



Campaigning for nature – Running a social media campaign

Time needed for activity

You could work on this over several lessons; first discussing what social media is and how you mount a successful campaign before moving onto writing key messages and planning a social media campaign on a chosen subject.

Location

Indoors or outdoors

Context

This activity plan sees learners take on the role of social media experts. Planning, preparing and potentially running a social media campaign to raise awareness of an environmental issue or topic through their setting's social media platforms.

Natural Resources Wales' purpose is to pursue sustainable management of natural resources in all of its work. This means looking after air, land, water, wildlife, plants and soil to improve Wales' well-being, and provide a better future for everyone.

Curriculum for Wales

Languages, Literacy and Communication

- **What matters** – Languages connect us.
- **What matters** – Understanding languages is key to understanding the world around us.
- **What matters** – Expressing ourselves through languages is key to communication.

Humanities

- **What matters** – Our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by processes and human actions.
- **What matters** – Informed, self-aware citizens engage with the challenges and opportunities that face humanity and are able to take considered and ethical action.

Digital Competency Framework

Completing this activity provides opportunities to meet the following strands of the Digital Competency Framework.

Citizenship

- Identity, image and reputation
- Digital rights, licensing and ownership
- Online behaviour and online bullying

Interacting and collaborating

- Communication
- Collaboration
- Storing and sharing

Producing

- Sourcing, searching and planning digital content
- Creating digital content
- Evaluating and improving digital content



Objectives

By the end of this activity learners will be able to:

- Set SMART communication objectives.
- Identify and write key messages.
- Identify target audiences.
- Explore different methods of communication.
- Create and potentially run a social media campaign to communicate their key messages.
- Evaluate how effective their campaign and communication skills were.
- Increased awareness and knowledge about the environmental subject they have chosen.

Resources and equipment

- Paper, pencils and pens.
- Access to software programmes such as Word, Google Docs, PowerPoint, Google Slides, Excel or Google Sheets.
- Access to the internet to research their given topic and find appropriate images.
- Supervised access to your setting's social media account if they are actually going to run their social media campaign or a staff member posts on their behalf.
- PowerPoint Presentation - Campaigning for nature: Running a social media campaign (optional) to help you guide your learners through the process.

What to do

1. What is social media?

Working in small groups, ask your learners to discuss and write down:

- What do they understand by the term 'social media'?
- What does social media do?
- Why do people use social media?
- How does social media differ from sending a letter?
- What are the pros and cons of social media?
- Can your learners name any popular social media tools and platforms?

Social media is a computer-based technology that enables the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information among people through the building of virtual networks and communities.

Popular social media tools and platforms include:

- **Blogs:** A platform for casual dialogue and discussions on a specific topic or opinion.
- **Facebook:** Users create a personal profile, add other users as friends, and exchange messages, including status updates. Brands create pages and Facebook users can "like" a brands' page.
- **Twitter:** A social networking platform that allows groups and individuals to stay connected through the exchange of short messages.
- **YouTube/Vimeo:** Video hosting and watching websites.
- **Flickr:** An image and video hosting website and online community.
- **Instagram:** A free photo and video sharing app that allows users to apply digital filters, frames and special effects to their photos and then share them on a variety of social networking sites.



2. The brief for the social media campaign

Explain to your learners that they are social media experts. 'The client' - your setting - would like their help to plan and prepare a social media campaign to raise awareness of an environmental issue or topic through their setting's social media platforms.

Their campaign could:

- Highlight an environmental problem and a possible solution
- Celebrate the natural environment, a habitat or species
- Explain a natural environment management technique or a natural process
- Call others to action to help establish pro-environmental behaviours

Working in small groups, ask your learners if there is a particular topic they would like to raise awareness about. Alternatively, you could allocate the topic or give your learners several topics to choose from.

3. Background information

Once your learners have agreed on the topic they are going to cover, ask them to research the topic, consider the 5 W's and 1 H and compile a fact file:

- Who or what is the campaign going to be about? Who or what does it affect?
- What has, or is happening? What does it mean? What are the key facts?
- When has, or is it taking place? Has it been going on for a long time? Is it a new phenomenon?
- Where has, or is it taking place? Is it a local issue? National? International?
- Why is, or did it happen? Why does the general public need to know?
- How can people get involved in the campaign? Do your learners want people to take action? Learn something new? Change their habits?

If you are completing the activity as a class, different groups could address different points.

4. Ask your learners to set SMART objectives for their social media campaign

Setting objectives for their campaign will ensure your learners have a vision of what they want to achieve, and they will also provide a benchmark for them to evaluate their social media campaign against once complete.

Using the SMART acronym may help your learners to set their objectives.

S - Specific - We want to run a social media campaign to raise awareness of the importance of saving water to help protect the environment and future water supplies.

M - Measurable - We want to increase our number of followers on Twitter by 5%.

A - Achievable - There's no point trying to plan a social media campaign to raise awareness of the importance of saving water to help protect the environment and future water supplies across the world. Although it's a great aim, it would be very hard to achieve. How about looking to raise awareness amongst the parents of learners associated with your setting or locality?

R - Relevant - The whole purpose is to run a social media campaign to raise awareness of an environmental issue or topic. If their plan is to raise awareness of a new restaurant that's opening, then it's not relevant.

T - Time bound - Is what they have planned achievable in the time they have available? Encourage your learners to set deadlines to complete tasks by - it will help them prioritise their tasks and reduce the risk of them becoming overwhelmed.



5. Key messages

Once your learners have had the opportunity to identify and research their chosen topic, working in their groups, ask your learners to discuss and decide on the message or messages they want to communicate. What do they want their campaign to achieve? Ask them to note their ideas. Key messages should be:

- **Concise:** Is it easy to understand? Make your language concise, professional, and to the point.
- **Simple:** Straightforward language; minimal jargon and acronyms.
- **Memorable:** Easy to remember and repeat.
- **Be positive:** Present solutions to stimulate action instead of problems.

Once your learners have identified the key messages for their campaign, it's time to start looking at how they could bring their campaign to life.

6. Who is the target audience?

A social media target audience is the specific group of people you want to reach with your posts. They are the people who are most likely to be interested in your content. The audience depends on the message and if there is a user group associated with that message. For example, if the campaign is about reducing dog fouling, the target audience might be dog walkers. If the campaign is to encourage people to take their litter home with them when families go for a picnic, the audience might be parents. Ask your learners to identify who the target audience for their campaign is.

7. Risks/Challenges

Running a social media campaign may not appear to involve much risk, but closer examination shows thinking about risk is integral to communication. Ask your learners to consider:

1. What could go wrong with their social media campaign?
2. What is the likelihood and impact of something going wrong?
3. What can they do to minimise the risk?

8. Social media platform

Which social media platform will your learners use to share their messages? They may be limited to only using the platforms your setting has an account with. Choosing their target audience and identifying their key messages will help your learners decide which social media platform is best to mount their campaign on. Their choice of social media platform will also give them an idea of how many posts they will need to produce, in what style and the maximum character count they will have available.

9. Planning their campaign

A successful campaign will:

- Catch attention
- Be visually attractive
- Offer something new or a new idea/angle on the subject matter
- Be exciting or amusing
- Achieve the objectives set at the start

How will your learners ensure that their campaign meets this criterion? Ask your learners to jot down their ideas.



Tone - How will the campaign make the audience feel?

Below are some tones that your learners may want to use:

- Dramatic - moves the audience emotionally.
- Informative - factual, clear and concise.
- Conversational - casual and authentic, as if speaking to someone you already know.
- Urgent - persuasive and urges the audience to act.
- Funny - makes the audience laugh or smile.
- Cute/feel good factor – something that makes the audience go “awww!”.
- Entertaining - aims to inform and entertain. Ask your learners to imagine they are a presenter on the BBC One Show.
- Inspirational - uses inspiration and motivational language to drive action.

Remind learners that they are representing a client and they need to ensure that what they ‘say’ in the campaign is appropriate.

10. Drafting posts

Ask your learners to draft their posts using our **Worksheet - Campaigning for nature: Running a social media campaign**. Within their groups, they should appoint some members to take charge of the visuals for their campaign and others to write and edit the text.

A campaign should include lots of visual styles and techniques.

Today, people tend to have a shorter attention span therefore using images is a great way to grab attention and help the audience remember your learners’ message. Research shows that posts with visual content get more shares, engagement and clicks than other social media content.

To keep their audience’s attention and to reduce the risk of the audience losing interest due to repetition, learners should use a variety of images during the course of their campaign. Your learners could include:

- Photos, film and graphics
- A visual representation of scientific information or data
- Visual quotes or interviews with people or experts
- Video of a celebrity or an influencer (someone who has loads of likes/ friends/views) talking about the key message.
- An animation – illustrated or animation (2D, 3D, etc) using ‘cartoon-like’ characters.

Learners should make sure resources are copyright free or they have permission to use them. Photos, graphics and videos are freely available on websites such as Pixabay or Pexels. Websites such as Canva offer a free to use graphic design platform to create social media graphics, presentations, posters, documents and other visual content. Other sites are available.

Writing a script for the social media posts.

The script is made up of the words written within the post.

Your learners should start their post with a **headline**:

- Promise a benefit e.g. Being in the natural environment can provide well-being benefits.
- Use numbers e.g. 3 ways to entice more wildlife to your grounds.
- Ask a question e.g. Where is your favourite sand dune system?
- Create urgency e.g. 3 things you can do to reduce your carbon footprint today.
- Trigger curiosity e.g. 3 things you didn’t know about hedgehogs.

A **second headline** gives the audience a better idea of what the content is about and is a second chance to catch their attention and get them to engage.



Emojis and special characters can make a post more noticeable and are meant to complement a message. Adding an arrow or a pointing finger to a link in your post can help draw attention but don't overdo it otherwise your audience may suffer from emoji overload 🙄.

If relevant, and there is a captivating soundbite from an article, ask your learners to insert a **quote** in the post text to help it stand out.

Line breaks can help a post stand out by increasing the vertical height, making it more visually prominent in the stream. The additional whitespace helps to reduce the risk of the text within the post getting crowded and lost.

Hashtags - Your learners should include appropriate hashtags in their post. A hashtag is a clickable keyword or topic, such as #sanddunes, #WalesOutdoorLearningWeek or #AcornAntics. When someone clicks a hashtag in any post, they'll see all the posts with that hashtag. Hashtags can emphasise a message, increase the visibility of posts and help your learners reach a wider audience.

Tagging an individual, organisation or any entity with a social profile that supports your learners' message will allow your learners to engage with them. When they tag them in a post it's an invitation for them to get involved and support the campaign. If successful and they share your learners' post or comment on it, their engagement can act as a form of validation.

Keep it snappy - Make it too short, and your learners' posts risk getting overlooked. Too long and they might reach the platform's character limit and lose their audience's interest. There's nothing worse than writing a perfect post, only to realise it's too long and needs cutting down.

Language - will your learners post bilingually? Or just in one language? If bilingually, will they write one bilingual tweet or two separate posts?

Thorough checks - Learners should be encouraged to ensure their campaign is going to deliver their key messages. It is much easier to make changes at the planning stage than make changes once the campaign is live and being shared! They could ask teachers, other groups or an expert in the field for feedback.

- Is the message clear?
- Is what they 'say' in the campaign appropriate? - it should enhance the client's reputation not damage it.
- Have they used less characters than the maximum limit the social media platform allows?
- Does/Do the key message/s unfold successfully during the campaign?
- Do the style, tone and imagery work?
- Check the grammar in the text, links, hashtags, and tags are correct.
- Are the emojis used appropriate and do they add value?
- Are the visuals that accompany the posts appropriate, eye catching, and do they say a thousand words?

11. Scheduling their posts

Scheduling allows your learners to pre-plan when and at what time each of their social media posts will be published. Most social media platforms have scheduling tools, so your learners can prepare their posts in advance and choose when they are posted.



Ask your learners to consider their posting schedule. What time period will their campaign run for? A day? A week? A month? Will it run in the lead up to an event or during a specific time of year?

- Posting at a time when they think their audience are most likely to be checking their social media accounts will maximise the chances of your learners' posts having the best engagement. For example, if your learners are trying to influence the behaviour of working parents, it may be best to schedule their posts for the time parents are likely to be unwinding and checking their accounts after a day in work.
- Having a schedule written well in advance of the campaign will allow your learners to ensure they post consistently during their campaign and ensure they don't have any gaps in their coverage.
- Scheduled posts can free up your learners' time to respond to comments and anything that pops up unexpectedly during their campaign. Having all or some of their posts scheduled also acts as a contingency if members of their group are ill on a day they were meant to post. The posts will still go out according to plan.

However, remind your learners they don't have to use scheduling tools, or they could choose to have some posts scheduled with some posts being written and posted as the campaign goes live so they can respond to events organically. It's important to keep some flexibility so your learners can respond to their audience in real time.

Learners can plan and organise their posting schedule using our **Worksheet - Campaigning for nature: Running a social media campaign**.

12. During the campaign

Your learners should plan on checking their accounts at least once a day to look for opportunities to engage with their followers in real time. There may be relevant posts from other people that they can share or like. They should ensure that there is an identified member of their group on duty each day to monitor their posts' progress or plan this into the day to allow for group discussion about a response.

Which posts are performing the best? Did a post with a certain style or one posted at a certain time of day get more engagement than other posts? Monitoring the campaign's progress in real time will give the learners evidence that they need to change their tactics and allow them to make changes before the campaign ends.

13. Identifying success

How will your learners know if their campaign has been successful? In order to monitor the success of each post and the campaign as a whole, it is essential that some measures of success are identified and monitored. Did they achieve their objective to raise awareness of an environmental issue or topic? If yes, great. If no - why not?

- If the campaign was to raise awareness of a rare species then monitoring the number of interactions posts receive e.g. likes, shares and comments or increased use of the hashtag will be a way of measuring success.
- Increased hits on a webpage following the sharing of a link during their campaign would also be a measurement of success.
- How many users watched a video that was shared?
- What was the campaign's reach? How many people saw their posts? 5? 500? 5,000? The more people that saw your learners' posts the greater the reach and the more successful their campaign has been.
- Did the tweet without a hashtag do worse than a tweet with a hashtag?
- Did a fun tweet do better than a more conventional one?
- If the aim of the campaign was to encourage people to pick up their dog waste in a certain area, then some more practical 'before' and 'after' monitoring will be required.



Most social media platforms have inbuilt analytic tools which provide valuable information to help your learners evaluate how successful their campaign has been. Ask your learners to do a bit of number crunching with the data generated.

14. Lessons learnt

Once their campaign has drawn to a close, ask your learners to work together to note any lessons learnt from the planning phase through to running their campaign. Noting these lessons means that if they were to run another campaign in the future, they will have captured their campaign's successes and weaknesses and can take steps to ensure things go more smoothly next time.

Suggested key questions

- What are your campaign's key messages and goals?
- Who is your target audience?
- What kind of content will you need to produce?
- How will you keep your campaign on track?
- Has your campaign been successful?

Adapting for different needs/abilities

More support

- Write the text for your learners – ask them to find an appropriate image only.
- Direct your learners' campaign – tell them what their topic is and what the key messages they should deliver are.
- Don't ask them to analyse the data generated from the campaign.

Less support

- Ask your learners to pitch a range of ideas for the campaign for you to pick from.
- Ask your learners to prepare a report or presentation on the success of the campaign utilising the data gained from the analytics.

Follow up activity/extension

- **Activity plan - Animating nature through stop motion animation.** Can your learners create a short stop motion animation to share as part of their campaign?
- **Activity plan - Creating an enviro-vlog: would your learners like to be nature influencers?** Ask your learners to share their thoughts on a given environmental topic, call others to action or document changes in nature.

Looking for more learning resources, information and data?

Please contact: education@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk or go to <https://naturalresources.wales/learning>

Alternative format; large print or another language, please contact: enquiries@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk
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