YouTube search for “UK election 2019” produced results from professional news organisations such as the BBC and Daily Telegraph, but nothing from political parties explaining their policies.

However, the weekend before the 2019 General Election, the Conservatives paid for a series of banner ads on the YouTube homepage generating millions of views in the first 24 hours. This might well have signalled a turning point when it comes to using YouTube as part of campaigns in UK elections.

But what now? It seems that politicians, political parties and “politics” in general are still largely absent from the platform. So, where does that leave local councillors, city and regional mayors, police and crime

commissioners, and members of devolved legislatures?

Remember, you have three constraints on your social media campaigns:

1. Lack of time.
2. Lack of resources.
3. Lack of budget.

So, ask yourself: Will you be able to create enough compelling, good quality video content to justify setting up an account on another platform like YouTube?

Before you make your mind up on YouTube, read the following chapter on why video is such an important medium online.

CHAPTER 5

The Power Of Social Video

VIDEO

Even though algorithms are constantly evolving and social media users' behaviour is constantly changing, there is something that is more powerful than ever before: Video.

The Power Of Social Video

Video is the primary type of social content. It's the most immediate and cut through way for you to share your story and reach the right people. Although it's a lot easier for you to create memes, or put together infographics, if you want to share your message and get results, video needs to be part of your campaign.

Personalising Video Content

However, it's not enough to just "make videos". Once you have your objective, you

need to identify your target audience. Once you know who you are targeting (whether organically or through paid advertising), you can create the right type of content. Personalised video is a much more effective way to share your story. A male aged 65+ consumes and reacts to completely different types of video than a 25 year old female.

Optimising Video Content For Social Media Platforms

Not only do you need to personalise your videos for your audience, you need to optimise them for different social media channels. What works on Facebook won't necessarily work on Instagram. Each platform has its own video specifications in terms of dimensions, ratios, formats, lengths and file sizes.

Meanwhile, there are also user preferences. **If you want to reach the right people, you need to give them what they want and how they want it.**

Long-Form Video

In 2016 Google rolled out 'six-second bumper ads'. Digital marketers quickly responded by creating shorter-style videos. This, combined with our seemingly ever-decreasing attention span, surely indicates that shorter videos are better? *Not necessarily.*

Recent changes have demonstrated algorithms favour longer-form videos. Facebook is encouraging creators to make videos at least three minutes long, so that the organic reach is higher. Instagram has introduced IGTV which allows you to increase the usual one minute maximum video upload

to 60 minutes (if uploading it from the web). However, Twitter only has a maximum video length of two minutes 20 seconds.

The rule is to experiment with your video content and see what works best based on the platform you intend to use.

When all is said and done it comes down to three things:

1. Do you have a powerful opening ‘hook’?
2. Does your video tell an engaging story?
3. Are you giving people what they want to watch?

Authenticity Over Production Value

In local, regional or devolved public office you don't have the time, money or resources to create the next big viral political video. But, don't worry. **What people want to see is real**

life, over well-shot videos. People are drawn to real content and genuine stories. Not only do people want to see something, *they want to feel part of it.* Videos that reveal sneak peaks, behind the scenes and “live moments” help build connections and trust between the viewer and the author.

Video is the most popular form of content. This is unlikely to change anytime soon and will likely remain one of the best ways to tell your story and to reach the right people.

CHECKLIST FOR MAKING VIDEOS

Making your videos look more professional is more *technique* than *tools*, so don't worry too much about your budget.

Here are 10 tips to help you create compelling video content:

PRE-PRODUCTION

1. Plan your videos in advance. Before you even get your camera out, you need to know the answers to the following questions:
 - What do you want to achieve?
 - Who do you want to reach?
 - What are the consequences of making this video?
 - What can you shoot?

It helps to map out a timeline or a storyboard before you hit 'Record'.

PRODUCTION

2. Use plenty of light. **Whether you're shooting indoors or outdoors, you need to make the most of the light, especially natural light.**

Make sure there aren't any silhouettes or shadows caused by bad light positions - such as a subject standing in front of a window. If you wear spectacles, make sure that you hold your head in a position where the light doesn't reflect off them.

3. Consider the background. Be intentional with what is behind you. **While the background should never be a distraction, it could be an addition depending on the video topic.** If you're talking about new traffic calming measures, having a busy road in the background could enhance

the message, (although you would need to think about audio levels).

4. Check audio quality. **Usually your audio quality is more important than your video quality, as most people are willing to watch a video that is not shot in HD, or is a little bit grainy. But if the audio quality is poor you will soon find people switching off.** You also have more leeway with social video as around 85% of people watch videos muted. Depending on your budget, you may want to consider getting a lapel microphone to plug into your phone or camera.
5. Watch your framing. Think about where everything and everyone is positioned in the shot. Is the top of their head cut out? Is the camera eye-level? Does everything look straight? Will the footage be shaky? Avoid unnecessary pans and zooms. There are times to follow the action, but if you are

filming something let the motion that's happening naturally in the video dominate the video. **Keep your camera static as much as possible.** Stop yourself from adding random zooms and pans, which distract from the action. Your camera should act as a single vantage point and not move itself

6. Cultivate your camera presence. **The way you carry yourself on camera has an enormous impact on how professional your content looks.** Appearing nervous, fidgety, or uncomfortable on camera will distract viewers from your message.

- Use calm, open body language and stand up straight.
- Take deep breaths.
- Don't cross your arms, but you can use your hands.
- Imagine you are talking to a neighbour or friend.

- Reflect the mood, tone and emotion of the video topic.
 - Slow down when you talk so that you speak clearly.
 - Practise, practise, practise. Watch footage of yourself and identify the areas where you could improve.
7. Gather B-roll footage. B-roll is the extra footage captured to enrich the story you're telling and can give you greater flexibility when editing, for example, when cutting between different shots. It also sets the scene. So, if you're making a video about local library closures, capturing footage of local libraries, bookshelves, opening times and people reading could be used in your sequence under narration. **Every shot should tell a story.** B-roll is there to provide additional context and depth to your story. Don't just stick in clips for the sake of it.

Remember to seek permission from people before recording them or private property and never film minors without parental consent.

POST-PRODUCTION

8. Adding music. You may want to consider adding music to your video and choosing the right track can be difficult. Here's what you need to consider:

- What emotions are you evoking?
- What's the overall mood?
- Remember the role of music is to support the video, not the other way around.
- Get the volume right.
- Understand the music rights for the chosen track and whether you have permission to use it.

9. Adding captions. **Studies show that around 85% of all videos on social media platforms are watched muted.** Captions are a great way to increase engagement and retention, and also an important step in connecting with people who are deaf, or hard-of-hearing. Captions can be a drain on your time, budget or resources, so you need to consider the consequences. If you do use captions, ensure they match the audio perfectly and check spelling and grammar. *Badly written captions would only be a distraction.*
10. Think about the thumbnail. Hours of video content are uploaded every single minute to social media platforms, so it can be difficult to share your story and reach the right people. That means you need to do everything you can to get your video content in front of the right people, at the

right time, using the right social media channel. **Along with using tags, engaging titles and descriptive posts, the most effective thing you can do is make sure your thumbnails invite click-through.** Make your thumbnails visually appealing by adding a human face to forge an emotional connection, add your branding to increase awareness and add some text to describe what viewers can expect. Look at other examples and analyse what you think works, and why.

If you go through this process every time you make a video, you are on your way to producing engaging content that will become a massive part of your movement.

LIVE VIDEO

Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and other social media platforms all allow you to create live videos. The time people spend watching Facebook Live videos has quadrupled in the past year and generate more engagement than pre-recorded videos.

Around one in five videos on Facebook is a Live video and across all social media channels Live video is expected to grow 15-fold by 2022, making up around 17% of all internet traffic.

So how do you incorporate live streams into your social media campaign?

Some ideas to get you started:

- You can use Live video to share an announcement that keeps your community informed.
- Hold Q&As with your followers.
- Share how you're feeling about something and add real time tips and advice.
- Raise money for a cause that's close to your community.

Best practices to bear in mind:

1. Make it conversational.
2. Keep your set-up casual. Making an overly stuffy or business-like video won't cut through and will potentially jar with the context.
3. Consider using a microphone to improve audio quality.
4. Aim to live stream for at least 15 minutes or longer, so that your audience has time to

tune in.

5. Remember to ensure you pick a good time to go live - when nobody is due to ring your doorbell or when children or pets can't interrupt!

If you are looking for a way to authentically engage with your community, and in real time, look no further than Live video.

With Live video, your community can ask questions, comment, react or just follow along at the same time.

CHAPTER 6

Change Your Community

THE POWER OF THE ONE

Often when we look around we see problems EVERYWHERE. It can be difficult to believe that just one person has the power to make a difference. But it just takes one person, YOU, to understand their WHY and to take the time to mobilise a movement of people committed to the cause of changing a community.

Social media provides a platform and the tools necessary for anyone in public office to share their mission, spread their message and build their movement.

The Power Of Social Media

We can't choose to make a difference with our movement when we don't know what's going on around us in the first place. Social media helps to provide us with solid, reliable

and timely information, and the OTAC framework helps us make wise decisions regarding which campaigns will make the most difference to our community, whether that is raising millions of pounds for the NHS or asking people why they want more police on their streets.

Social media helps you to get informed, get involved and CHANGE YOUR COMMUNITY.

THE NEXT STEPS

This eBook has taught you the *WHY* and *WHAT* of using social media to connect you with your community. The next step is to learn *HOW* to put everything into practice.

I understand that you might have constraints on your time, budget or resources, so there are four ways that I can help you reach your social media goals:

1. I regularly update my website with articles that you can read for *free*. These articles shed further light on how to implement the strategies contained in this eBook, along with case studies, and tips and tricks.

**ACCESS FREE ARTICLES
ON MY WEBSITE.**

2. I send out a *free*, weekly newsletter which contains answers to your social media questions and crowd-sourced examples of best practice campaigns and content.

**SIGN UP TO THE *FREE*
WEEKLY NEWSLETTER.**

3. I offer 30 minute consultations for £75 in which we can discuss your digital strategy and content creation requirements. I use real-time data and stats from your digital portfolio to understand what works and what doesn't. Undertaking an audit, analysing your audience and developing a personalised plan helps us to share your story and to create your campaign. If you are struggling to understand HOW to improve your social media strategy, I can tell you exactly what you need to do. We

can also discuss any content that you need to create.

SCHEDULE YOUR CONSULTATION.

4. I have created a '30 Day Plan' that will help you put together your own social media campaign plan in 30 days (*you can complete the plan in as many or as few days as you like*). The Plan will teach you HOW to:

- Discover your local demographic
- Conduct a SWOT analysis
- Find your WHY
- Establish a Facebook Group
- Tell a story
- Create your own content

...and much more! Through videos, activities and case studies you will learn how to use social media to change your community.

30 DAY PLAN

WHAT IS IT?

Just five minutes a day for 30 days to learn HOW to create social media campaigns that will change your community.

WHAT DO YOU GET?

- 30 lessons broken up into six modules.
- High quality videos.
- Downloadable worksheets to help you put together your very own campaign plan.
- **Unlimited access to the course for life.**

The 30 Day Plan is the most practical, effective and data-backed course on social media strategies for councillors, City and Regional Mayors, Police and Crime Commissioners and members of devolved legislatures *ever created*.

Plain and simple, this course will help you learn the strategies used to reach millions of people on social media. **All for just £50.**

ENROL NOW

**CHANGE
YOUR
COMMUNITY**