

DIGITAL ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN TOOLKIT

**A SHORT GUIDE
TO HELP YOU THINK
ABOUT AND PLAN
YOUR NEXT DIGITAL
ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN**

DEVELOPED BY:



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Dermatology Patient
Organizations

GLOBALSKIN.ORG

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PURPOSE

You are reading this document because you are part of a global movement working to improve the lives of people living with dermatological conditions. This document was developed by the International Alliance of Dermatology Patient Organizations (also known as GlobalSkin) to help support you as you consider pursuing digital advocacy campaigns.

WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

Before we explain the meaning of digital advocacy, it's important that we first define advocacy more broadly. Advocacy can be defined as any effort to compel decision-makers (often, but not always, government officials) to take action (e.g. make a declaration, support a public policy) which is achieved by actively leveraging support from your community and the broader public. Many strategies and tactics – from government relations plans to public education campaigns to policy writing initiatives – are important components of a successful advocacy program.

WHAT IS DIGITAL ADVOCACY?

So much has changed in the past few years, and many organizations around the world are beginning to realize the importance of integrating digital advocacy campaigns into existing advocacy programs. When they do so, many are seeing better and faster results. But what is digital advocacy?

A digital advocacy campaign leverages current and relevant online platforms to engage the public around an issue and a common goal, and to influence the actions of decision makers.



This document will help you ask questions and start important conversations inside your organization about the steps you need to plan and launch your next digital advocacy campaign. Some of those questions include:

- Where do we begin?
- What is our main goal?
- Who is our advocacy target?
- Who is our campaign audience?
- What action do we want our advocacy target to take?
- What is our Call To Action?
- How will we measure progress and results?

Each of these questions will be answered within the remainder of this document.

WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

Digital advocacy campaigns can range from very small moments to massive multi-phased and multi-channel efforts. To determine where your campaign will fall on this spectrum, make an inventory of all resources available to you and consider what deadlines and milestones you need to achieve in order for your campaign to be a success.



WHAT IS OUR MAIN GOAL?

What are you trying to achieve? Your main goal needs to be singular and focused on the big picture. Examples may include making a specific medicine or treatment more accessible, having a lesson added to the public education curriculum, or lowering the cost of certain medications. Whatever you decide, choose something that clearly points to an outcome that will help your organization achieve its mission.

WHO IS OUR ADVOCACY TARGET?

Now that your goal is defined, you need to identify your advocacy target. This is the person or group of people who your campaign will revolve around. Ask yourselves: who is the person with the most social/political influence and authority standing between us today and achieving our goal? Is there somebody who could make a significant difference, if only you could convince them that your goal is too important to ignore?

Sometimes this is one person (e.g. government official) and sometimes this is a group of individuals (e.g. Ministry of Education). Either way, your advocacy target will almost always be focused on a role that is recognisable, accessible, and influential.

WHO IS OUR CAMPAIGN AUDIENCE?

Your campaign audience is the section of the general public you will be engaging and activating in order to get your advocacy target to take an action. Your campaign audience will be a group of diverse people with varying identities, experiences, and traits. One thing that your entire audience must have in common: a shared aspiration to achieve your goal. Your existing organizational audience is a good place to start. From there, ask yourself which people have access to and influence over your advocacy target, and add those people to your audience, too.



For example, if your advocacy target is the local Ministry of Education, you might consider parents of school age children to be a key part of your campaign audience, even if you've never intentionally engaged this group of people as part of your organization's audience.

Once you've identified your campaign audience, make a list of their shared values and aspirations. This will be useful information when you are developing your campaign materials and key messages.

WHAT ACTION DO WE WANT OUR ADVOCACY TARGET TO TAKE?

You need your advocacy target to take one specific action. It is important that you name this as simply and clearly as possible. This statement will become part of your campaign's central key messaging. The more specific you can make your statement, the more likely you will be to succeed.

Examples of actions you may want your advocacy target to take include:

- Making a public declaration
- Publicly committing to taking a virtual meeting with you
- Writing a specific policy
- Lowering the cost of a certain medicine
- Voting a certain way on an upcoming issue

WHAT IS OUR CALL TO ACTION?

Your Call to Action (CTA) is what you are asking your campaign audience to do. This is the action they will take in order to compel your advocacy target to take action. In order to determine which CTA tactic is right for your campaign, review all of the options in the list below. Ask yourself which tactic your campaign audience is most likely to take, and which feels like it will apply the right type and amount of influence upon your advocacy target.

CTA options include:

Sign an E-petition: This is the most common and successful form of digital advocacy; here you pre-write an e-petition and ask your campaign audience to sign it. At the end of the campaign, you deliver the petition to your advocacy target.

Open Letter: This tactic is one where you write an open letter that demands action from your advocacy target. Before you make it public, work with your Board and network to get as many influential people and organizations to sign it. Then, publish the letter on your website and use social media to ask your audience to add their names to the list of signatories.

Send a Letter to Target: Very similar to an e-petition, with this mass letter-writing tactic you will ask your campaign audience to sign their name to the bottom of a letter you have pre-written and ask them to individually send it directly to the advocacy target.

Write a Letter to Editor: Here, you're asking your campaign audience to send a letter to their local newspaper or media outlet for them to publish it in the letter to editor section, if available. The letter will be pre-written by you, or you will provide key messages in advance and ask your audience to write their letters uniquely.



Participate in a Handraiser: A handraiser is similar to an e-petition but instead of demanding change from your advocacy target in an actual petition, you are asking your campaign audience to add their name to a list of citizens to say they agree with your goal. This is a good option when you don't have a concrete demand to ask of your advocacy target, but rather want to simply "demand change." As a note, Handraiser campaigns are effective but generally elicit a smaller response from the campaign audience because they are less tangible.

Attend Online Training: With this tactic, you are asking your campaign audience to attend an online training. This training will equip the attendees with key messages and the fundamentals of your advocacy objectives so they can take the work into their own local networks and communities.

Invitation Spree: This tactic motivates your campaign audience around a simple ask: get your advocacy target to accept your invitation to an online

meeting. This is an especially interesting CTA if your advocacy target is more than one person and your goal is to collect as many accepted invitations as possible (e.g. every member of the Board of Directors, or a Mayor from as many cities in the country as possible).

Tweet storm: With this tactic, you ask your campaign audience to amplify your ask by tweeting a unified message at the advocacy target in a coordinated effort, and using a predetermined campaign hashtag.

Story Amplification: Story amplification campaigns are a simple and effective way to broadly share why your goal is important from multiple perspectives. With this tactic, you create a short online survey that asks your community a simple question: "Can you share a personal story about why this campaign goal is important to you, and why you think the advocacy target needs to act?" Once the results are in, reach out to those with the most compelling stories and ask them if you can share them publicly on your social media channels. Do this, and make sure each is accompanied by a public ask to your advocacy target.

WHAT IS OUR TACTICAL GOAL?

You have already set your main goal, and now that you have determined your Call To Action, it's time to set your tactical goal. This is the goal that is specific to this campaign CTA. It might be that you want to collect 500 e-petition signatures, or that your goal is to have three government officials confirm attendance to a virtual meeting with your team. Whatever it is, make sure you set one that is ambitious but also realistic. When you define success in advance by setting a goal and sharing it with your community before you get started, you'll be surprised how excited the community will be to rally around your campaign and help you achieve your objectives.

Remember that no success is too small, and starting out with a modest but achievable goal you can meet is often more impactful than setting an incredibly ambitious goal and not being successful.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

[Change.org](#) and [Avaaz](#) are great websites that let you host an e-petition.

[Dogooder](#) is a great tool for hosting Letter to Target Campaigns.

[Ecojustice Canada](#) does a good example of displaying an online Letter To Target campaign on their organizational website.

[SurveyMonkey](#) and [Typeform](#) are great free tools you can use for collecting content from your community.



DEVELOPING YOUR CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

Now that you've determined your strategy and tactics, it's time to develop your campaign materials.

The list below is a great starting point when you're considering what your campaign needs.

Landing Page: Most campaigns will require a landing page. This may be hosted on your organization's website, or it may be a standalone landing page that you create using an advocacy platform (some examples below). Wherever you host it, make sure your Call To Action is prominently featured, and try not to distract the page with anything else besides your CTA. When a person arrives at your landing page, it should be very clear to them that there's only one action they need to take and that action should be very obviously presented.

Emails: The people who are signed up to receive your emails are almost always your most engaged online audience. Make sure you take advantage of this channel by sharing frequent asks to participate in the campaign, and use this channel to provide progress updates as you go.

Social Content: Your social media channels are a great place to share your message even more frequently. Remember there is almost no such thing as too much content, as long as it's relevant to your audience and your CTA. Also remember that some people might need to see your campaign more than once before they participate. Use social media to share your CTA, but also to ask your audience why the issue is important to them. If possible, spend some of your media budget on your social content and turn the posts into social media ads. You will be surprised how much of a higher response you will see with even a very small investment.

Video Content: Not all content will have the same impact, and video content is undeniably important in digital marketing. Your videos don't need to be expensive or fancy; simply record a few personal messages using your phone or webcam and tell your audience what you need from them in less than one minute. Share your video content on both social media and via email.

Creative Value Propositions: It will be important to highlight several value propositions throughout your campaign. In essence, a value proposition is the answer to the question, "Why should I care?" To get started, ask yourself: "What are the top five reasons a person should care whether or not this campaign meets its main goal?" and then develop one piece of content for each of your answers.

Creative Storytelling: As a general rule, your audience will be much more easily compelled to act when the message is shared alongside an emotional and personal story. Tell as many personal stories as you can from a diverse set of people with unique experiences. Putting personal stories at the heart of your campaign will make it more human and relatable; emotional storytelling almost always outperforms intellectual, technical, or organisationally focused storytelling.

EXAMPLES

The Coalition for Headache and Migraine Patients released a video to their supporters asking for help with a Twitter Storm.

The New Hampshire Democratic Party has a great landing page on their website that walks their campaign audience through the steps necessary to send a letter to the editor.



HOW WILL WE MEASURE PROGRESS AND RESULTS?

Whether or not you achieve your campaign goal or your tactical goal, it's important to measure your progress along the way as well as at the end so you can fully understand which parts of your efforts worked better or worse than others. When you're measuring results, here are a few concepts to keep in mind:

Transparency: Your campaign audience's trust is earned, and it's easy to lose. Showing your community that you are committed to transparency will make them trust you more, will show them the impact of their efforts, and will make them feel like they're part of the in-group who has access to behind-the-scenes information. From the very beginning, make your main goal and your tactical goal public. At the end of the campaign, share your results even if the goal is not met.

Momentum: Don't wait until the campaign is over to report back to the community. People love to be a part of building momentum – if you share that you're happy with the campaign's progress, they'll get excited about it too and share with their networks. Most online

behaviour studies show us that people are much more likely to support momentum and help a winning campaign cross the finish line; so make sure to share your progress frequently and excitedly, and celebrate every small win with your campaign audience.

Evaluate during your campaign: If you're measuring as you go, you might start to realize that some efforts are working better than others. Perhaps social media posts with certain imagery are getting a better response than social media posts with no imagery? Maybe your Facebook posts are generating a more cost effective response than your tweets, but your emails are performing better than both of them? Analyze your data as you go, and make real-time adjustments accordingly to make sure you're getting the most impact possible from your effort.

AN EXAMPLE OF DIGITAL ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Below you will find an example of someone who is planning their own digital advocacy campaign and asking themselves the questions defined in this document.

Fernando knew that he and his team wanted to try a digital advocacy campaign for the first time. They sat down and took inventory of their human capacity and technical resources, and they made a timeline that considered when all of this work needed to be completed. From there, they determined that their main goal was to ensure a new drug was available to the people in their country in a timely manner. Knowing this, they decided that their advocacy target would be the Ministers of Health from every province across their country.

The action that Fernando and his team needed every advocacy target to take? Introduce a government motion to allow for an expedited approval for this new drug. Fernando's team spent a considerable amount of time determining which CTA was best for them and decided that they would try to get as many virtual meeting attendance confirmations as possible from the Ministers within a one-week period.

While they really hoped to get meetings with each of the country's 10 Ministers of Health, Fernando and his team knew they'd be happy with a smaller number too, so they set their tactical goal to be 3 total attendance confirmations. From here, they met with several community members to collect personal stories with permission to share them more widely. When it came time to build the landing page, they realized that they didn't have the technical capacity or time to do something new, so they decided to use their organization's existing blog to write a very clear detailed blog article with their CTA prominently featured. They sent an email to their entire email list and boosted a Facebook post featuring a short video – in both, they asked their audience to contact the Minister of Health in their own regions and ask them to attend a meeting with the organization. Fernando and his team also hosted a Facebook Live where they shared some tips and key messages with their campaign audience to help them approach their local Ministers.

Two days after they launched, they'd received two attendance confirmations from Ministers so Fernando's team sent out an email to the entire audience sharing that they were very close to their goal. This excited the audience so much that people tried even harder and within the next 24 hours, four more meetings were confirmed and the goal was surpassed. The team then posted an update on social media to celebrate the campaign win, and thanked everybody for their participation while promising to provide a further update once the meetings took place later that month. Many community members commented that they felt they'd made a real impact and that they would like to get more involved in future advocacy initiatives!

CONCLUSION

As you embark on your digital advocacy project, consider your budget, goals and the resources available inside your organization, and then, take on what feels right to you. We wish you great success in your digital advocacy efforts!

