

#PAC:

BEST PRACTICES FOR
BRINGING YOUR PAC INTO
THE DIGITAL AGE

ONE
TWO
THREE
FOUR
FIVE

TAKE A CULTURAL CUE

MAKE IT MULTIMEDIA

KEEP IT SNACKABLE

TRACK, MEASURE, OPTIMIZE AND REPEAT

BUILD IN ROOM TO FAIL

INTRODUCTION

Political Action Committees, commonly referred to as PACs, are an effective tool for organizations to engage in the political process. But running a PAC is no easy feat.

PACs first came into existence 65 years ago. Despite regulatory, legislative and judicial changes to their governance, PAC communications have stayed largely the same for decades. But that's changing rapidly.

**But more and more,
we're seeing PACs integrate
digital tactics that
demonstrate you can be both
*creative—and compliant.***



PAC professionals have always been challenged with communicating about the importance of political involvement to a distracted audience. And, because they are highly regulated, creative marketing and communication ideas are often quashed by legal counsel. But more and more, we're seeing PACs integrate digital tactics that demonstrate you can be both creative—and compliant.

At Curley, we are working with PACs to bring their communications into the digital age—which is both an efficient and effective means to the same end. Whether you're a digital media evangelist, or just wading into the shallow end of the PAC pond, we've outlined a few best practices that anyone can implement today to bring their PAC communications into the enlightened, digital world.

ONE: TAKE A CULTURAL CUE

Public affairs professionals sit squarely at the intersection of media, politics and culture.

If your job is to help influence politics, then you need to take your cues from what's happening culturally.

Digital media is a great tool to aggregate, engage on and stay smart about the issues important to your audience.

Be Smart: Determine which digital platforms and people your audiences are tapped into and start following them.

The aviation industry has an incredible online presence. Type in the hashtag #crewlife and you'll enter a fascinating world of pilots and flight attendants talking about what's important to them.

The same goes for the medical community (#nurselife) and the restaurant industry (#cheflife).



Why is this important to your work?

You'll start picking up on trends. In DC, we have a tendency to talk in terms the rest of the country doesn't understand. The Skimm and Axios have been successful because they're able to boil down complex issues into intelligent, pop-culture speak using "smart brevity" as an effective and efficient communications style.

TWO: MAKE IT MULTIMEDIA

The key to successful modern communication is knowing where to reach your audience and how to engage with them.

Most PAC professionals need to communicate across the spectrum – from executives who still want hard copy materials, to millennial employees who prefer podcasts.

Meet your members where they are by developing multimedia tactics. Whether you're sending an email or hard copy newsletter, you can incorporate social and digital media best practices. Conversely, you can turn your traditional materials into video, audio and graphics.

There's an age-old marketing adage that people need to hear something 7x before they remember it. To effectively reach your audiences with messages they'll remember, it takes more than just one strategy or tactic – you need a variety. From newsletters, to ad hoc email updates, to monthly video rundowns, reach your audiences where they are and engage them on what they're already talking about.

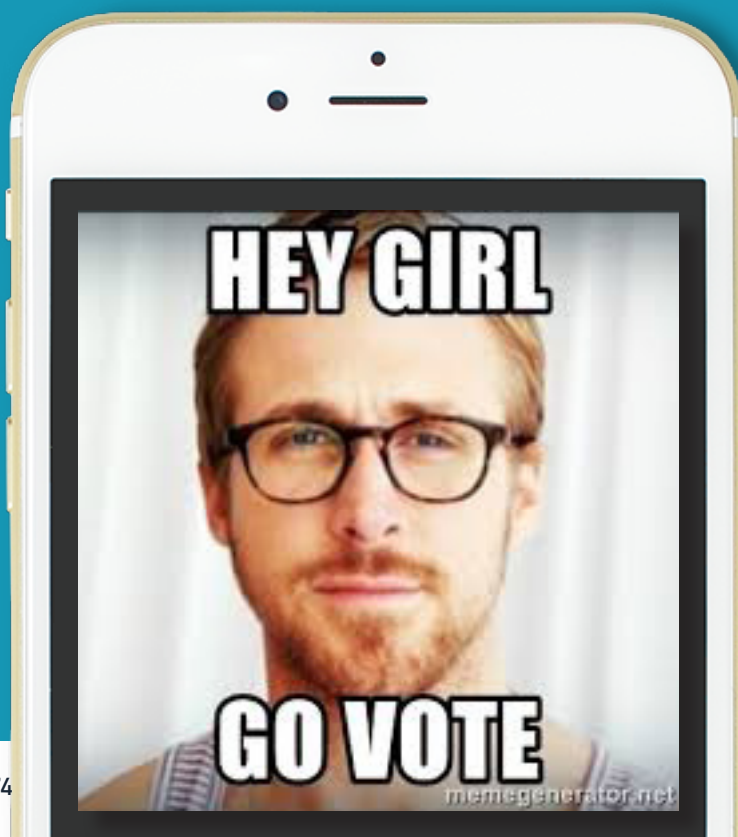


THREE: KEEP IT SNACKABLE

We're living in a 140-character world. Our attention spans are short...

Can you boil that policy position down to the length of a tweet? Would a meme more accurately capture the sentiment of that legislative victory? Most people are reading your message on their phone. A good "rule of thumb" explain your point or make the pitch within two thumb swipes.

Overall, send more frequent, shorter communications. Mix it up and have fun. It will go a long way toward increasing engagement.



FOUR: TRACK, MEASURE, OPTIMIZE & REPEAT

Measuring success starts with establishing good benchmarks. Before introducing new communication tactics, you need to understand your baseline and what you're trying to achieve.

What content resonates the most with your donors? When are your open rates highest? What subject lines spur engagement? What needle are you trying to move?

Our consumption habits are *evolving quickly*, and it's important that PAC professionals stay ahead of those trends.

TEST

A/B testing and pulse surveys can provide quick but effective insights into your audiences.

LISTEN

Develop and encourage two-way communication between you and your audiences by establishing mini-focus groups within your membership and prospective donor base.

OPTIMIZE

Use your data to help build case studies to incentivize more investment in the areas where you're seeing the best return.



FIVE: BUILD IN ROOM TO FAIL

**Communication is *an art*,
not a science.**

Digital tactics make it easier for us to track and measure success, but algorithms and consumption habits are constantly evolving.

When developing your PAC communications strategy, give some of your tactics the chance to fail.

What resonates with one set of industry stakeholders may fall entirely flat with another. But you're not going to know until you try. Start socializing the idea of a fail budget with your boss and colleagues. See if you can set aside a small budget this year to try a video series, create a LinkedIn group or test some targeted digital advertising.



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WHY CURLEY?

The digital age has changed the way we consume news and information, breaking down the traditional barriers between public relations, marketing and advertising. At Curley, we define this as Next-Generation PR. We apply the latest trends and tactics to increase the reach and impact of traditional communications strategies. We believe every PAC communications plan should have a social and digital component - and video is increasingly becoming a must do.

We know Washington, DC, and we understand how PACs work. Our team is well versed in PAC compliance and operations.

LET US HELP YOU BRING YOUR PAC INTO THE DIGITAL AGE.

**Please contact Caitlin Donahue for a complimentary consultation.
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