

# How to Choose Social Media

## FOR YOUR CAUSE

### Related topics:

- How to identify audiences
- How to write your social media plan
- How to be wonderful on social media



*This worksheet is a complementary guide to help you put into practice the advice found in our "How to Choose Social Media for Your Cause" video. Each 3-minute video is packed with information and is designed to be watched multiple times—even while you are completing this worksheet.*

**WHAT** Choose the right social media channels for your cause.

**TIME REQUIRED** 55 minutes

**WHO IS INVOLVED** We suggest brainstorming responses as a team. Alternatively, you can start this process alone, and then refine with a larger group.

Knowing how to focus your activities in an environment where every new social media technology is touted as a 'must do' can be challenging.

This worksheet walks you through three steps to help you choose which social media channels will best support your campaign and helps you to identify the strengths of specific social media tools in relation to your communication goals and strategies.

1. Determine your goal
2. Identify the audience you need to reach
3. Choose your social media platforms based on what is right for your audience and what you want them to do

### Here is an example:



**Campaign:** Government support to address international environmental problems

**Goal:** For a senator to propose a bill that has measures protecting the Amazon rainforests

**Key Audiences:** Public policy-makers, environmental lobby groups, and journalists

**Priority Social Media Platforms:** Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube

→ For more help, contact Cause Communications at [info@CauseComm.org](mailto:info@CauseComm.org) or visit [CauseCommunications.org/tools](http://CauseCommunications.org/tools) to see other Bite-Size Courses.

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To help identify where your audience resides online and which social media channels align with your communications goals, complete the following steps.

### 1. Determine your goal:

*The most successful campaigns are those with a clear ask and plan to get there. If your cause already has a communications strategy or defined organizational priorities, this activity will help you review and improve it. Take five minutes to write down specific asks of your campaign. After reviewing the ideas as a group, prioritize your top three activities.*



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### 2. Identify the audience you need to reach:

To refresh your memory on how to determine your audiences, check out, “How to Identify Audiences for Your Cause.” Think about the following questions: Whose lives are impacted by this campaign? Who has a connection to the campaign—personal or professional? Who can influence change towards my goal? Spend ten minutes writing down all the groups of people or significant individuals who have a connection to your campaign and can influence change. Choose three priority audiences, in order of importance, to your campaign.



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### 3. Choose your social media platforms based on what is right for your audience and what you want them to do:

Based on your goals (step 1) and the audiences you have decided to target (Step 2), consider the available platforms and prioritize the top two to three that align with those decisions. Check out the list of social media channels we have included in "Extra Tips" at the end of this worksheet for a quick overview of a few of the most widely used platforms.



# How to Choose Social Media FOR YOUR CAUSE

→ EXTRA TIPS

## Facebook

**What:** With over one billion monthly active users, Facebook is a powerful tool for engaging with and growing your audience.

**How:** Sharing high-quality images and graphics is a great way to encourage engagement (likes, comments, sharing, links back to your website), which expands the reach of your content to your followers' networks. Engaging content is critical to your success, as Facebook's algorithm prioritizes content it thinks will be interesting to your followers. The algorithm is changed frequently, so continue to evaluate how your content is doing and what types of content do the best. Paid advertising options enable you to reach your entire fan base or new and targeted audiences that may be interested in your message.

## Twitter

**What:** Twitter is a modern news outlet with 140-character headlines used to deliver breaking news, instantly connect with people you do not know, start conversations, and rapidly mobilize your audience.

**How:** Especially popular with the media and marketers, its real-time interaction means your tweets need to be frequent and timely. Using appropriate hashtags can help you reach new audiences who are interested in your cause. The platform also offers paid advertising to expand the reach of your tweets and grow your audience.

## Instagram

**What:** Photo-sharing sites like Instagram create a visual journey of your campaign with high-quality images or short videos. Growing rapidly, Instagram is now one of the most popular social media platforms.

**How:** Select a limited number of Instagram's digital photo filters to define your unique, artistic perspective and use relevant hashtags (#) to become part of the bigger conversation around your issue. There are no limits to how many hashtags you can use, so don't limit yourself. Links aren't allowed in posts, so include a link to your website in your profile. Paid advertising provides an opportunity to expand your reach.

## Pinterest

**What:** Pinterest is another photo discovery tool that allows you to create and share digital scrapbooks that help tell your story and inspire your audience.

**How:** Pinterest is all about aspiration. The most popular themes are ideal homes, beauty, and DIY. It can be a powerful tool for raising visibility, especially among its predominately female audience. Build boards with themes targeted for various audiences to tailor your messaging further.

## Snapchat

**What:** Snapchat is a photo platform that is especially effective at connecting you directly to a younger audience.

**How:** Its design tools (doodles, captions, lenses, and filters) make it a more personalized and fun photo-sharing experience. Sponsored filters and lenses offer opportunities to reach a broader audience. Photos disappear after they are viewed when sent directly or after 24 hours if placed in your story, making it great for timely, fun content.

## YouTube

**What:** YouTube is a video-sharing website used by a wide audience that allows uploading and viewing on the site, easy linking, and embedding of videos so they can be accessed on other sites.

**How:** The visual impact of video captures attention, is effective in increasing awareness, and inspires mobilization. Establishing a YouTube channel will help you create a public record, establish credibility as a leading voice in your area of expertise, and allow you to widely distribute your video content.

## LinkedIn

**What:** LinkedIn offers similar social benefits to Facebook, but is more focused on professional networking.

**How:** It provides access to an audience that is typically more highly educated and at higher income levels on topics that relate to their career and job-seeking.

### Additional platforms to explore

Flickr, Vine, Vimeo, Google+, Tumblr, Reddit, Digg, StumbleUpon  
For up-to-date stats on different audiences' use of specific social media platforms, visit [www.pewresearch.org](http://www.pewresearch.org)