

# Digital Advocacy Campaigning

**A Simple Guide**



# Digital Advocacy Campaigning

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*Motoon extends thanks and gratitude to all national, regional and international organizations for their efforts and contributions in developing advocacy mechanisms through providing trainings, guides and toolkits.*

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## Introduction

Despite that most of civil society organizations, NGOs and community activists in the Arab region use digital tools and social networking platforms, but unfortunately they mostly use it as a tool for publishing without any strategic planning, which impedes its effectiveness to be an advocacy tool that build a supporting community around different causes.

Technology provides us with many tools and platforms daily, which have many characteristics which make it an effective alternative to mass communication with our causes target groups, especially after increasing the number of Internet users in general, and social networking platforms in particular, in our Arab societies.

It is necessary to consider these digital tools as key mechanisms in delivering our messages and gathering supporters around our different causes, so it is time to have a sound methodology to use this mechanism to be effective for our institutions or initiative.

## Why this guide?

Motoon is committed to provide technical solutions and tools that support civil society to help in developing its mechanisms in line with the rapid technological development happening globally, one of which is digital advocacy. In this context, Motoon provided intensive training workshops in this field to various groups of activists and civil society workers in Egypt during 2018. These trainings helped our team to identify the most important challenges, obstacles and analyze the basic needs for communication and digital media officers in the Egyptian civil society. This simplified manual is used as a cornerstone for anyone wishing to start developing their abilities, skills and tools in the field of digital advocacy.

## Methodology

Motoon team members, who was involved in writing this guide, has reviewed all previous efforts by local, regional and international civil society organizations to develop advocacy manuals, guides and handbooks in general, accordingly, this guide has been built to link the previous efforts with the findings of Motoon's digital advocacy trainings. This guide has been written to develop general advocacy mechanisms to suite digital implementation. Readers of this guide who have no prior

experience in advocacy and community building, are strongly advised to review the *New Tactics for Human Rights* and the *Tactical Tech Collective Tactics Guide*.



# Mission One: Brainstorming!

## Step 1: Identify and Define Your Problem

Before being able to confront a problem, its existence needs to be identified. This might seem to be an obvious statement, but – quite often – problems will have an impact for some time before being recognised or brought to the attention of someone who can do anything about them. Looking at the problem in terms of goals and barriers can offer an effective way for defining many problems and splitting bigger problems into more manageable sub-problems.

## Step 2: Research and Development

Before going forward with your campaign planning, we advise you to spend quality time doing intensive research about the problem you are planning to campaign on. This could be managed by asking yourself and your colleagues some important questions:

1. What do we exactly need to reach through our campaign to help solving this problem?
2. Have any other campaigns worked before on the same problem? If yes, what is our new approach?
3. Who are the people we are targeting? What are their characteristics? Where can we find them?
4. Where are we standing now towards a real change? And where are we aiming to arrive?

## Step 3: Resources Analysis

Resources are crucial for campaign growth and success, and it is important to see if the current set of supplies/resources will help or hurt the campaign, because you could have the most sought after resources, but if you don't know how to use them for the benefit of your campaign, then they are useless. Resource analysis helps bridge the gap between having valuable resources and using them thoughtfully. Resources tend to fall into four categories:

- **Financial:** Funds, investment, and investors
- **Human:** Demographics and skill levels



- **Physical:** Anything that can be touched such as office space, tech gadgets, etc.
- **Intellectual:** Reputation, brand identity, mailing lists, media database, influencers engagements

Back to your conversation with yourself and your colleagues, start brainstorming with them by popping up these questions into your minds:

1. How many people do you need and in what roles?
2. What tech and tools are required for running the campaign?
3. What are the type of production needed? What is its average market cost?
4. Do we need an office space? If yes, what is the specs needed to this space?
5. Do we have intellectual assets or are we starting from scratch?

## **Step 4: Risk Assessment**

As part of managing the safety of your campaign, you must control the risks! To do this you need to think about the potential causes of harm to your team, your data and any external supporters, and decide whether you are taking reasonable steps to prevent that harm. The aim of the risk assessment process is to evaluate hazards, then remove them or minimize the level of their risk.

Getting back to your brainstorming discussion with your colleagues, it is important to start asking these questions:

1. Are we working in a region with security risks?
2. Are we addressing sensitive problem in our campaign?
3. Do we have a culture challenge in addressing our problem?
4. Do we have a legal umbrella for our work?
5. How will we secure our data and digital identities?

According to these findings, you and your colleagues should know the hazards you may face during your work and try to put an internal risk policy to eliminate them. As this guide is mainly focusing on digital campaigning, we highly advise that you read our digital security manual, or book a visit to our digital security clinic.

## **Mission Two: Strong Strategy**

A digital campaign strategy is a summary of everything you plan to do and hope to achieve on digital media. It guides your actions and lets you know whether you're succeeding or failing. Every post, reply, like, and comment should serve a purpose. The more specific your strategy is, the more effective the execution will be.

### **Step 1: Create your Campaign's Vision**

By developing a clear vision for your campaign, you will master the executional excellence which will obviously lead to high benefits that will help your campaign grow and sustain. Your campaign vision articulates where you plan to go and how you plan to get there, it also underpins everything you do and remains your everyday guide for driving any changes in your campaign. After creating and setting your campaign vision you have to make sure that it is understood by all team members, aligned with the personal objectives of all involved, supported and bounded by the same culture and values. So ultimately, everyone pulls in the same direction.

We advise you, when setting your vision, to keep all of your team involved in this process, to reach the best outcome. The easiest way to choose a relevant vision, is to first understand the problem your campaign is trying to solve and then can ask yourself and your colleagues the following questions to help you find your vision:

1. What is our purpose?
2. What is the problem we want to solve?
3. What would the world be like without that problem?

Write down and record the key elements during your discussion, these are the components that should serve as the foundation for any vision statement that is created. After all, a vision statement is a statement that depicts the world when you've fulfilled your purpose and solved the whole problem, to make it more easier for you! Your campaign vision statement is your biggest dream.

### **Step 2: SMART Goals**

SMART goals are a structured way for creating long term goals that increases the likelihood of success. It is an acronym that stands for **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant and **T**ime



bound. Each category addresses a different aspect of goal setting that helps reinforce a strategy for success. Let's explore how to use SMART goals for your upcoming digital advocacy campaign. To do so, we'll define each part of the acronym to understand what constitutes a true SMART goal and why.

## Specific

Before you can consider how to use SMART goals for campaigns, you need to be specific about what you want to achieve, it is kind of a mission statement for your desired goals. At this stage you will be asking yourself and your team members the popular "5 Ws" questions. The secret is defining specific answers to as many of these questions as possible:

- Which limitations and resources do you have to work with?
- Where is the location of the goal?
- Who are the individuals that will help you meet the goals?
- Why are you trying to achieve the goal?
- What specific goals do you need to achieve?

Remember the problem of not being specific can be challenging to achieve a clear mission. When the goal is vague, the results will also be vague, and typically disappointing. Also, how will you know when you have actually reached your goal? If it cannot be defined within certain parameters, the goal post can be constantly moving.

## Measurable

Once the goals have been defined you need a way of measuring them. This helps you stay motivated and clued up on how much progress is actually being made. When you are close to reaching your goals, the excitement of getting to the finish line can give you a much needed boost to stay in your peak. Here are a few questions you need to ask during this phase:

- How will the goal be achieved?
- How many?
- How much?
- How accurate is the data?
- Are there multiple sources I can compare to validate my results?

Generally, it's a good idea to check on the measurable data on a scheduled basis, this helps figure out if you are on track to meet your goals or not and If there is a problem, then you can make changes to your campaign process.

## **Achievable**

Unrealistic goal setting is one of the biggest reasons why goals are not met. Overwhelming goals are counter productive and can lead to a downward spiral of failure. When a goal is not met you'll get discouraged and that in turn might instill the belief that future goals cannot be met.

You need to consider the first two acronyms to determine how realistic the goal is. Take a close look to your deadlines, resources and personnel to determine what can be achieved. It's easier to set realistic goals when you understand what you have to work with.

However, do not set goals that are not ambitious. Goals that can be met too easily can be demotivating. You need to be excited by the prospect of striving to achieve a goal, so when you reach the top of the mountain you actually feel like you've accomplished something.

It's also a good idea to create mini-goals that act as milestones towards the ultimate goal. Each time you reach a mini-goal, you'll feel a sense of accomplishment. It gives you hope that other goals can be met and therefore you'll push forward.

Finally, try to set the goals that you can control and are important to you. Goals that are based on pure chance are destructive, because you can give it your best shot and still come up short, it's not a recipe for success at all!

## **Relevant**

Let's start with the statement "be careful what you wish for". You need to determine if the goal is something that you actually want and is relevant with other goals or not. It would be disappointing if you set a goal that upon achieving you realize it doesn't help your big vision. A goal can be considered as relevant if it can answer "yes" to the majority of these questions:

- Am I the right fit for this specific goal?
- Does this goal take advantage of the skill and experience available?

- Is the timing for the goal is right?
- Will this goal improve my campaign work?

We advise you to add extra questions that might be better suited to your cause and its nature.

### Time-bound

A timeline needs to be established for a goal to be finalized. The difficulty of achieving a goal is somewhat based on the amount of time you have. For example, it might be easy to reach 1 million Facebook page likes for your campaign within 5 years, but very hard within a year!

Our advice is to break a goal down into steps, and that's done by creating time-based milestones. For example, if you have an annual content plan of publishing 100 posts on your facebook page, then you could setup the goal to publish 20 per month and you can even go a step further and set a goal for publishing 5 per week. Micro-goals work better in many cases, it gives you motivation in the short term, it helps in measuring your success, and allows you to see failure rapidly so you can take your precautions on time.

### Step 3: Know your Audience

Knowing who your audience is and what they want to see on your digital channels is your key to create content that they will like, comment on, and share! It's also critical for planning how to turn your campaign fans into real supporters and allies to your main cause.

Our advice is to create an audience persona, to allow you to effectively think of your potential followers as real people with real wants and needs. This will shape what you should exactly offer them, what type of crafted messages you need to persuade them, and the right tone of voice that address their needs to be campaign supporters. This needs too much work and continuous research and development while you are running your campaign, but basically you will need to take these steps before starting to execute your campaign.

1. **Know who is buying from you:** Gather all the information you can about your cause supporters. Some of the key data points you need to collect are age, location, language, behavior, work scope, interests, beliefs and activities,

gather what you can from the research you have done during mission one, and you consider confirming and supplementing this information through one to one email surveys, digital channels polls, and focus groups.

2. If your campaign is already running or if your campaign is a sub-activity from an organization/initiative, then you have to **dig into your analytics**: digital analytics tools can provide an incredible amount of information about the people who are interacting with your campaign/organization online, even if they're not yet supporters. These Insights provide valuable and detailed information.
3. **Use audience persona to guide you**: Thinking of your supporters as real people allows you to craft advocacy messages that speak to real people. Advocates too often fall into using human rights and legal way of speaking that incorporates a lot of buzzwords but doesn't really mean anything to public audience. It's harder to fall into that trap when you're crafting an easy and creative advocacy message.
4. **Address your audience priorities**: Ask yourself and your team these questions while working on your potential supporters persona to make sure you address their priorities instead of your own. What questions do they have that your message can answer? What social networks do they use? What kind of language do they use when they interact with their friends online?

#### Step 4: Determine your Digital Channels

This is the most interesting part for any campaigner, but also the very challenging! In this step we will do all the efforts to align its results with all the previous steps. While choosing the digital channels which your campaign depends on, you have to first set your findings in steps 1, 2 and 3.

The chosen digital channels should serve your vision, help you achieve your goals and match your audience personas, and here comes the trick that many campaigners fail! For instance, if your vision statement is "Free all human rights detainees in Egypt", then choosing Instagram, Snapchat or Pinterest as one of your digital channels is totally a lack of effort, as the type audience

using these channels who are caring about your dream will not be there, and even if they really care and support your vision, they most probably will not pay attention to your message on these platforms which they almost use it for entertainment! And this will lead to paying a lot of worthless physical and financial efforts and may result in a total ignorance of your message and losing a potential supporters that you can reach through relevant channels, and this automatically affect your goals!

Accordingly our advice to you and your team is to ask yourself some questions before agreeing on your digital channels.

1. Is the audience who support or may support our vision is here?
2. Is this channel commonly used for entertainment?
3. Is there a large user presence in this channel from the region I campaigning in?
4. Does this channel have certain policies that may affect our message?
5. Does this channel allow us to build a community around our cause through the features it provides?

Answering these questions and linking them with the findings of the previous steps will obviously help you determine which channels are better suited to serve your vision, reach your audience, and accomplish your goals.



# Mission Three: Creative Execution

By finalizing the planning phase, we were supposed to have a clear vision of what we want to achieve and how to reach our campaign goals . The next phase will be implementation! which mainly depends on both creativity and commitment to campaign strategic planning.

## Art of creative messaging

It is not just your belief in your campaign mission, but also the creative message production that suits your campaign digitally. Here are some tips for you and your team.

- **Storytelling**  
Storytelling is an effective tool to keep both audience attention, it help you convert facts and ideas into compelling content. Storytelling is not just written content, but all content types that can be turned into stories.
- **Visualize ideas and information**  
Whether through images, videos, visual presentations. Visual content is much more attractive to social media audience, starting from campaign/organization logo, passing through your visual digital identity, and your posted content on digital platforms.
- **Communicate with your audience**  
Keep including a "call to action" to your posted content, your audience will need to contribute after reading your posted content, which will make them feel part of your campaign.

## Step 1: Identify success indicators

At this point we define digital indicators for a successful campaign this indicators must serve thr previously identified campaign goals. There are four key indicators that you should focus on as a non-profit campaign, during assessing your digital presence:

- Turning your followers into campaign supporters.
- Interaction or engagement on your digital channels  
"Engagement" Reach.





- How consistent is your published content and audience engagement with your campaign goals.

## Step 2: Publishing planning

In this step we identify the appropriate tactics - the appropriate tactic is the tactic that serve the context, objectives, target audience, available resources, risks and expected opportunities - each channel should communicate with different target audience according to its messages, we mean the best type of content (themes, topics, template).

After selecting the content types and contexts, we distribute it along the campaign schedule, which should contain, also, the digital channels we will use and publication dates.

What is the importance of publishing planning?

Take the time to prepare good content - but not for too long - and always remember at this stage that you produce content for your audience - you do not speak to yourself.

Planning gives you time to prepare good content and focus on important events related to your business that help you spread your messages - International Child day, for example, if you are working on a child rights campaign, this avoids risks of spontaneous content.

Before you look at the content types there are general qualities for good content "entertaining, inspiring, educational, persuasive and stimulate dialogue", Don't forget always to keep your messages simple, coherent, credible and always connected to your identity.

Most popular content types!

Written content

Written content includes both the original content produced by your organization, or content derived from other sites. Make sure that the derived content does not contradict with your message and ideas. Also, It should not exceed 20% of the content posted on your pages.

Articles and blogs: It's always good to share articles and posts from your website/blog on your social accounts. Do not restrict yourself to new articles. Sharing older posts, which have had a higher interaction earlier, can help you create a new interaction with your followers.

E-books "include training manuals, papers, and reports": These types of content can be used to motivate followers to subscribe to mailing-list and website updates.

Case studies and live testimonials: This type are an important tool to support ideas and messages addressed to the target audience. We must always take into consideration that we use storytelling in this type of content. In general, it is always good to use storytelling in all types of written content.

Lists Articles: List articles are not independent content, they are a type of blog post or article, characterized by their ability to draw attention to a higher degree than other articles. The list article differs from the normal article in the editorial style, as it contains list components , and the title contains the number of list components. Example: 10 keys to get new customers through social media.

Visual Content

- Pictures
- Infographics
- GIFs
- Slides
- Video "recorded or live"

**Audible content**

- Podcasts
- Audio Books

## **Step 3: Preparing Content**

We move now to the content production process , whether written or visual - always remember that your content is your only way to deliver your message to the target audience. The content type depends on the type of message, audience, and available resources. . It's worth mentioning that audio-visual messages is the most popular among social media users.

Tools to help you produce low-cost content

It's always good to have a visual designer to ensure a distinct identity for your content. In addition, there are many low-cost tools - sometimes free - that can be used to produce visual content.

Visual Content

Pictures, Infographic and animation:

GIMP is a free and open source image editor. It has many educational videos. We suggest this list for beginners.

Canva is a good tool for producing visual content, whether slides or images, and you'll find a collection of guiding videos that explain how content is produced online. Canva educational videos.

Piktochart provides you with a good tool for producing infographics, their YouTube channel also offers several educational videos.

Giphy is a free animation site for GIFS.

Video production

Video is one of the most common types of content, and many free video editors are available; Adobe's OpenShot and Sparks.\* This list contains OpenShot tutorials.

Also, Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Youtube, provides video live streaming option.

Sound content

Audacity is an open source audio editing tool, and you can also use it to record audiovisual material like books. You can watch special tutorials videos for Audacity on YouTube.

Also, You can create a podcast channel on Soundcloud, famous audio platform.

## **Step 4: Publishing and content distribution**

Create a Content Calendar: Many sites offer ready-made templates for evaluating content, from which you can choose or create your own calendar, keeping in mind that calendar must include the following key elements:

- Publishing date and time
- Digital channel on which the content will be posted.
- Subject or title of published content.
- Content type (image, article, video, etc.).
- Responsibles for posting if there is more than one person posting the content.
- Online content Links “This will help you keep track of published material”. It is also helpful to attach images published with content.

Tools for scheduling publishing content “Automation Tools”:

Facebook offers the ability to publish later, so you will not need an additional tool and for Twitter you can use Tweetdeck.

## Final Step: Evaluation

The assessment is based on the indicators identified in the first step.

Tools used for evaluation process in each platform:

- **Twitter:** Twitter provides the Twitter Analytics tool to evaluate your presence. You should measure the number of followers, followers who have re-posted your tweets to determine its average spread. You have also to track both separately to determine your monthly growth rate. You can also use the free TweetReach tool.
- **Facebook:** Track the total number of page fans, In addition, check the number of friends who have followed you over a certain period of time or during a campaign, and those who have commented on or liked your posts to determine the reach rate on **Facebook:** Facebook Insights is a powerful tool to measure the evolution of your page.
- **YouTube:** Measure the number of video views for a specific period of time, also, the number of new subscribers during this period.
- **Blog or website:** Measure the number of your website visitors in a given period or during a campaign. You can do this by including the Google Analytics code on your website. If you are a free software enthusiast it is a good chance to try Open Web Analytics.
- **Email lists:** Take a look at the number of subscribers for your mailing list and the number of people who have already opened your mails.




Motoon is a social enterprise invested in nurturing a free, enabled, connected and gender conscious tech community that empowers and supports social development and well being.

We provide a range of IT services, including consultancy, web development, training, localization, and hosted applications, for individuals, NGOs, SMEs and corporates.

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