

Getting Influencers to Root for Your Cause

How to Mobilize Your Everyday Ambassadors



CONTENTS

2	Introduction	9	Conclusion
3	Supporter-Centric Engagement	10	About the Author
7	The Key to Any Social Strategy: Everyday Influencers	10	Contributors

INTRODUCTION

Let's face it—there's a lot of competition for people's attention online. Ironically, while the Internet has democratized communication, it's also unleashed a torrent of information, putting the competition for mindshare at a premium.

So, it's your job to get your organization's message through the digital noise, reach your audience, and keep them captivated so they'll rally around your cause. Sounds a bit daunting, right? But, it doesn't have to be.

Integrating your existing supporter records with insight from social data and social listening can help you better understand the social side of your supporters. This gives you a glimpse into how your people talk about issues related to your campaign which allows you to personalize your engagement and drive campaign conversions.

This social insight also allows you to leverage one of your most important yet undiscovered assets—your social media influencers. By enabling the most influential followers on your list to be ambassadors of your message, even more people will hear about and get to know your cause. When that occurs, big things can happen.

In this guide, you'll get practical advice on how to:

- Personalize your communications to drive deeper engagement
- Identify social media influencers from your email list
- Get those influencers involved in spreading your message
- Equip influencers with the training and support they need

SUPPORTER-CENTRIC ENGAGEMENT

Engaging your supporters based on their preferences is the hallmark of modern marketing. The message, channel, timing, and calls to action will largely determine a campaign's success. The better you know someone, the deeper you can engage them, build on that relationship, establish trust, and get them involved in something you both care about. And, if they feel connected to the organization on a more personal level, they're more likely to continue to support it and get others involved.

This supporter-centric engagement starts with knowing your people.

By combining peoples' social behavior—what they talk about, the social networks they use—with information you already have in your databases like activity levels and donation amounts, you're able to get a closer look and understanding about their lives and what matters most to them.

Social insight helps inform a supporter-centric engagement approach by bringing in three important aspects: the supporter record, social data, and social listening.

Supporter Record + Social Data + Social Listening = Social Insight



Supporter Record

Giving amount and frequency, participation, activity level, and interests



Social Data

Klout score, Twitter® bio, number of connections



Social Listening

Group everyone talking about "my campaign" on social media

The new view you have tells you more than just what network that person uses. It's much deeper than that—it's about understanding the social behaviors and interests of your people—what and how often they post, how many connections they have, if you follow each other, their demographics, what other platforms they use, trending terms they use, and more.

Connecting social behavior to supporter records helps you get to know your people better, so you can personalize your communications and drive engagement for greater involvement with your campaigns.



Listening for Your Best Advocates

To get the best results for your campaign and cause, tap into the real-time passion of your supporters. Engage them when they are most fired up about an issue relating to your mission. One of the best ways to get the pulse on your people is to simply listen.

Social listening means monitoring digital media channels to understand the conversations around relevant topics so you can better engage those people driving the discussions.

Historically, social listening has meant listening to the rest of the entire world—what's the conversation out there about a certain issue? But, by focusing in on how key stakeholders, such as donors, activists, advocates, and supporters talk about the issues surrounding your work, the possibilities open up for deeper, multichannel engagement.

Intelligence gained from social listening gives you an immediate pulse on your audience so you can create content that speaks directly to your people, your influencers—those who are already passionate the cause you're fighting for, so you can energize your campaigns across channels.

Social listening can also help you understand how your audience plans to act on an issue. For example, you can find out if people are sharing actions that put pressure on an elected official or corporation. You can see how followers are reacting to trending news stories, if they're stirring action around a media outlet, or if they're circulating around a hashtag.

Engaging People Who Are Talking About Your Campaign On Social Media

This is where the real-time engagement comes into play. The goal of segmenting by social listening is to allow you to establish groups based on specific mentions and engage them by email and social media with personalized calls to action.

For example, by automating emails based on social mentions, American Rivers® sent highly targeted emails asking its supporters to sign a petition within 24 hours of the mention. The Result: 24% petition conversion rate, 2500 new signatures, and 0 unsubscribes.

THE POWER OF ONE IN A SOCIAL AGE

The power of the individual is rapidly evolving. More than 600,000 petitions were created on Change.org in 2015 alone and resulted in thousands of victories for various causes. We've also seen an explosion in crowdfunding, and the creation of movements separate from institutions or organizations has played an enormous role in bringing issues to the forefront.

While many of the underlying strategies behind winning campaigns haven't changed, something transformative is happening as it relates to change makers and the way they make change happen. Today, every individual is an agent of change who can leverage power through their social networks.

Because people are more connected and more empowered than ever before, organizations have a tremendous opportunity to boost their outreach and use this power in a new way.

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS

Social media influencers are people who are active on one or more social networks with a modest to large following and can drive awareness and action around your campaign.

Influencers come in all shapes and sizes, but they have one thing in common: **They drive action.** They help generate buzz around key moments, such as the release of a report, a vote, a time-sensitive fundraiser, a petition, and other current events that impact your cause.

People have more access to instant information than ever before. Anyone can easily find out how to get involved with a cause just by doing a simple search online. But too often, people don't proactively go down that path on their own. So what should you do? This is where your social influencers can make a huge difference and substantially increase exposure to your work.



WHY INFLUENCER MARKETING WORKS

The [Georgetown 2013 Digital Persuasion Study](#) found that **65% of people get information about causes they care about from family and friends online.** In comparison, only 26% find out about a cause directly from an organization.

The Study also revealed that people are more likely to believe something they read online from a friend versus another source.

The reason?

People like to get information from friends and family because they trust them. It's not that your organization isn't trustworthy, but *people believe people.*

And, [Nielsen's 2015 Global Trust in Advertising Report](#) found that 83% of respondents in 60 countries say they trust the recommendations of friends and family.

Similarly, the reason Facebook®'s recent algorithm serves more content from friends and family (and not your organization or advertisements) is because it's the best performing content, with video leading the way.

So, what does that mean for your organization?

Empowering your supporters to share your content and create their own is key to breaking through the content noise. Find the people most passionate about your campaign and cultivate them as messengers.

Influencer engagement is about the *type of people* you're reaching and the way you connect with them *across channels* to amplify your message. To do this, use your assets strategically, including your email list and have your social media influencers share your message for you.

Equally important, if you leverage influence in strategic ways, you can avoid burning out your email list with numerous asks that don't quite fit the segments in your email file. Social listening and social data in an influencer-driven program can provide untapped opportunities for your organization. With tools, structure, and strategy that make sense for your campaign goals, you can create a ton of energy and momentum to drive big actions and turn influencers into lasting advocates for your mission.

FINDING YOUR INFLUENCERS

Influencers are everywhere. Attentive.ly® found that the top 5% of influencers on a nonprofit email list of 140,000 can reach an average of 34 million people, or 85% of the email file's total reach. This is a big deal. It's real power and an opportunity for nonprofits even though only a small number of those influencers may share your message. The key is to identify and cultivate the people on your email list who are active and have a large following so they will spread your message beyond your organization's immediate reach.

FINDING INFLUENCERS WITH KLOUT



Klout has emerged as the leading way to measure how much impact an individual or brand has on social media by assigning a score. It reviews a person or organization's activity on all listed social media sites and measures their overall online influence. A Klout Score is a specific number from 1–100 representing the influence that brand or individual has through their presence on social media. For example, if your tweets tend to get lots of retweets and comments, that shows influence and you probably have a Klout Score over 40. Celebrities and political figures tend to be over 70. The more networks you're on and the higher your engagement, the greater your score will be. Keep in mind, a large number of followers or friends doesn't necessarily relate to a higher score, and scores are dynamic and can change daily.

For a nonprofit, Klout Scores allow you to measure your supporters' influence in the space of digital conversations. If someone has a high score, it means their reach is wide and impact sizeable. This matters, because working with people with high scores can improve your organization's visibility and get your message heard by many more people.

FINDING INFLUENCERS USING KEY HASHTAGS

In addition to using Klout to find your influencers, consider looking for influencers among those who are actively using terms or hashtags related to your cause or campaigns. For example, in preparation for its #Write4Rights campaign, Amnesty International Canada identified influencers in its CRM solution who had already used the campaign hashtag. The organization then direct messaged those influencers, asking them to tweet during the organization's global day of action.

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The Georgetown 2013 Digital Persuasion Study found that 65% of people get information about causes they care about from family and friends online

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SEGMENTING YOUR INFLUENCERS

Nearly every organization has an email list that's comprised of petition signers, volunteers, donors, and other important stakeholders. Your organization has also likely invested time and resources to grow that list and ensure that you're able to communicate with your email subscribers regularly. But not all email subscribers are created equal; your email segments probably include:

- Active donors
- Lapsed donors
- Activists who are not donors
- Volunteers
- Lapsed subscribers

It doesn't make sense to speak to different segments in the same way or include them all in every single email campaign. And, it's more effective to involve your social media influencers in a completely different way with deeper levels of engagement and different actions.

So, consider including additional segments to reflect a deeper strategy for your social audiences, including:

- Social media influencers
- Social mentioners (i.e., people who talk about climate)

Adding a social media influencer segment to your list will require a different kind of cultivation and outreach strategy. But it's definitely worth investing in to get the most out of your campaigns and stretch your reach. In other words, **influencer segmentation informs cultivation strategies that can strengthen your email messages and ensure you're not messaging disinterested parties on your list.**

Ultimately, the goal is to find those passionate people who truly want to be involved with your cause and are willing and able to talk about it with their personal social networks. It's common to have three influencer segments—VIPs, professionals, and everyday—but your own experiences will help you organize your segments.

To find social media influencers on your list, sort your existing contacts/followers by Klout Score or number of social connections. Then, segment them into the following categories in your CRM solution, marketing solution, or email list:

- **VIPs** (e.g., celebrities) 70–100 Klout
- **Professionals** (e.g., media, bloggers, politicians, movement leaders) 60–70 Klout
- **Everyday** (e.g. nurse by day, climate activist by night) 40–60 Klout

Social listening comes back into play here too and can help you see which influencers are talking about your campaigns. It's especially helpful to know how VIP and professional influencers are framing your issues, because it will inform how you ask them to share your message.

Though not required, it's far more likely that influencers will engage with a personalized ask if they are already involved with your organization, which may be something as simple as signing up for your e-news or signing a petition.



SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS Are Your Digital Volunteers

They can amplify your calls to action

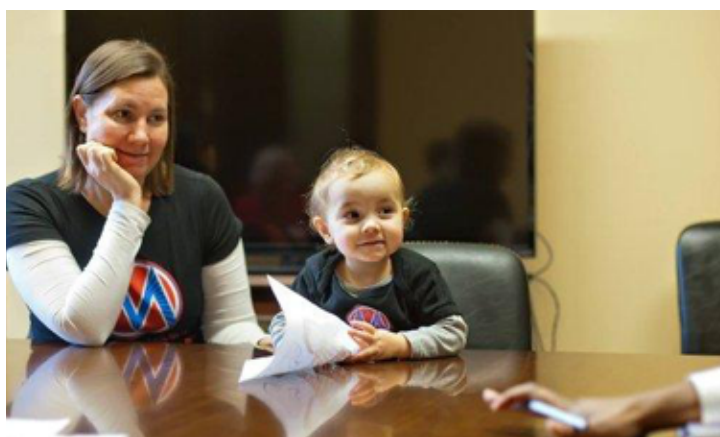


THE KEY TO ANY SOCIAL STRATEGY: EVERYDAY INFLUENCERS

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“If only we had a celebrity talking about us.”

.....
—Anyone who’s ever worked on a campaign

While it’s true that the right celebrity can significantly raise your campaign’s visibility, celebrities and VIPs are limited. That’s why it’s important to diversify your messengers by mixing in professionals and everyday influencers too.



Meredith Dodson, pictured here with her daughter, is a big supporter of MomsRising® and often tweets about taking action on issues facing women, mothers, and families. She even created her own hashtag, #BabyLobbyist.

As long as they’re motivated by passion and interest around your cause, everyday influencers are the largest and most accessible of the three influencer groups you should cultivate. Just the sheer numbers in this group make these individuals a powerful force. Research has found consistent evidence that everyday activists play a critical role in generating online content as compared to core leaders. “[The Critical Periphery in the Growth of Social Protests](#)” states:

“Although committed minorities may constitute the heart of protest movements, our results suggest that their success in maximizing the number of online citizens exposed to protest messages depends, at least in part, on activating the critical periphery.”

In other words, the campaign message simply can’t spread without supporters on the fringe sharing the message on their social networks too. While these supporters are less impactful as individuals, their power lies in the sum of their numbers; their contribution as a group is comparable to that of core leaders.

Fundraising with Everyday Influencers

Although the Global Fund for Women™ already had a strategy to engage high-level influencers, it had to think creatively about new ways to nurture its everyday influencers. As a solution, the organization launched an influencer program aimed at growing its audience through social media.



In December 2015, the Global Fund for Women asked its advocates (influencers) to participate in the #IAmDetermined Selfie Challenge as part of #GivingTuesday, a national initiative dedicated to inspiring giving and philanthropy across the country. The Fund raised \$1 for every selfie shared on #GivingTuesday, thanks to a matching gift from a donor. The Fund sent advocates social media toolkits with drafted messages and images to help raise awareness about the campaign.

The Result: The Global Fund for Women raised more than \$25,000 on #GivingTuesday—the Fund’s most successful 24 hours on Twitter®. **#GivingTuesday raised more than \$25,000—the Fund’s most successful day on Twitter.**

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“For us, the value of our everyday influencers is absolutely priceless.”

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—Camira Powell, PR and Social Media Coordinator, Global Fund for Women

Improving Event Turnout with Influencers

Anita Jackson, director of social media strategy and blogging at MomsRising decided to incorporate social listening to bolster the organization’s events and overall support.

Typically, MomsRising held events like petition deliveries and movie viewing parties, but wanted to make a bigger impact by giving its supporters what they were asking for—on-the-ground programming with regular meetings. For the first phase of the new programming, MomsRising tried the usual ways of using social media to increase meeting attendance—Facebook® events and ads, tweets, posts. Sometimes they worked, sometimes they didn’t.

But just before the Iowa caucuses, the organization tried something different.

The organization planned an on-the-ground meeting and invited supporters via email and social media. This way, no matter how an individual supported MomsRising®, they were aware of the event. In addition, the organization used attentive.ly® to find people on its list who shared their location. Then the team sorted those individuals by Klout score, so it could prioritize reaching out to those people who were more likely to engage and share the message quickly and widely.

The Result: MomsRising got retweets from a local journalist, as well as Zach Wahls, an Iowan who made the spotlight when he stood up for LGBT equality. Plus, there was a huge increase in engagement from local Iowans sharing the tweets and emailing their friends and family about the event. Those everyday tweets and posts were huge, because they gave MomsRising solid social proof from Iowans.

So, even on a giant public social media platform like Facebook® or Twitter®, getting personal is possible. And by doing so, you can target your cause's strongest voices on the web.



Anita Jackson, Director of Social Media Strategy and Blogging, MomsRising



Empowering Influencers to Convert Passion into Impact

Whether your mission is curing pediatric cancer, cleaning up the oceans, housing veterans, or any purpose in between, driving your campaigns forward means getting your people to take action. It also means cultivating your new messengers to inspire their own communities and networks to fight for the cause too. Unfortunately, most people hoping to make a real impact don't know how. They need to be shown the path to engagement and provided the tools and training to succeed. And they need a strong community supporting them every step of the way. Here are some guidelines that can help you optimize your outreach efforts and get your influencers on the road to creating big change for your organization and cause.

- **Mirror the mission.**

Your cause is the reason your organization's mission speaks to you. It's your "why." And it is also why people get drawn in and feel a need to get involved. Deep engagement is fostered when people identify with your mission, as individuals and as a group.

A powerful connection can be created when you show supporters how everyday people like themselves not only feel the same way, but how they've taken action and made a difference. Social media influencers have this ability to mirror your mission to current supporters and their own networks by sharing your campaign message. It's social proof.

- **Foster community.**

You need people power to win your campaign and achieve your mission. The power of bringing people together isn't just about education or fundraising around an event, but also showing them the social proof so they're inspired to take on more responsibility. Building community means providing opportunities to engage through the channels and platforms where your people spend time—online and off. When you provide a communication infrastructure for others to share, collaborate, lead, and mirror your mission, that collective identity will lead to collective action.

***Try this:** Invite your influencers to an exclusive call to get them hyped up about your campaign. American Friends Service Committee regularly invites their influencers and active supporters to monthly Google+ Hangouts® to inform them how AFSC is addressing key issues and how others can get involved.*

- **Hook them up with tools and training.**

We're great at asking supporters to take action, but we usually don't show them how to do it without us. In addition to providing

your volunteers and social media influencers with campaign toolkits with images and messaging, regular training can help them learn the skills they need to make a greater impact.

Try this: Create a resource hub. Make it easy for influencers to share your message by creating a landing page with sample messaging, images, videos, and other useful resources. This could range from text and images in a Google® Doc to 350.org-style toolkits that include branding guidelines, logos, messaging ideas, and more.

- **Offer different opportunities for engagement.**

People like having options when it comes to getting involved. So, offering a variety of ways for influencers to engage with your organization is going to be more effective. Options can range from taking a one-minute action, like posting to your social network, to leading a local meet-up. And remember, segment your most active influencers in your email file, so you can give them special attention.

Try this: Provide exclusive access. Offer special content tailored for influencers that shows your appreciation while also educating new spokespeople about the campaign. Make them feel special and get them excited about future campaigns by providing sneak peaks of a report or new campaign, an update on legislation or a lawsuit, or a letter from the board president.

- **Show your social support.**

During a campaign, encourage your influencers and supporters by liking, commenting, and retweeting their posts about the campaign or mission. As basic as this sounds, acknowledging their involvement is one of the most important steps to build people power and keep the campaign momentum moving forward.

CONCLUSION

Things to Remember

The most successful campaigns rely on modern multichannel communications, relevant messaging and rapid response timing to break through the nonstop information

Today, change is fueled by networked individuals who share, engage, and ultimately mobilize their own social networks around a cause

The key is to identify and cultivate your supporters who are active on social media, so they'll spread your message beyond your organization's immediate reach

- **Automate your marketing messages.** When a supporter mentions your cause on Facebook® or Twitter®, send them an automatic email asking them to sign your petition, make a donation, and more.

Learn more at www.attentive.ly ►

Want to learn even more about influencers? Download [How to Identify & Engage Your Influencers](#), a guide to getting your content read and spread.

Attentive.ly® Moves Campaigns Like Yours



Attentive.ly converts your supporters into social media advocates. Find out what people are saying on social media, so you can target the right people to help you make real change.

- **Segment with social listening.** It takes just one click to create a group based on social mentions, influence, and social networks.
- **Identify influencers hiding out in your email.** Find your existing influencers based on network reach, topic relevancy, and prior interactions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jeanette Russell is a product marketing manager at Attentive.ly® (Blackbaud) who is dedicated to creating change through technology. In her 20 years in nonprofit technology and the advocacy sector she's worked with thousands of nonprofits and has a deep understanding of fundraising, advocacy, and digital communications. Passionate about

pioneering next generation digital engagement, Jeanette writes and speaks nationally about advances in nonprofit technology. She serves on the advisory board of JustGive® and the WildWest Institute and co-founded the Montana chapter of the New Leaders Council® and the National Forest Protection Alliance.

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About Blackbaud

Serving the worldwide philanthropic community for 35 years, Blackbaud (NASDAQ: **BLKB**) combines innovative software, services, and expertise to help organizations achieve their missions. Blackbaud works in over 60 countries to power the passion of approximately 35,000 customers, including nonprofits, K-12 private and higher education institutions, healthcare organizations, corporations, foundations, and other charitable giving entities. The company offers a full spectrum of cloud and on-premise solutions, as well as a resource network that empowers and connects organizations of all sizes. Blackbaud's portfolio of software and services supports nonprofit **fundraising and relationship management, digital marketing, advocacy, accounting, payments and analytics**, as well as **grant management, corporate social responsibility, and education**. Organizations that use Blackbaud technology raise, invest, manage, and award more than \$100 billion each year. **Recognized as a top company**, Blackbaud is headquartered in Charleston, South Carolina and has operations in the United States, Australia, Canada, Ireland, and the United Kingdom. For more information, visit www.blackbaud.com.

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