



**votervoice**

PART OF **FiscalNote**

# How to Use Social Media for Better Digital Advocacy



# Contents

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<b>Introduction: Your Guide to Acing Your Social Strategy</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Part 1: The Role of Social Media in Advocacy</b>	<b>4</b>
Advocacy in the Digital Age	4
Why Social Media is Great for Advocacy	5
<b>Part 2: Using Social Media to Reach Your Advocacy Goals</b>	<b>6</b>
Align Your Social Strategy with Advocacy Goals	6
Educate Supporters on Key Issues	7
Mobilize Online Communities	8
Track Engagement and Evaluate Success	9
<b>Part 3: Strategies for Optimizing Each Social Platform</b>	<b>10</b>
Facebook	11
X (formerly Twitter)	12
Instagram	13
LinkedIn	14
TikTok	15
Example: A Successful Social Media Strategy in Action	16

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# Introduction: Your Guide to Acing Your Social Strategy

Social media gives advocacy teams the chance to put their message in front of a large number of potential supporters.

But using social platforms isn't as simple as making a post and hoping your audience will find it. With so much happening online, it can be difficult for advocacy organizations to break through the noise and connect with those they most need to reach. Any group trying to make an impact on social media needs a comprehensive strategy that is aligned with both their advocacy goals and current trends.

In this guide, you'll find insights on why social media is valuable for advocacy, tips for creating an impactful social strategy, and guidance for using specific platforms successfully.



# Part 1: The Role of Social Media in Advocacy

## Advocacy in the Digital Age

Social media gives even the smallest advocacy group the potential to cultivate a global audience.

Before these channels, advocates had to rely on more insular modes of outreach, like direct mail or in-person events. While these “analog” forms of advocacy are still effective, a social strategy can generally help organizations reach more people with fewer resources.

The data proves that social media is an impactful tool for advocates. For example, the VoterVoice **2023 Advocacy Benchmark Report** found that social platforms account for 11 percent of traffic to action centers, making it the third largest source of traffic.

In addition, communications agency **Empower** suggests that 55 percent of people who engage with non-profits on social platforms end up taking some kind of action, be it donating money, volunteering, contacting their representatives, or something else.



## Why Social Media is Great for Advocacy

Some of the factors that make social media so helpful for advocacy are:



### It lets you reach more people

A smart social strategy can help you reach a wider audience, including people who may have never heard of your cause before.



### It encourages two-way communication

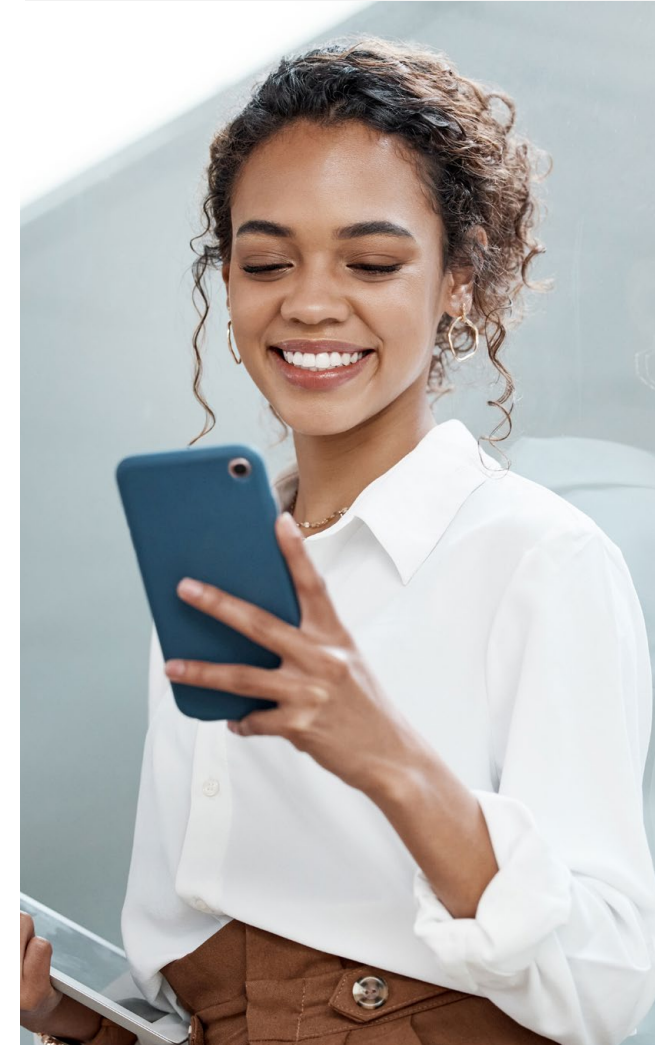
Social channels let you respond directly to comments or questions from supporters. This makes your organization appear more personal and can create greater loyalty among interested advocates.



### It helps you engage lawmakers

All members of Congress are on social media, and most other lawmakers are as well.

Engaging with legislators this way can be effective because, "If you Tweet at your member of Congress, then there's a whole audience out there who are going to see that message," says Laura Brigandi, manager of digital and advocacy practice at the Public Affairs Council. "It puts a little bit more pressure on the elected officials to respond."



# Part 2: Using Social Media to Reach Your Advocacy Goals

## Align Your Social Strategy with Advocacy Goals

Successful social strategies are tied to specific campaigns, with clear goals and objectives.



### Integrate social into your overall strategy

Brigandi advises advocacy groups to not let social media be an afterthought, but instead to make sure a social strategy is baked into a campaign from the very beginning.

It's also important to get your marketing or communications team and government relations team on the same page. These two units have similar goals, but different perspectives on how to achieve them. Encouraging collaboration from the outset can reduce friction.



### Know your audience

You're likely trying to reach **specific demographics** with your advocacy campaigns. Where do those people spend their time online, and what types of content do they respond to? Understanding that is essential for building a social strategy that gets results. "We often hear that content is king, but your audience is queen, and the queen is the most important piece on the chessboard," says Stacie Manger, director of digital communications at the American Forest and Paper Association.

"We often hear that content is king, but your audience is queen, and the queen is the most important piece on the chessboard."

#### **Stacie Manger**

Director of Digital Communications,  
The American Forest & Paper Association



## Educate Supporters on Key Issues

A consistent social media strategy is a great way to keep your supporters informed on key issues and how you're addressing them.



### Speak in a direct, authentic way

The tone of voice you use in your posts matters. Work with your communications team to develop a tone that feels authentic and organic to your organization's brand.



### Fill your feed with interesting content

If you post nothing but promotional calls to action (CTAs), followers and supporters will likely become disengaged.

"People don't want to be talked at, and they definitely don't want to only hear from you when you want them to do something," Brigandi says. "So make sure that you are also providing updates ... celebrate your wins, highlight top advocates ... and promote user-generated content."



## Mobilize Online Communities

Social media can be used to drive communities to action in support of your cause.



### Try to claim virality with user-generated content

Getting your supporters involved in your social campaigns gives your message a broader reach while energizing your followers. Encourage supporters to join your campaign with relevant hashtags, simple challenges, and other participatory activities. Remember the Ice-Bucket Challenge?



### Drive action with specific CTAs

The quality of your CTAs is key to making sure your supporters perform the actions you need them to.

Make sure your instructions are clear, specific, and easy to follow. For example, if you want supporters to send a message to their representative, use a simple, clear CTA (such as, "Contact your representative today!") and link to your VoterVoice Action Center, where supporters are automatically matched with their specific representatives at the federal, state, and local level. You can include a pre-written message for supporters to customize, and they can send messages to all lawmakers representing them with a single click.





## Track Engagement and Evaluate Success

Having a great social strategy means tracking metrics so you know what's working and constantly refining your content based on that data.



### Monitor engagement metrics

Track engagement across all your social platforms, monitoring likes, reposts, and comments. Take notes on what types of posts seem to get higher engagement and try to find patterns among them so you can replicate your success. Notice whether specific strategies work better on certain platforms.

"Monitor, measure, interpret, and adjust constantly," says Manger. "Your audience's preferences are not static, so your content shouldn't be either."



### Track action taken by supporters

Slightly more difficult, but just as important, is tracking whether your social campaigns are leading to action among your supporters. VoterVoice tracks how many times campaigns are shared on social media, and which channels have the highest number of shares, helping you prioritize certain channels over others when sharing your message.



## Part 3: Strategies for Optimizing Each Social Platform

Each social platform plays by slightly different rules. You may have a presence on all the major platforms, or you may choose to prioritize two or three your followers are most likely to use.

“Don’t feel like you need to be on every platform or give equal attention to each of them. You really want to focus on the channels that are reaching most of your audience,” Brigandi advises. But also, “Don’t be afraid to try something new ... you might find that there is an audience that you weren’t expecting.”

Wherever you end up creating a social presence, it’s important to know the strengths of each platform and differentiate your content accordingly.

“For example, if you have a policymaker audience on Twitter but a donor audience on Facebook, the tone of your content needs to cater to their individual needs and goals,” Manger says. “In addition, certain creatives perform differently on each platform.”

Here’s a closer look at each major platform.



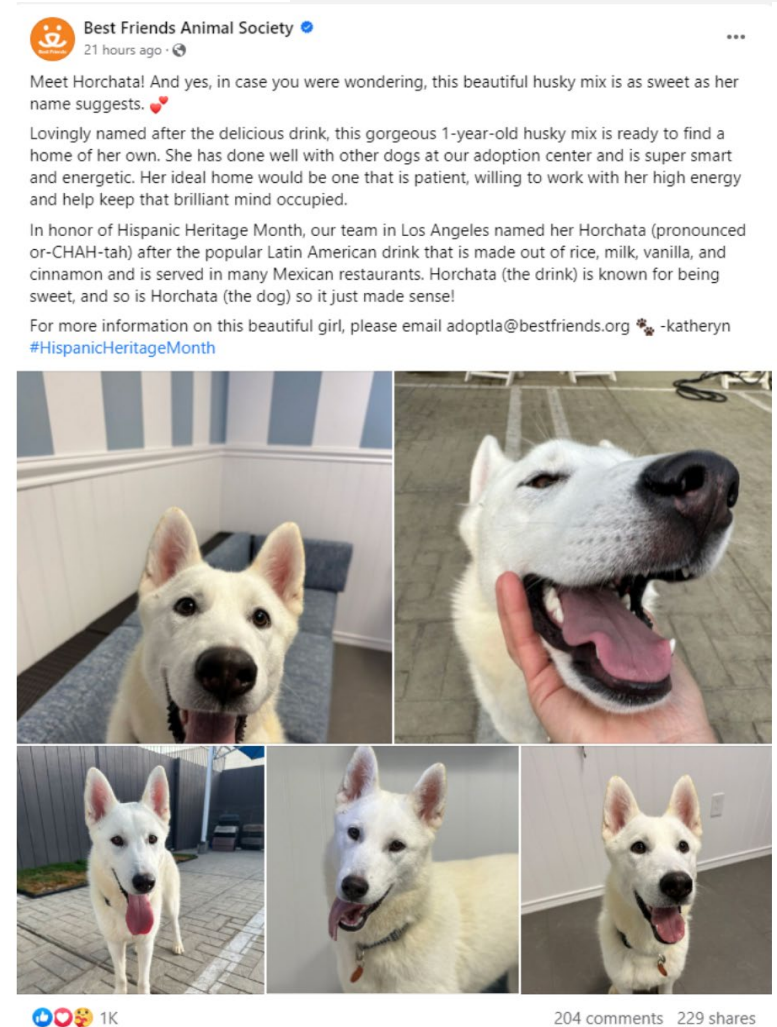
## Facebook

Facebook remains the most influential platform for advocacy, accounting for 75.9 percent of social traffic to advocacy Action Centers, according to the **2023 Advocacy Benchmark Report**.

The audience for Facebook tends to skew a little older, so it can be good for reaching a Gen X or Boomer demographic who may not have a big social presence elsewhere. Since Facebook is more about connecting with family and friends than following strangers, it can also be great for word-of-mouth engagement.



*This Facebook post from Best Friends Animal Society grabs attention with cute pictures while taking advantage of Facebook's longer text limits.*




**Best Friends Animal Society** 21 hours ago

Meet Horchata! And yes, in case you were wondering, this beautiful husky mix is as sweet as her name suggests. ❤️

Lovingly named after the delicious drink, this gorgeous 1-year-old husky mix is ready to find a home of her own. She has done well with other dogs at our adoption center and is super smart and energetic. Her ideal home would be one that is patient, willing to work with her high energy and help keep that brilliant mind occupied.

In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, our team in Los Angeles named her Horchata (pronounced or-CHAH-tah) after the popular Latin American drink that is made out of rice, milk, vanilla, and cinnamon and is served in many Mexican restaurants. Horchata (the drink) is known for being sweet, and so is Horchata (the dog) so it just made sense!

For more information on this beautiful girl, please email [adoptla@bestfriends.org](mailto:adoptla@bestfriends.org) -katheryn #HispanicHeritageMonth



👍❤️🐾 1K

204 comments 229 shares





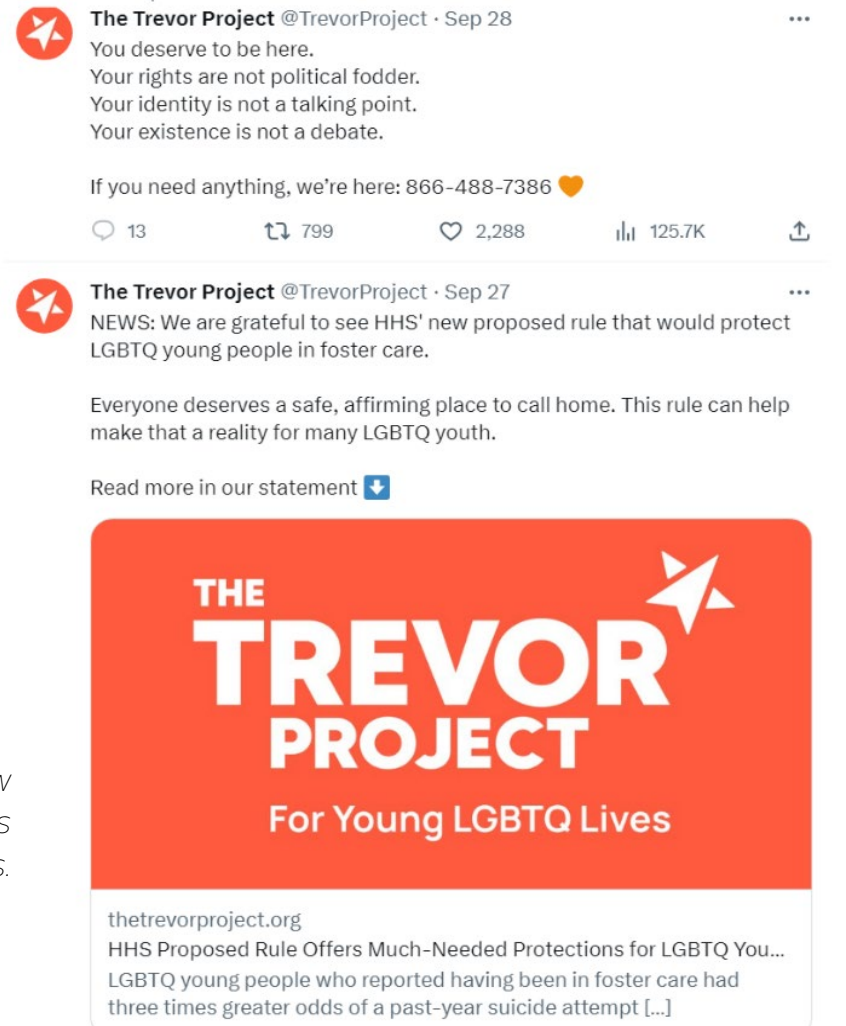
## X (formerly Twitter)

Despite its turbulent year under new management, Twitter (now officially “X”) remains a leading platform for advocacy and political outreach. It’s great for sharing quick information via snappy taglines.

Most importantly, X is the platform that nearly all elected officials are on. When you want to make posts you know political leaders will see, this is the platform to use.



*These posts from The Trevor Project illustrate how X can be used for memorable text-based posts and more policy-centric conversations.*



**The Trevor Project** @TrevorProject · Sep 28  
You deserve to be here.  
Your rights are not political fodder.  
Your identity is not a talking point.  
Your existence is not a debate.

If you need anything, we're here: 866-488-7386 ❤️

13 799 2,288 125.7K

**The Trevor Project** @TrevorProject · Sep 27  
NEWS: We are grateful to see HHS' new proposed rule that would protect LGBTQ young people in foster care.

Everyone deserves a safe, affirming place to call home. This rule can help make that a reality for many LGBTQ youth.

Read more in our statement ↓

**THE TREVOR PROJECT**  
For Young LGBTQ Lives

thetrevorproject.org  
HHS Proposed Rule Offers Much-Needed Protections for LGBTQ You...  
LGBTQ young people who reported having been in foster care had three times greater odds of a past-year suicide attempt [...]



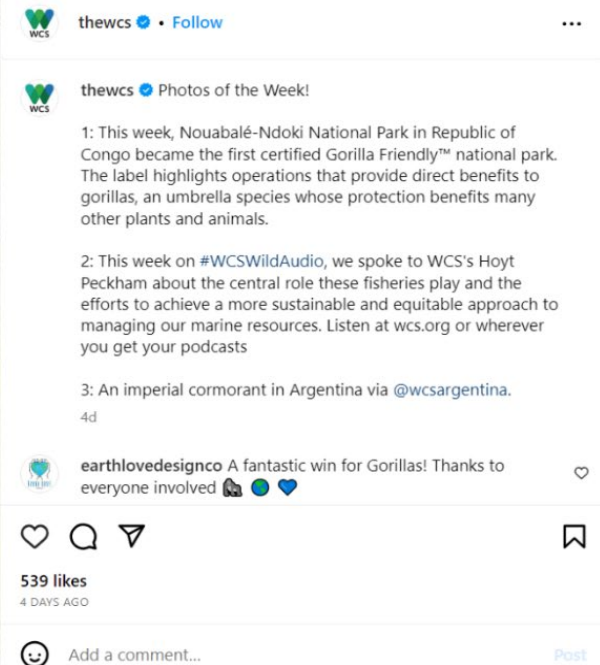
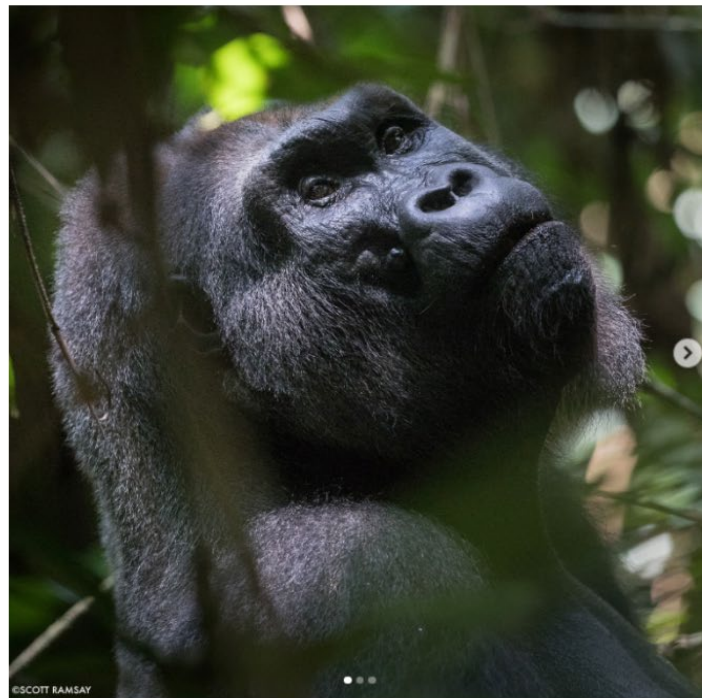
## Instagram

Instagram is all about eye-catching images and videos. Its visual nature makes it an excellent platform for sharing updates about your work in the field or celebrating successes.

Instagram also allows you to stream live video (as does Facebook), which can be a great way to foster engagement.



*This photo-based post from The Wildlife Conservation Society illustrates how eye-catching images can be used to get followers' attention before sharing updates.*



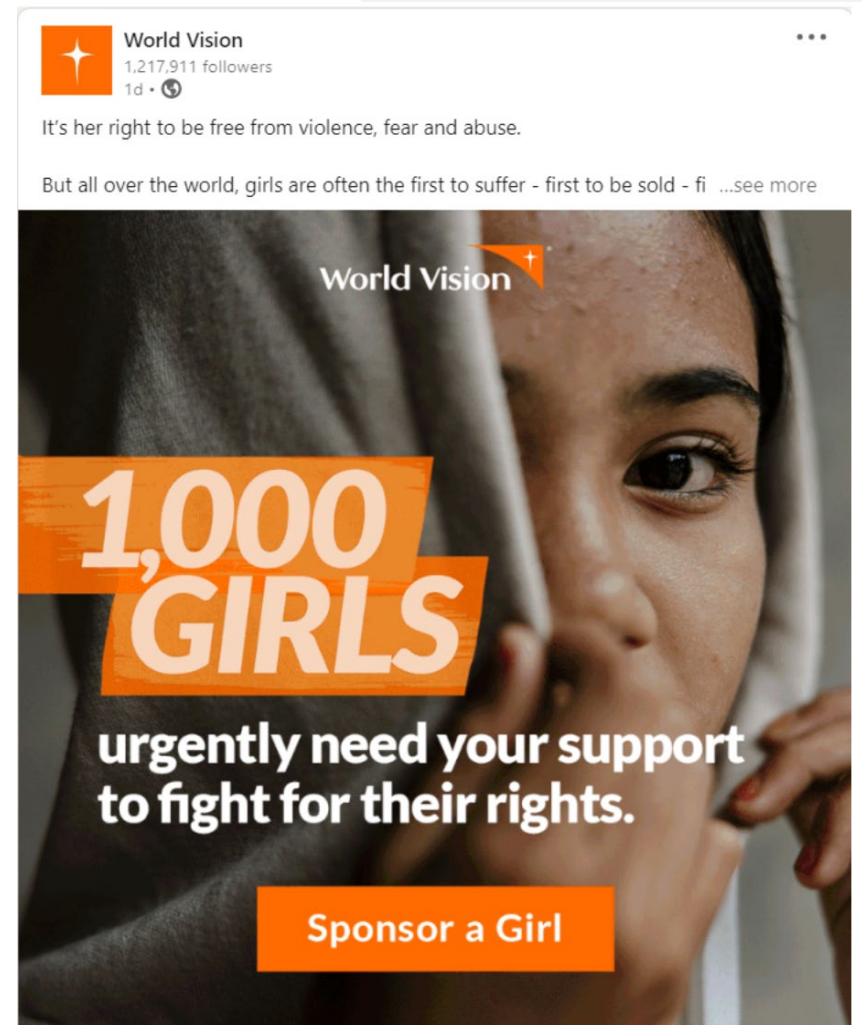
## LinkedIn

LinkedIn often gets left out of the social media conversation, since it's a professional site more than a social one. However, the LinkedIn audience is growing, and its importance for advocacy is expanding with it — especially if you want to reach professional groups.

While it's certainly a more serious platform than the others, even LinkedIn users want to see interesting content on their feeds.



*This photo-based post from The Wildlife Conservation Society illustrates how eye-catching images can be used to get followers' attention before sharing updates.*



The image shows a screenshot of a LinkedIn post from World Vision. The post features a close-up photograph of a young girl's face, partially obscured by a white cloth. The text of the post reads: "It's her right to be free from violence, fear and abuse. But all over the world, girls are often the first to suffer - first to be sold - fi ...see more". The post includes the World Vision logo, the text "1,217,911 followers" and "1d • 🔒". At the bottom of the image, there is a large orange banner with the text "1,000 GIRLS" and "urgently need your support to fight for their rights." Below this, there is a button that says "Sponsor a Girl".





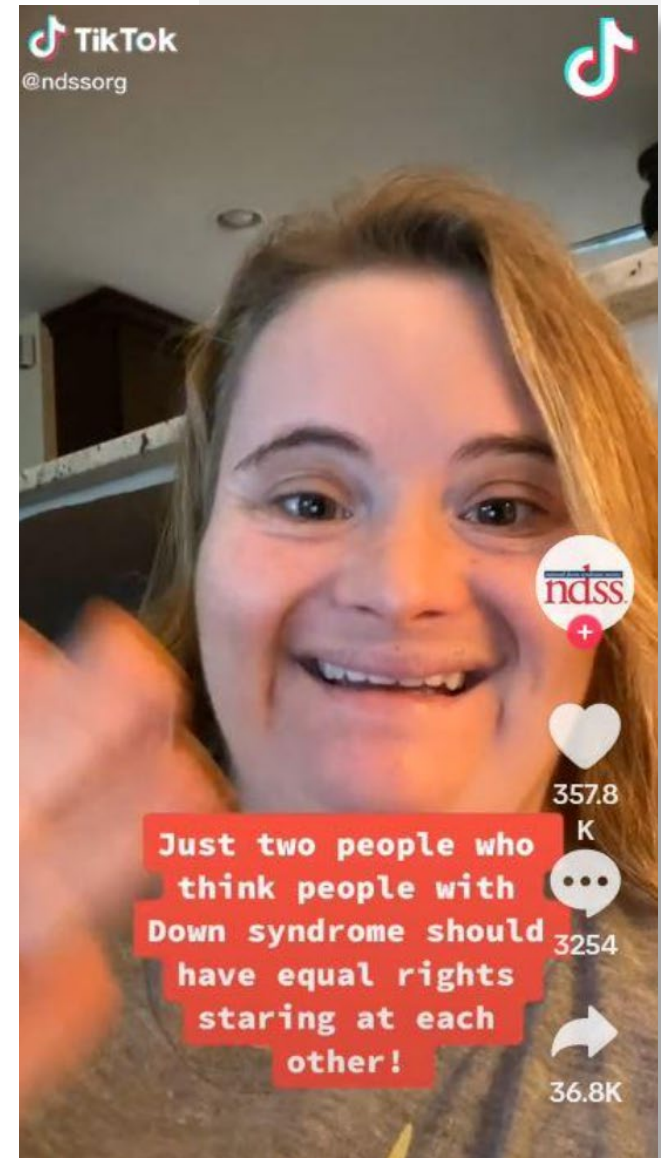
## TikTok

TikTok is today's ascendant social platform, with a major influence on culture — especially youth culture. If you're trying to connect with a younger audience, you want to be active on TikTok.

The video-focused platform is great for sharing quick bits of information or videos of your organization in action, and it favors those who know how to capitalize on viral trends.



*This screenshot of a TikTok video from the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) shows how TikTok's fun, conversational style can be used to spread awareness of issues. [Read a deep dive into NDSS's successful TikTok strategy.](#)*



## Example: A Successful Social Media Strategy in Action

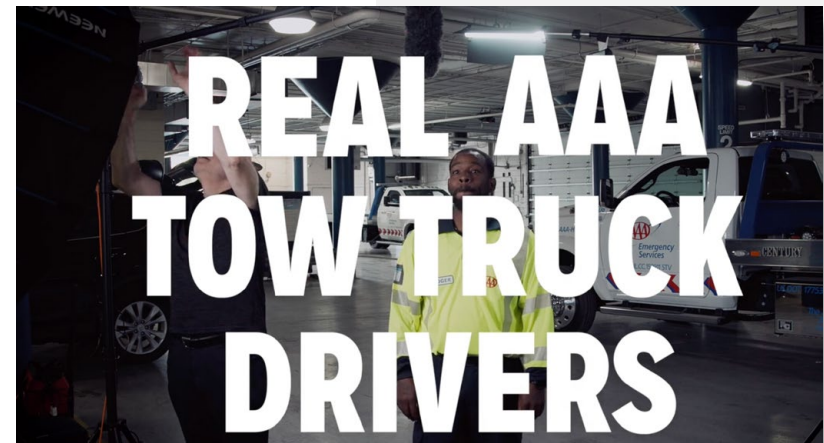
In October and November of 2022, AAA ran the “Move Over for Me” campaign to promote awareness of safety laws requiring drivers to slow down and move over when they see stopped vehicles.

This campaign consisted of 209 social media posts in total. Over the span of two months, it garnered 995,111 total impressions and 804,122 video views.

The key to its success? “Putting a personal face on the issue. The videos were of regular people,” says Brigandi. This helped viewers relate to those the campaign was designed to protect.



An example of the “Move Over for Me” video series



A “mean tweets” video featuring AAA tow truck drivers



Sample social media images used with the “Move Over for Me” campaign.





## Build a Successful Social Media Advocacy Strategy with FiscalNote and VoterVoice

From staying on top of the latest developments around the policy that matters most, to mobilizing supporters to message lawmakers through multiple channels, to reporting on advocacy efforts, success is largely dependent on using the right technology tools. **FiscalNote's advocacy solutions** empower organizations of all sizes to quickly adapt and execute innovative advocacy strategies. Find **more resources** or **request a demo today**.



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