



## Advantages of social media

---

The spread of online social media platforms, such as Facebook or Twitter, has revolutionised the world of communication, media & marketing. Never before in history, was it possible for any one individual to reach out to thousands or even millions of people, with the ease that social media allows for.

Social media provide you the ability to communicate to your entire network of friends & acquaintances with a single click. But even more importantly, social media presents you an ability to move beyond your immediate network by joining groups of individuals interested in a particular topic.

Being creative and interesting on the posts that you put up, increases the chances that it gets liked, shared or tweeted upon on other people's networks. The more interesting the post, the more often it will be shared and the eventual reach of the initial post can be virtually limitless.

As an outreach tool, social media is simply indispensable and should be a key part of any activist's outreach programs - from the arm chair activist, grassroots NGOs and for larger organisations.

## Planning your social media activism

---

Awareness outreach is any activity which is undertaken to spread awareness about an issue to a group of people. Every one of us have fairly large social media networks. Every time you like, tweet or share anything related to an issue on your social media pages, you have undertaken an outreach activity and have helped to spread the message to your network of friends & associates. This simple activity itself can have tremendous outreach capabilities, due to the potential of that message being shared forward onto other people's social media networks.

The focus of this guide is on how to take social media outreach to the next level, by taking the spreading of your message beyond your own social media networks and onto the larger worldwide web.

Before you start, it is very important to go back to step 1 of your outreach activities - choosing your issue. Try and narrow down to what exactly is the issue that you care the most about and would like to communicate. The more specific the issue, the more closely you can try and match your message to its audience, increasing the chances of your message going across.

For virtually any topic, there will be numerous online groups focussed on different aspects. Once you have identified the main groups related to your topic, join the groups that (a) have a large & active membership base (b) allows members to post information on their wall (c) has as close a fit as possible to your specific issue (c) have members who will benefit from increased knowledge about damages caused by the livestock industry. Try and focus on groups where the issues of factory farming are still not well understood, to widen the spread of your message.

Just examine the posts on the group for a few days, prior to posting your first outreach message. This should help you develop a feeling of the group and how members communicate with each other.

Once you have joined a group, you then need to become an active and value adding member to the group to be taken seriously. Go over the large amount of material available online or in the resources section of this website, and identify information which you believe will be of interest and of relevance to the group. This could be a webpage, an article, some latest research, a speech or a documentary.

Post this information to the group with a short note on why you believe it would be of interest to members. Remember to check back and address any queries which may come up. Provide a link in your posts for people to read up more.

Always keep the following in mind while posting in groups:

- Never spam a group. Limit the number of messages posted every day.
- Never post a message not related to the group. (e.g. don't speak of health issues of dairy on a carbon emissions Facebook group).

- The more narrow the message the better. Focus the message to the interests of that particular group.
- Try and post on a regular basis. Keep aside a certain amount of time each week for this activity.
- Be an active member of the group. Get involved in conversations other than your own, and speak of issues other than factory farming.
- Don't be overzealous in your communication and do not react adversely to negative comments.