Content Strategy for HTC Communities
Hi, I’m Cheryl!

CEO
Do Big Things
Who We Are

270 Strategies and Do Big Things

We are community organizers, digital strategists, communications professionals, and data scientists who have dedicated our lives to building communities, campaigns, and organizations focused on making the world a better place.

We got our start working for presidential campaigns and cause-based organizations and know that organizing starts with a deep understanding of your community. Over the last five years, we’ve worked with hundreds of national and international campaigns and advocacy organizations to build out their campaign and engagement programs.
Do you have census specific questions?

Check out these census resources:

- U.S. Census Bureau
- Census Counts Website
- Census 2020 HTC Map (CUNY)
- Count All Kids

Note: Count All Kids is a good example of a constituency-focused resource, of which there are many, and we recommend finding resources that speak to your constituencies.
Our Process

Since October 2018 our team has conducted digital assessments of National Hubs:

Content will be driven by a comprehensive analysis of the field, paired with our organization's wealth of experience in relevant civic engagement work.

Ongoing Collaboration:
Training Schedule

This is the third of five online trainings that will walk you through GOTC from plan development to program evaluation.

- **JUL 24**: Crafting Your Census Campaign Plan
- **AUG 13**: Assessing Your Digital Readiness
- **SEP 10**: Content Strategy for HTC Communities
- **SEP 26**: Developing Your Hard to Count List
- **OCT 8**: Optimizing your GOTC Program

TODAY
Goals for Today’s Training

1) Define message, trusted messenger, content, and content strategy as it relates to census GOTC work

2) Learn how to develop an effective content strategy and how to coordinate efforts across platforms for outreach

3) Think critically about where your community is online and how to amplify messages in those spaces

4) Feel empowered to use digital content as a tool to GOTC
Today’s Agenda

Training Goals

What is digital content strategy?

Overview

Messenger

Message, Tone of Voice, and Visuals

Platforms

Planning

Wrap up
A note about this training:

this training is a big picture view, focused on framework, so you have the basics, but your supplementary materials have a lot of specifics on best practices, post frequency, etc.

They look like this:

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<th>SEGMENT</th>
<th>DRAFT LINK</th>
<th>Approver</th>
<th>NOTES (i.e. email send time/schedule, creative needed, etc)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>When will this content be shared with your community?</td>
<td>What is the purpose of this content (in 1-3 words)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Who is this message coming from? Will it be from the organization generally or from a specific sender? If a sender, who?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>7-Sep</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Tweet</td>
<td>Organization handle - reciever</td>
<td>Commit to getting counted and follow us here</td>
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[Your org] Content Calendar
Census Digital Organizing Training Questions and Sample Content

Questions to Ask Yourself When Creating Content

Content Do and Don’t

Email Template

SMS Script

Social Media
    Image examples

Questions to Ask Yourself When Creating Content

- What does your content look like? Is it easy to read and scan? What will it look like on a phone?
- Is the content compelling and written clearly?
- What is the voice? Does that unique voice come through in the content?
What is digital content strategy?
This is Miguel. While commuting on the bus, he checks his twitter feed...
On his way to work, he reads a text from the principal at his son’s school.
The next day, Miguel runs into his son’s principal at pick up and they talk about the census.
A few days later, Miguel sees a similar message again on his Facebook feed…
Miguel starts to think to himself…
“The Census seems important. I wonder when the census starts or how I can get more information?”
You are behind the scenes creating this digital ecosystem for Miguel.

You choose the messenger, the message, and the cadence.

Website  Email  Social  Face-to-Face  Ads
Overview
Content is:
everything you are communicating.
Who is speaking
+
What they are saying (and how it looks)
+
Where it is said =

Content Strategy
Your content should be designed to reach your specific audience.
So, let’s dive into how we build a content strategy.
Message is the **point** that you want to make to your specific audience and the **way you say it**.

Message should be communicated in a way that resonates with your **specific community**.

Message should be **informed by research**.
A trusted messenger is someone (or something) within your community who people go to for **reliable information**.

It’s someone you relate to.

The messenger matters as much as the message.
Platforms are the *channels* through which we get our messages to our communities.
Content strategy is a plan to purposefully present valuable information to your community. It is your approach to getting the most important information to your audience. It includes a plan with dates and other specifics.
Revisiting Audience

Who are you mobilizing to complete the census?

**Meet your Hard to Count community where they are**, and utilize your knowledge + research to target and reach your audience.

Where is your community most engaged online?  
*Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, etc.*
Trusted Messenger
Pulse Poll:

- Do you currently know the term “trusted messenger” as it applies to digital organizing?
  
  http://bit.ly/contentstrategy1
Trusted messenger example

NALEO Educational Fund 📠 @NALEO · Jul 2
@MayorOfLA knows how important an accurate census count is for LA. Census data guide the allocation of federal funding to programs that are crucial to the well-being of families & communities.

Have questions about #Census2020?

📞 Call 877-EL-CENSO (877-352-3676)! #HagaseContar
Who does your community (audience) trust?
Why Use a Trusted Messenger

Your audience should hear from multiple people online and offline

- Influences engagement (e.g. open and read rates)
- Builds on existing trust
- Reinforces message
- Effects how audience process information in content
- Creates diversity of voices
Finding a Trusted Messenger

• Who does your community seek out for information?
• Is it you or your organization?
• Where does your community gather?
• Do you have staff members or volunteers that can speak to your community?
This doesn’t just mean hoping community influencers RT you! It means choosing trusted messengers in advance and coordinating communication.

<table>
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<td>Communication that spotlights our organization, Emails at phase transitions</td>
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<td>Updates, educational information, importance of census</td>
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<td>Campaign updates, volunteer opportunities, pledge cards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tyrone (digital volunteer)</td>
<td>Excitement, community events, calls to action, personal story of action</td>
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Securing a Trusted Messenger

- Bring in trusted messengers as long-term partners
- Be clear about structure - who will draft, calendars, etc.
- Merge online and offline in partnership
Message, Tone of Voice, & Visuals
Content Best Practices

- What does your content look like? Is it easy to read and scan?
- What will it look like on a phone?
- Is the content accessible and engaging while still taking the serious issues seriously?
- What is the point of the content? Is it for Education? Messaging? Advocacy? Is the point of the content coming through clearly?
Content Best Practices

DO

- Use photos and videos that help tell a story
- Actively engage with your community
- Use video whenever you can
- Include calls-to-action whenever possible
- Keep copy and asks simple / streamlined
- Engage with hashtags
- Collaborate with partners
- Test different message effectiveness (A/B testing)

Check out our Digital Organizing Video Training Series: Email 101
Content Best Practices

DON’T

- Write posts without captions
- Overwhelm your audience with too much content in a single post
- Post pictures that are low quality
- Primarily retweet other voices on Twitter. The most consistent voice should be your own

Check out our Digital Organizing Video Training Series: Social Media 101
Content Best Practices

MISINFORMATION CONSIDERATIONS

- Proactively put out digital communications with your message
- Cite multiple reputable sources
- Do not engage trolls or bots *(see bot resources in sup. material)*
- Maintain a positive tone that connects with your community
- Build strong partnerships/affiliate networks and coordinate to amplify each other’s messages online
- Anticipate specific kinds of misinformation and prepare usable responses
- Only RT known users, community members, and experts - check all studies before sharing

Additional resources on Content Best Practices and Sample Content
Content Examples

19 likes

naleoefund This #Census2020, remember that children count too!

Leaving them out of the census may reduce the amount of fed. funding for programs like Head Start, Special Supplemental Program for Women, WIC and more! #HazmeContar

April 30

28 likes

advancingjustice_aajc Join us TOMORROW, Tuesday 12/18 2 p.m. ET, for a Twitterstorm to tell the Census Bureau that our communities need an accurate #2020Census, and that includes improved language access. See you on Twitter! More hashtags are #AAPI2020 and #CompleteCount
Message
What you say matters and affects how audience behaves
Messages reach communities differently, so you should blend your knowledge of the community with research
Message should be informed by research and tailored to your audience
  - You can find segmented research here.
The Census Bureau has helpful research
  - Look here and on the Bureau website
Stay up to date on messaging info at www.censuscounts.org

*Overall effective message* - focus on how a complete count is tied to funding
Call to Action (CTA)

- Most of your communication should include a Call to Action (CTA)
- An action the reader/audience can take
- This action should strengthen your organizing abilities
- Often will include list-building activities (give your email, cell, etc)
Sample CTAs Over Time

**Education**
[Now - Dec ‘19]
Sign up here to get more information about the census [email collection]

**Promotion & Mobilization**
[Jan ‘20 - Apr ‘20]
Pledge to be counted [digital pledge card]

**Targeted Action**
[May ‘20 - Jul ‘20]
Follow through on your pledge - be counted now [digital pledge card]
Tone of Voice
What is tone of voice (TOV)?

- The style of how each message is going to be delivered
- The manner in which you communicate with your audience
- Varies depending on sender and message or call to action
## Tone of Voice

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<td>Liana (Exec Director)</td>
<td>Communication that spotlights our organization, Emails at phase transitions</td>
<td>Powerful, Energized, Authoritative, Grateful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe (local principal)</td>
<td>Updates, educational information, importance of census</td>
<td>Passionate, Personal, Facts and figures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amari (Staff member)</td>
<td>Campaign updates, volunteer opportunities, pledge cards</td>
<td>Informal, Energized, Grateful</td>
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<td>Tyrone (digital volunteer)</td>
<td>Excitement, community events, calls to action, personal story of action</td>
<td>Personal, Informal, Specific, Energized</td>
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## Tone of Voice

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<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Build community and share information; ask questions to inspire engagement on posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Share temporal/newsy content; stats, news links, conversational tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>Celebrate of things people are doing and how others can get involved; celebratory, enthusiastic, inviting</td>
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<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>Used to tell a story and get people to learn and take action; informative, educational</td>
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Visuals
Use images and video to tell a story.

Give that story a face and a voice.
Benefits of Images and Video

Increases engagement
- Social video generates [12x shares](#) than text and images combined
- 92% of mobile video viewers [share videos with others](#)

Increases information retention
- The information retained in 1 min of video equals about [1.8M written words](#)
- Viewers are [9x more likely to remember information](#) when presented with a video compared to text-only information

Check out Content Best Practices and Sample content for specifics on imagery and video
Pulse Poll

- Do you feel prepared to apply the concepts of messenger, message, tone of voice, and visuals to your digital organizing work?

Platforms
Platforms are the channels through which we get our messages to our communities.
Platforms for Mass Communication

People or organizations produce content that is aimed at their entire following; the audience might be extremely broad.
These platforms are more conversational and your message is being conveyed to a selective group of individuals.

Platforms

Messaging Apps

WhatsApp

Facebook Messenger

WeChat
A good platform strategy uses
mass communication platforms
+ messaging apps
that your Hard to Count community
already uses.
Example: Push Black

Need a dose of Black History?
Sign up for Powerful Black history stories sent straight to your phone.

Approach:
1. Start with audience - digital media platform for African Americans
2. Learn about audience through research
3. Research led to a strategy to meet audience on their phones
4. “Subscriber first” approach - opt in to communication
5. Engage with storytelling and then share facts
Example: Jolt Initiative

Approach:

1. Start with audience - young Latinx
2. Long testing period (Sep - Dec) across multiple platforms (Facebook, Insta, Twitter, Email)
3. Message: Positive - power in your hands, you are in control
4. Partner with local artists to create images that speak to audience
5. Local example - an accurate census count could make Houston 3rd largest in the US
Planning
So, about Miguel...
## Content Calendar

### Shoreburn Counts Content Calendar

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<td>Email</td>
<td>Liana (Executive director)</td>
<td>Give us your cell phone to join our text community</td>
<td>Full list</td>
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<td>19-Oct</td>
<td>External Events</td>
<td>Confirm that recipients have joined the text community and ask recipients to talk about filling out the Census with their community</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Liana (Executive director)</td>
<td>Pledge to talk about filling out the Census with a friend or family member</td>
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<td>Email</td>
<td>Amari (Staff Member)</td>
<td>Fill out a pledge card committing to completing the census</td>
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See GOTC Content Calendar Sample resource
# Breaking it Down: The Basics

## Shore Count Content Calendar

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## Breaking it Down: Next Level

### Trusted messenger

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How to Create a Content Calendar

- Use our template!
- Add other columns that you want to track
- Define overall goals for digital organizing
- Break down into individual acts (rows)
- Establish trusted messengers
- Include trusted messengers in content calendar planning process
- Establish approval process
- Make sure all key stakeholders have content calendar

See GOTC Content Calendar Sample resource
Review
Key Takeaways

❖ Digital ecosystems don’t just happen - they are carefully coordinated

❖ Finding and using multiple trusted messengers is as important as having the appropriate message

❖ A content calendar is an incredibly useful tool that will require up front time investment

❖ Always meet communities where they are online - you know your community best, so trust yourself
Is your content strategy working?

There are ways to test your content strategy to determine if it is working.

We will talk more about testing and evaluation during the Optimizing your GOTC Program training on October 8th.

Registration for this training is now open: go to censuscounts.org/digital-organizing-tools to join!
Q&A // Wrap up

In the chat box: Please tell us your biggest challenges as you organize online.
Thank you!
Next Step: Complete the GOTC Content Calendar Sample.
Next Step: Complete the evaluation, which will be in your inbox shortly.
Up next, on September 26th is:

Developing your HTC List

Registration for this training is now open: go to censuscounts.org/digital-organizing-tools to join!