Content Strategy for HTC Communities

Hi, I'm Cheryl!

CEO
Do Big Things

Who We Are

270 STRATEGIES

DBT

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

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

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

NALEO Educational Fund

FAITH IN PUBLIC LIFE

STATEVOICES

ASIAN AMERICANS ADVANCING JUSTICE

FAITH IN ACTION

FIRM — FAIR IMMIGRATION REFORM MOVEMENT

Helping People. Changing Lives. community Action PARTNERSHIP — AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK

Ongoing Collaboration:

STATEVOICES

The Leadership Conference

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Training Schedule

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

UP NEXT

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

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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

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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:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	*Instructions:* To use this document, click "File" and "Make A Copy" and rename and save the document to your google drive.									
2	**[Your org] Content Calendar**									
3	SEND DATE/TIMING	Objective	DESCRIPTION	Type	Messenger/Sender	CTA	SEGMENT	DRAFT LINK	Approver	NOTES (i.e. email send time/schedule, creative needed, etc)
4	When will this content be shared with your community?	What is the purpose of this content (in 1-3 words)?	What will this content include? What will the substance of this content be?	Will this be an email or posted to a social media platform?	Who is this message coming from? Will it be from the organization generally or from a specific sender? If a sender, who?	What is this content's Call to Action? What exactly are you asking your community to do?	Who are you sending this content to? Your full list? Members of a specific group? A specific geo location?	Place a draft link in here	Who will be signing off on this content before it is posted or sent? (Note: this person should be staff ideally)	Anything else that you want to convey or note?
5	7-Sep	Introduction	Introduce census work, importance of counting, upcoming census work	Tweet	Organization handle - no signer	Commit to getting counted and follow us here	Full list			
6										
7										

And this:

CENSUS COUNTS 2020

Census Digital Organizing Training Questions and Sample Content
Census Counts Digital Organizing Training Series

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...
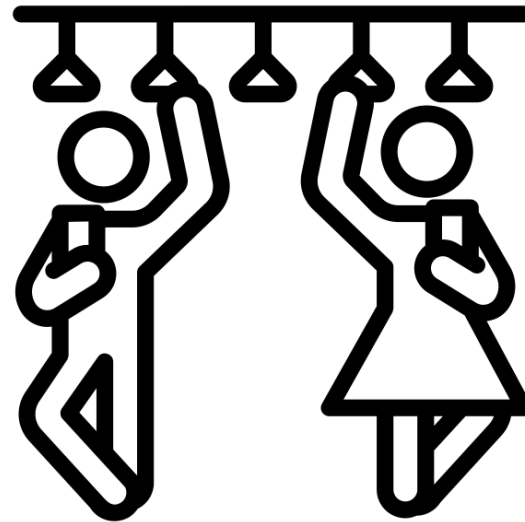
On his way to work, he reads a text from the principal at his son's school.

Thu, Sep 19, 1:26 PM

Hi Miguel, this is Principal Joe. I'm working with Shoreburn Counts to make sure our community is counted in the 2020 census. Our school resources are, in part, determined by census data. Please commit to completing the census. Click here to fill out a pledge: bit.ly/SBC2020
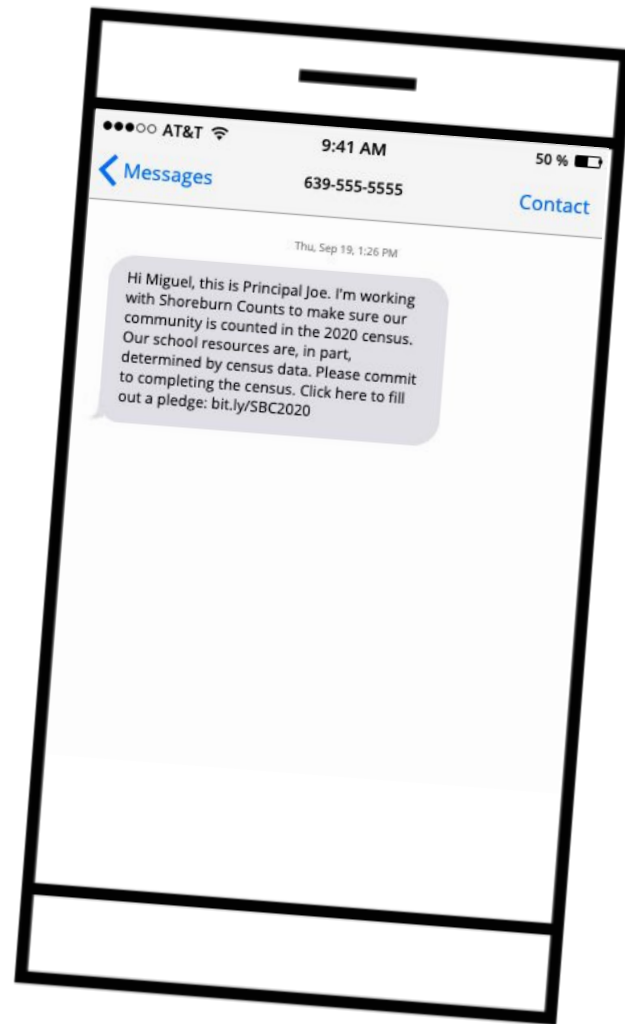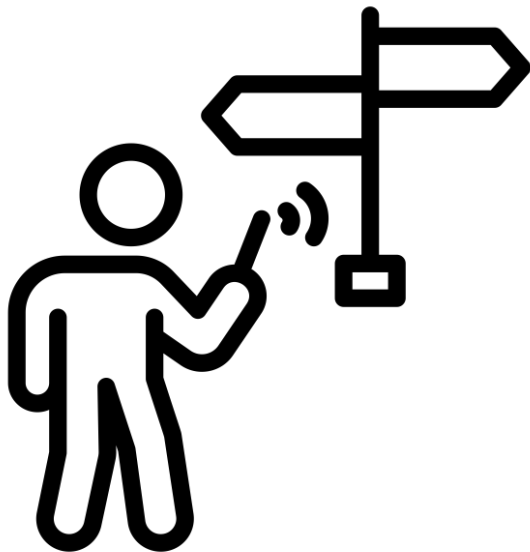
The next day, Miguel runs into his son's principal at pick up and they talk about the census.
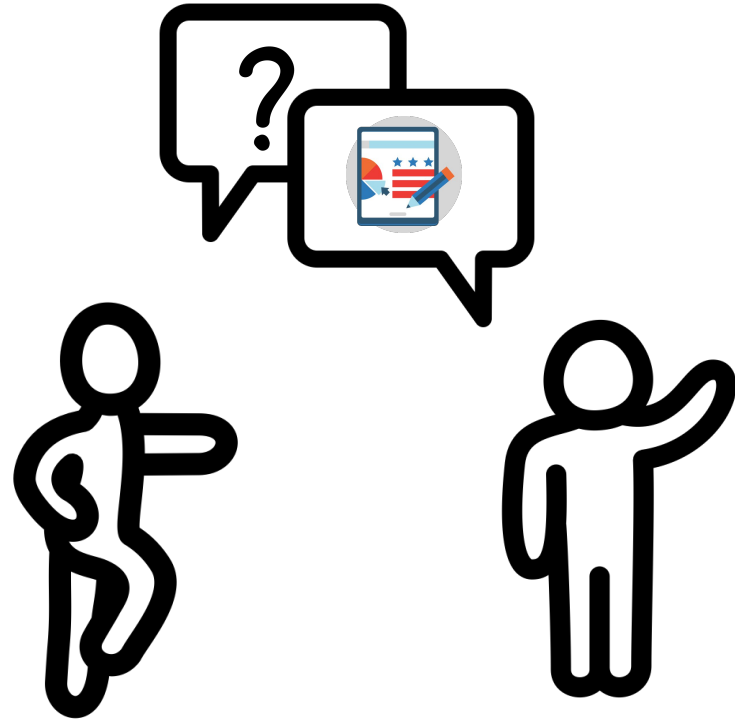
A few days later, Miguel sees a similar message again on his Facebook feed...

Principal Joe
Yesterday at 4:45pm · 🌐

★ ★ ★
TAKE THE CENSUS. GET COUNTED

SHOREBURN NEEDS YOU.

Find out more information about Census 2020 on ShoreburnCounts.org

Filling out the census is important. I'm working with Shoreburn Counts to make sure our community gets counted. The resources for our school are, in part, allocated based on census data. Join me in committing to completing the census. Click here to fill out a pledge: bit.ly/SBC2020

Like · Comment · Share

👍 44 people like this.

↪ 17 shares

Write a comment ...

Miguel starts to think to himself...
"The Census seems important. I wonder when the census starts or how I can get more information?"
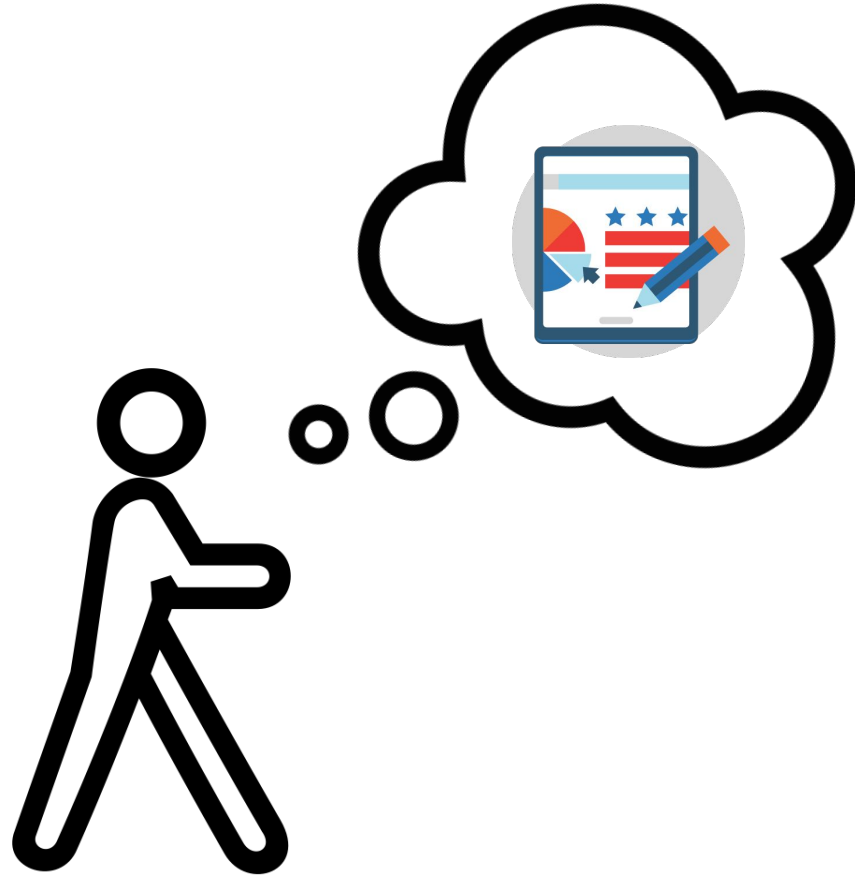
You are behind the scenes creating this digital ecosystem for Miguel.

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
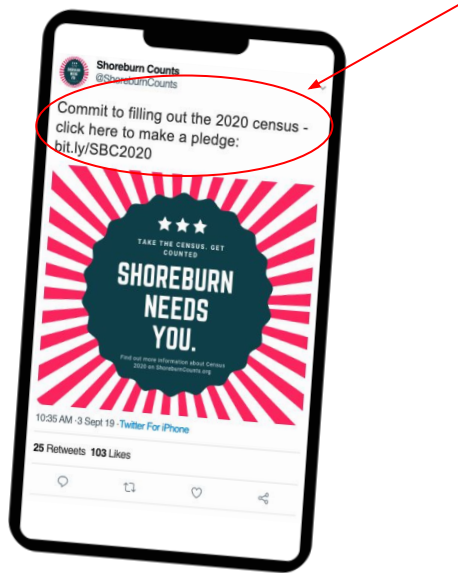
Message is the **point** that you want to make to your specific audience and the *way you say it*.

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

Message should be **informed by research**.

Trusted Messenger
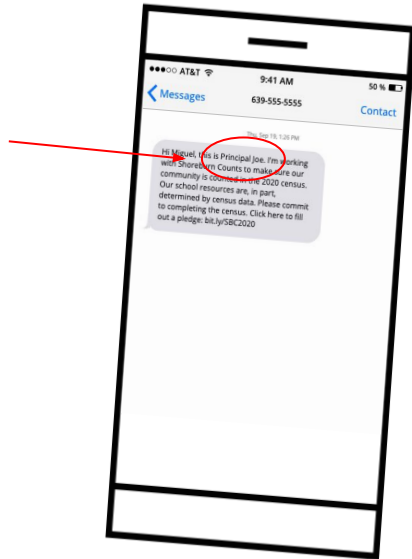
A trusted messenger is someone (or something) within your community who people go to for reliable information.

It's someone you relate to.

The messenger matters as much as the message.

Platforms
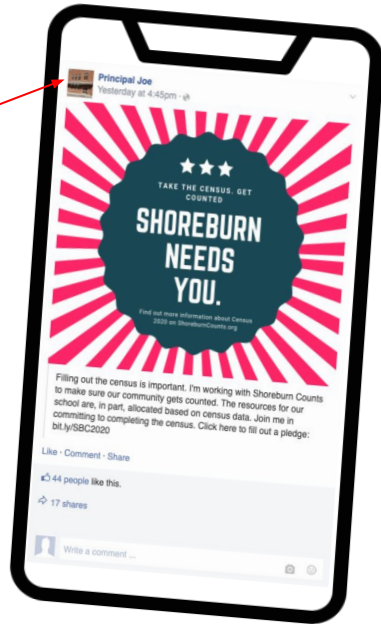
Platforms are the **channels** through which we get our messages to our communities.

Content Strategy
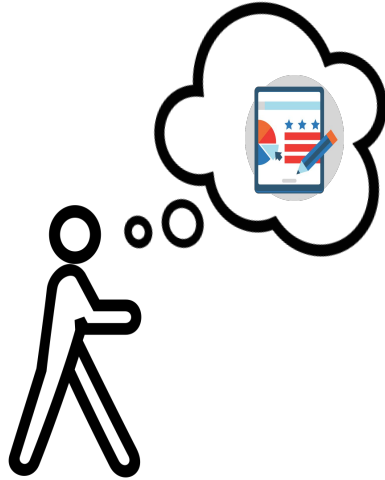
Content strategy is a plan to purposefully present valuable information to your community. It is your approach to getting the most important information to your audience. It includes a plan with dates and other specifics.

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.

Revisit your crafting your census campaign plan

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

Who does your community (audience) trust?
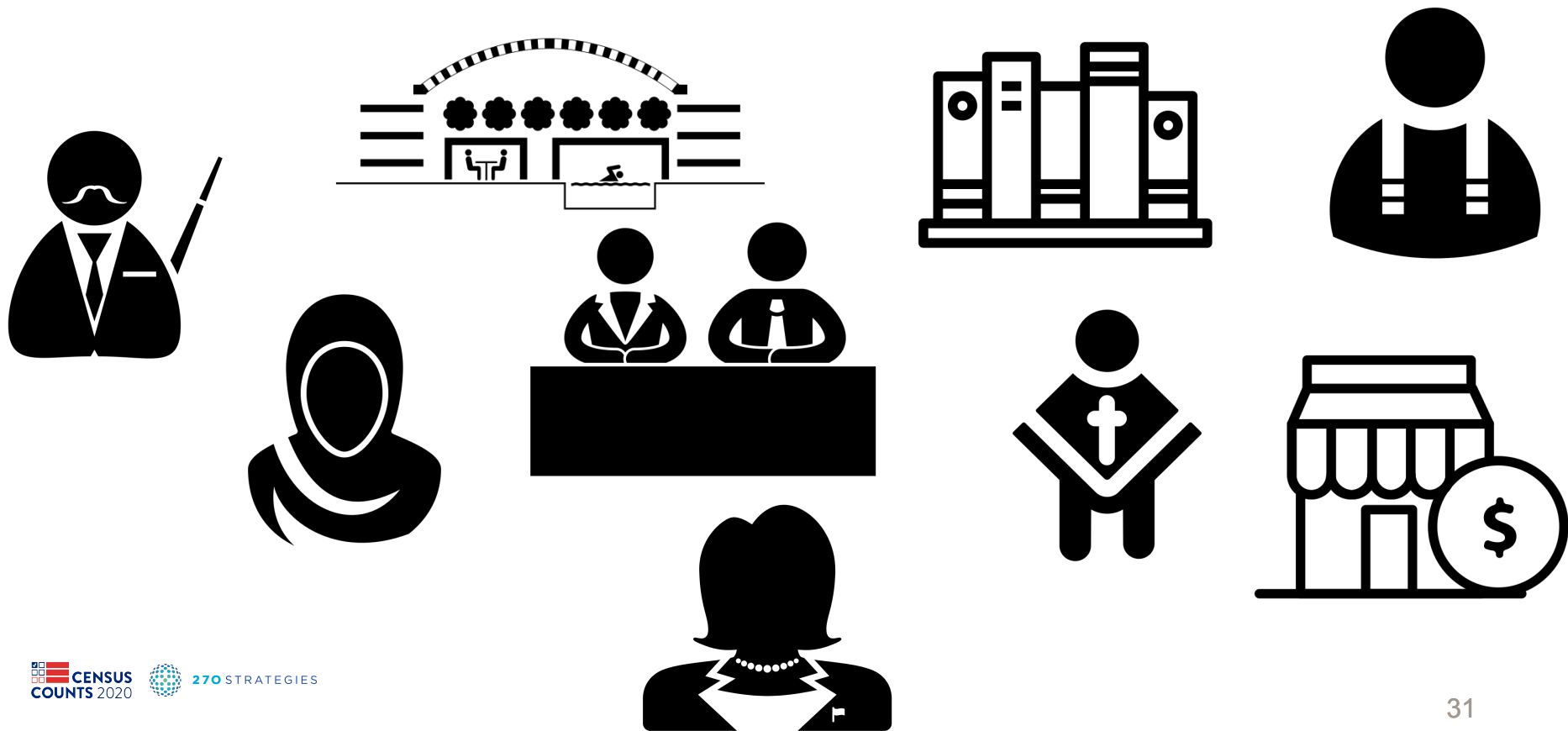
Why Use a Trusted Messenger

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?

Trusted Messenger in Practice

This doesn't just mean hoping community influencers RT you! It means choosing trusted messengers in advance and coordinating communication.

Messenger	Voice being used for
Liana (Exec Director)	Communication that spotlights our organization, Emails at phase transitions
Joe (local principal)	Updates, educational information, importance of census
Amari (Staff member)	Campaign updates, volunteer opportunities, pledge cards
Tyrone (digital volunteer)	Excitement, community events, calls to action, personal story of action

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?

More questions to consider on your Content Best Practices and Sample Content Worksheet

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

Message

Messaging

- What you say matters and effects 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]

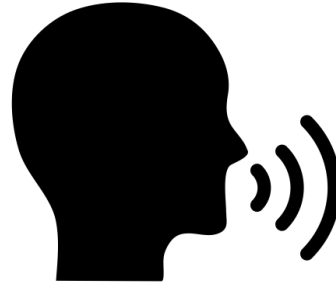**Promotion & Mobilization**

[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

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

Tone of Voice

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

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Visuals

Use images and video to tell a story.
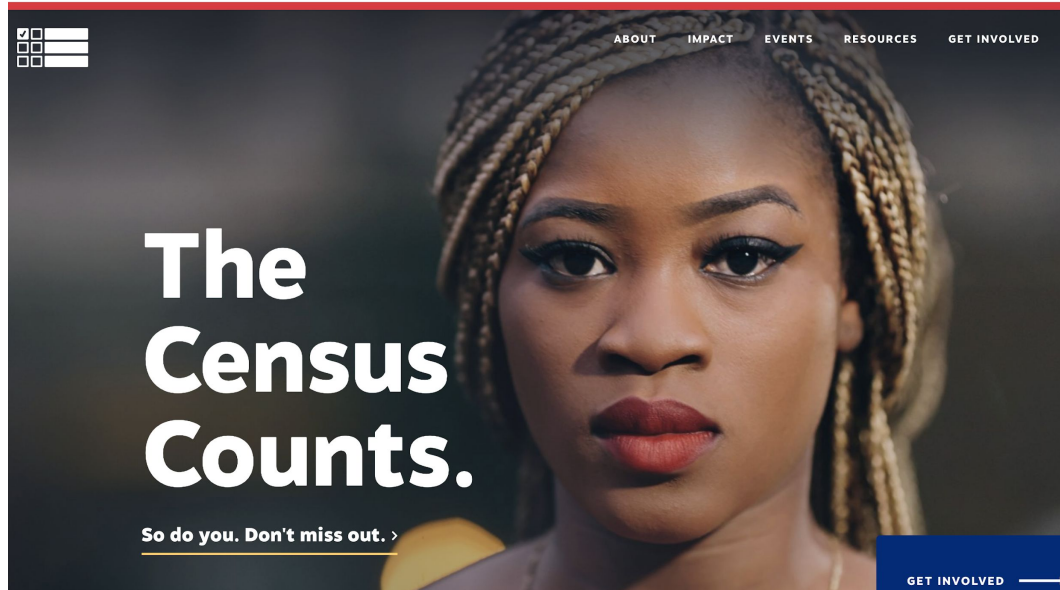
Give that story a face and a voice.

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

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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?

  http://bit.ly/contentstrategy2

Platforms

Platforms

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

Platforms

Platforms for Mass Communication

People or organizations produce content that is aimed at their entire following; the audience might be extremely broad.

Platforms

Messaging Apps

These platforms are more conversational and your message is being conveyed to a selective group of individuals.

A good platform strategy uses

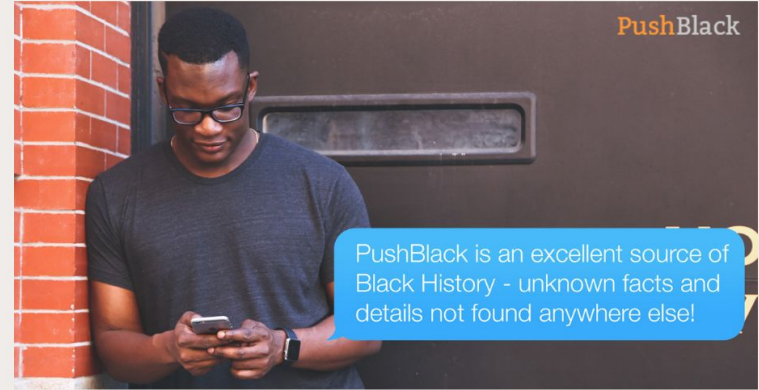**mass communication platforms +**

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.

Sign Up

PushBlack is an excellent source of Black History - unknown facts and details not found anywhere else!

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...

Education

Trusted messenger

Call to action
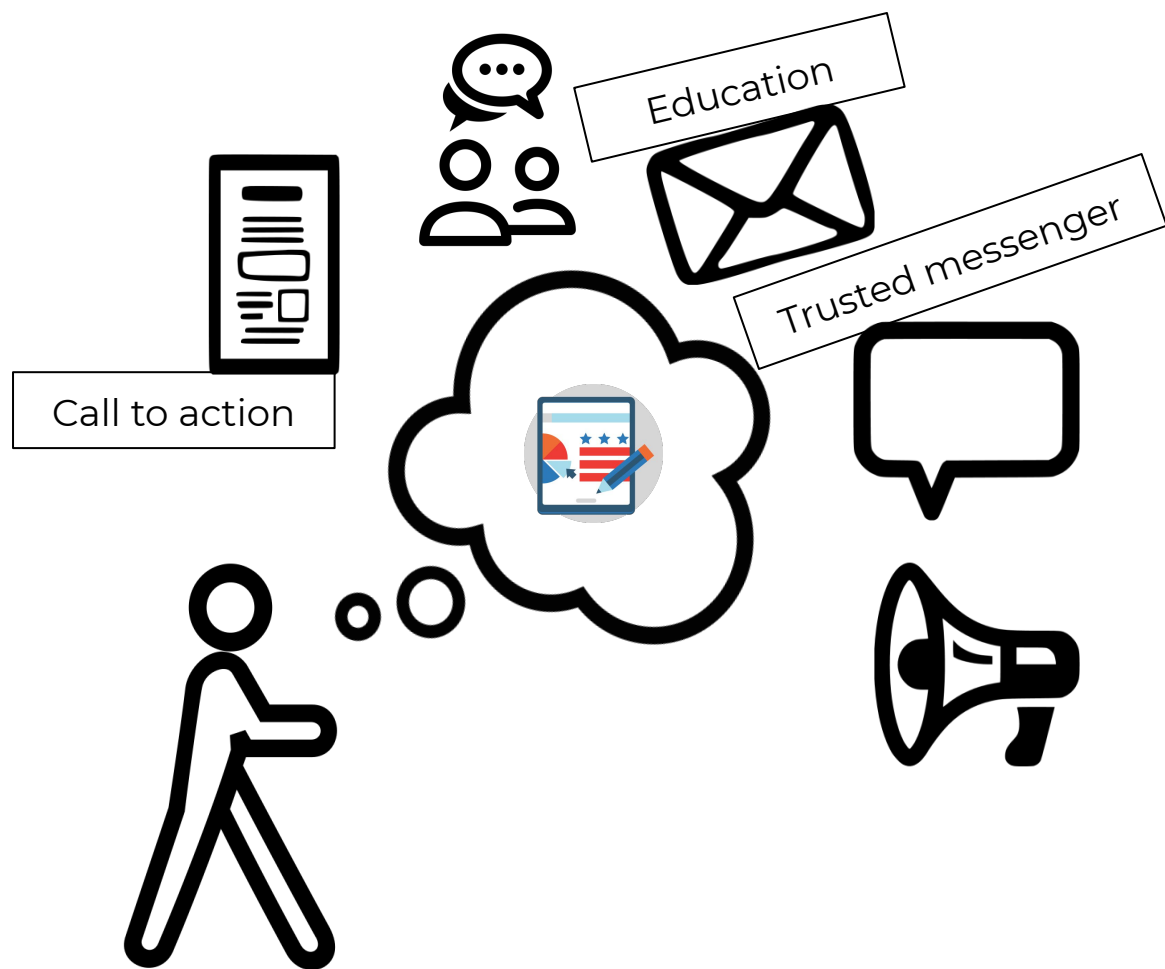
Content Calendar

Shoreburn Counts Content Calendar

SEND DATE/TIMING	Objective	DESCRIPTION	Type	Messenger/Sender	CTA	SEGMENT
7-Sep	Introduction	Introduce census work, imoprtance of counting, upcoming census work	Tweet	Organization handle	Commit to getting counted and follow us here	Full list
7-Sep	Introduction	Introduce census work, importance of counting, upcoming census work	Facebook	Organization handle	Commit to getting counted and follow us here	Full list
7-Sep	Introduction	Introduce census work, importance of counting, upcoming census work	Email	Liana (Executive director)	Give us your cell phone to join our text community	Full list
19-Oct	External Events	Confirm that recipiants have joined the text community and ask recipiants to talk about filling out the Census with their community	Text	Liana (Executive director)	Pledge to talk about filling out the Census with a friend or family member	Full list
30-Oct	Thank You	This text should briefly explain the benefits that the school district recieves from having an accurate count of the community and should ask people to pledge to complete the Census.	Text	Joe (local principal)	Pledge to be counted	School district 4
12-Nov	Introduction	This email welcomes grassroots census ambassadors to the team and asks them to fill out a pledge card committing to completing the census.	Email	Amari (Staff Member)	Fill out a pledge card committing to completing the census	Grassroots Ambassadors

Breaking it Down: The Basics

Date

Main goal

Detailed description

Type of communication

Shoreham County Content Calendar

SEND DATE/TIMING	Objective	DESCRIPTION	Type
7-Sep	Introduction	Introduce census work, imoprtance of counting, upcoming census work	Tweet
7-Sep	Introduction	Introduce census work, importance of counting, upcoming census work	Facebook
7-Sep	Introduction	Introduce census work, importance of counting, upcoming census work	Email
19-Oct	External Events	Confirm that recipiants have joined the text community and ask recipiants to talk about filling out the Census with their community	Text
30-Oct	Thank You	This text should briefly explain the benefits that the school district recieves from having an accurate count of the community and should ask people to pledge to complete the Census.	Text
12-Nov	Introduction	This email welcomes grassroots census ambassadors to the team and asks them to fill out a pledge card committing to completing the census.	Email

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Breaking it Down: Next Level

Trusted messenger

Call to action

Part of your list

Organizational details

Messenger/Sender	CTA	SEGMENT	DRAFT LINK	Approver	NOTES (i.e. email send time/schedule, creative needed, etc)
Organization handle	Commit to getting counted and follow us here	Full list			
Organization handle	Commit to getting counted and follow us here	Full list			
Liana (Executive director)	Give us your cell phone to join our text community	Full list			
Liana (Executive director)	Pledge to talk about filling out the Census with a friend or family member	Full list			
Joe (local principal)	Pledge to be counted	School district 4			
Amari (Staff Member)	Fill out a pledge card committing to completing the census	Grassroots Ambassadors			

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

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See GOTC Content Calendar Sample resource

Review

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!**

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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!