



ourfoodprint.com
Leafleting guide

Key advantages of leafleting

The great thing about leafleting is that anybody can do it - you don't need a group, you don't need large investments and you don't need to invest too much time. Given the right time & place, a single person can hand out hundreds of leaflets in less than an hour.

Some of the benefits of leafleting as an outreach activity include:

- It's information that goes directly into the hands of the target group.
- It's cost effective and does not take too much time or effort to implement
- It can reach a large group of people. A single volunteer can hand out as many as 50-100 leaflets per hour. This means a group of 4 volunteers who leaflet for 1 hour every week, have a potential to reach out and spread the message to between 10-20,000 people in a year.
- It empowers and activates volunteers to go out and do outreach work, without a great deal of preparation.
- A well-constructed leaflet, provides enough information for a person to understand the issue involved, has images that help the reader get a visual connect to the issues and also helps direct the reader to resources they can use to understand the issue in greater detail.
- It's a grassroot activity which while being a seemingly simple approach, has been shown to be highly effective in terms of spreading a message.

Planning your leafleting activities

While leafleting is a relatively simple activism activity to implement, a certain level of planning can help ensure greater success for your efforts. The following are some of the key things to keep in mind while planning your leafleting outreach efforts:

Identify an appropriate location & time

Technically, you can leaflet at any place with people traffic and at any time. However, certain locations & times of the day have been shown to be more effective in terms of reaching out to a larger group of people with greater effectiveness. A simple thumb rule is to try to focus on (a) locations with a large grouping of people (b) locations & times of the day where people have some time to spare and are not preoccupied.

The following are some examples of effective leafleting locations:

- Schools & colleges are amongst the best locations for leafleting. Try and focus on lunch hours, college events and towards the end of the college day. Students and the youth are amongst the most open to new ideas and accordingly make an ideal target group.
- Other effective locations include malls, theaters and cinema halls where people are likely to be at leisure and accordingly more open to sparing time to go through your leaflet. If you choose to leaflet inside a mall (which is technically a privately owned location), try and move around and leaflet away from security guards.
- Leafleting during events involving social causes (including events not related in any way to vegan issues) has also proved to be effective, as people are more inclined towards accepting leaflets and going through the same.
- Leafleting to people waiting in a long queue is also effective, as people are looking for something to pass their time.
- Leafleting around public transport areas (such as bus & train stations) can be effective during non-rush hours, since people who are sitting idle while in the bus or train are more likely to flip through a leaflet. However, the opposite holds through during rush hours, where people are in a rush and are preoccupied, and should accordingly be avoided.

Do you need to apply for permissions?

For most (but not all) locations, it is possible to leaflet without asking prior permission. However if you are venturing into a sensitive area or are unsure about the area, it is best to call the local police station or relevant authority in advance to verify.

At ourfoodprint.com, we have undertaken leafleting activities in schools, colleges, malls and even right outside a KFC outlet without facing any permission related issues. Remember that freedom of speech is a right of every citizen in a democracy and you are simply exercising the same.

You may occasionally be approached by the authorities while leafleting. In most situations, they are only interested to know what you are doing and that you are not creating any

disturbances. Do not shy away, but rather politely introduce yourself and explain what you are trying to do. In most cases, the authorities are likely to allow you to continue with your activities, once you have explained yourself. During a OFP demonstration outside KFC, we were actually congratulated & encouraged by the local police for spreading a positive message.

In the event that any authority does object to your leafleting at that location, simply apologise and move over to another location.

Plan ahead for volunteers

If you are a group of people looking at leafleting together, keep the following in mind. Ensure everyone is informed in advance of the location & time, and confirm participation one day prior to the event. Try and distribute roles across the volunteers - the most knowledgeable volunteer can act as the focal point for people interested in learning more as well as being the spokesperson for contact with authorities. The more outgoing volunteers could be in charge of handing out leaflets & interacting with people, while volunteers less exposed to leafleting could carry placards. Ensure all volunteers have been briefed with relation to how they should interact with people and address queries.

Carry volunteer signup sheets

During leafleting activities, you are likely to come across people who are interested in the cause and would like to help out in the same. Carry volunteer sign up forms, where you can take down contact and other details of any potential volunteers.

Try and ensure that you touch base with these volunteers within a short period of having conducted the leafleting activity. A simple email (can be preformatted) thanking the person for their interest, directing them to online resources to learn more and asking for more details helps greatly in keeping interested people involved with the cause.

Tips on effective leafleting

Initially leafleting in public may seem intimidating. However, once you put yourself out there, you will typically see any fears dissipating within the first 30 minutes of leafleting, and your confidence continues to grow from there.

Always approach leafleting with a positive & confident frame of mind. You are out leafleting, because you have an important message to share and you are trying your bit to make the world a better place. Just by putting yourself out there, you have taken the initial step towards the same. Feel proud & confident of what you are doing, and everything flows naturally from there.

The following are some tips which will help you become a more effective leafleter:

Smile, eye contact & an opening line: A genuine smile, eye contact and a simple opening line in a friendly tone such as 'information to help animals' do wonders in increasing acceptance rates.

Approach people: Don't wait for people to approach you; few will. Walk up to them, and with a friendly smile, hand them a leaflet accompanied by a positive comment like, "Here's some info on why we're here today." Then move on.

Be prepared to discuss: Be prepared to discuss the issues further and prepare answers to anticipated questions. Many people will express interest and it is often well worth some additional time spent discussing the benefits of vegetarianism with them. However your purpose is to try and hand out as many leaflets as possible, and not to get involved in lengthy discussions & debates. Try and keep your discussions brief, take down their contact details and direct them to online resources for further information.

Be positive & polite: You're an ambassador for a vegetarian diet. Always be positive, polite and encouraging. You might be the first vegetarian this passerby has ever met - leave them with a good impression. (read more: being an effective activist)

Be creative: If you are in a group, try and be creative to ignite passer-by interest. This leads to both increased acceptance rates and a better chance of them reading the leaflet. A few simple ideas include: having some volunteers hold up visually appealing placards, having all volunteers wear similar clothing, or having a volunteer dressed in a costume.

Following are some tips from Farm Sanctuary's Compassionate Communities leafleting tips that were tried while test leafleting.

- **The Lean:** If you extend your hand all the way, lean your shoulder forward and bend at the waist a bit towards the student, they will naturally take the leaflet. You're giving so much of yourself to try to reach this person, they would feel bad leaving you hanging.
- **The Head Tilt:** Tilt your head while offering the brochure. We don't know why this works, but it helps a lot.
- **The Stop And Start:** People often decide whether to take a brochure based on whether the person in front of them took a brochure. If you get a string of individuals who turn you down, stop leafleting, wait about fifteen seconds, and then start back up again.
- **The Hi:** Say "hi" or "hello" to an approaching person and wait for them to say hello back. Now that you two have established contact, offer them a leaflet.
- **The Gate:** If you're leafleting with a friend, stand across from one another on either side of the flow of foot traffic. It's hard for people to say no when they feel outnumbered.