Digital Campaigning – A New Role For Business In Education

Technology is fast connecting the world. Over one billion people are active on Facebook\(^1\), 645 million on Twitter\(^2\) and 259 million on LinkedIn\(^3\). And the numbers are rising. Capitalizing on this, digital campaigning has spurred great progress for several causes, mobilizing people globally to raise awareness, persuade target audiences and provide critical services such as fundraising.

This policy brief shares best practices for education focused, business-led digital campaigns and highlights leading strategies for planning and launching a digital campaign, taking a digital campaign to scale and making it sustainable for maximum impact.

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Digital Campaigning
Technology for Education

A global movement for education can accelerate the end of the learning crisis

Digital campaigns are used to organize people the world over for various forms of cause-related activism to raise awareness and institutionalize support, persuade a target audience to take action and raise funds for projects and initiatives.

Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, as well as email, websites and mobile technology are prime examples of tools that may be utilized to create successful digital campaigns. They offer an unprecedented opportunity to communicate with the 2.4 billion people connected to the Internet and 6 billion who have access to mobile phones, with immediacy and frequency, cutting across physical, social and economic barriers. If correctly utilized, digital campaigns can provide the global civic engagement and collective action required to resolve the learning crisis.

Business may be the best facilitator

Why should business engage in digital campaigning for education? Building a reputation as a socially responsible company is one important reason. Research shows that consumers have an increased willingness to buy products and services from socially conscious companies4. In a 2012 Nielson survey, education was also identified as a prominent cause with which to associate social responsibility. Fifty-six percent of online respondents from 56 countries reported that companies should support education5. Businesses will therefore, if their involvement in targeted and properly highlighted, benefit from increased consumer engagement and higher profitability.

Additionally, digital campaigning for education is an effective tool to deepen employee engagement. Companies typically engage employees in social causes through volunteering. However, giving employee hours can be costly and many employees seeking to make a social impact are often faced with limited opportunities and time off work to do so. Digital campaigning offers an innovative way to tackle these challenges and provides a platform for more long-term and flexible employee engagement. This can boost recruitment and improve employee loyalty and retention rates.

The benefits for education are also clear. Associating education with globally recognized brands through digital campaigns ensures that brand loyalists the world over focus on seeking sustainable solutions to the learning crisis. Business can leverage its extensive and growing network of consumers, employees, brand ambassadors and community contacts, for education. Microsoft Corporation alone has over 4 million Twitter followers, Intel Corporation over 2 million and Nokia over 1 million6. Harnessing the digital power of business for education campaigns has a multiplier effect for both business and education.

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6 (Data as at January 2014; accessed from Twitter accounts profiles) Twitter followers: Microsoft: 4,016,707; Intel: 2,637,639; Nokia: 1,205,053
Lay the foundation

Plan ahead

Rallying online support is easy when there is a clear plan of action

A successful digital campaign must be planned ahead. Three points are critical for doing so:

1. **Make the business case.** Securing the approval of executive management is important. The C-suite can mobilize a company’s core business operations to support the campaign. This can be in terms of product development, service provision, or company policy, enabling a company to transition from corporate philanthropy and social responsibility to creating opportunities for shared value. Intel Corporation offers an example. As a founding sponsor of 10X10’s Girl Rising – a social action campaign for girls’ education – Intel mobilized its corporate foundation, marketing and human resource departments to create internal programs that advanced its campaign. The company supported girls’ education and it boosted employee morale.

Martina Roth, Director of Global Education Strategy at Intel, prescribes a method to attain executive buy-in: ‘use data’. Facts make all the difference for busy executives who need to see the numbers to estimate the return on investment. Consider the case of girls’ education. As at October 2013, 31 million primary school age girls were out of school. So were 34 million female adolescents. How does this link with business outcomes? A 10 percent increase in the number of girls with secondary education raises per capita economic growth by 3 percent, creating a more stable operating environment.

2. **Begin with a clear objective and make this the core of the campaign.** Different intended outcomes require different types of campaigns. In a persuasion campaign for example, the objective is to persuade a target, such as the government, to take an action.

In October 2013, a Masai community in Tanzania won a battle against being evicted by the government to make way for a hunting reserve. The victory was won in part by utilizing the online petition platform Avaaz.org where over 1.7 million people signed a petition calling on the Tanzanian president to stop the evictions. With a clear objective to persuade the government, the petition pressured the authorities to take action.

By comparison, men’s health awareness is the objective of the Movember campaign and facilitating a globally shared experience produces the desired goal. Throughout the month of November, men are encouraged to grow a moustache and share their photos on Facebook, Twitter and an online ‘Mo Space’ for awareness and education. With 854,288 participants in 2013, the campaign went viral in over 21 countries, generating 1.9 billion conversations about Movember and men’s health.

3. **Have a clear plan of action and communicate it to all stakeholders.** “Do we understand how change happens in the world? Where does it happen? Who makes the change?” Cian O’Donovan, Technology Manager at UK campaign organization 38 Degrees, asks necessary questions that can guide this process. Knowing the combination of activities and outcomes that lead to the desired objective is a hallmark of an effective and efficient campaign. A clear theory of change ensures that all partners and campaigners share the same viewpoint about the campaign goal and strategies. It also facilitates the identification of milestones, which are important to keep campaigners enthusiastic as they are achieved.

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7 In corporations, the highest-level executives are often referred to as part of the ‘C-suite’, denoting three-letter titles that begin with ‘C’. These include the Chief Executive Office (CEO), the Chief Operating Officer (COO) and the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO).
9 Martina Roth is the Director of Global Education Strategy at Intel Corporation. She was a panelist at Tech4Ed London 2014: Harnessing the Digital Power of Business for Education Campaigns, a GBC-Education forum held in London in January 2014.
14 Cian O’Donovan is Technology Manager at 38 Degrees. He was a panelist at Tech4Ed London 2014: Harnessing the Digital Power of Business for Education Campaigns.
Take it to scale
From a moment to a movement

Going digital gives campaigns a life of their own

In some instances, digital campaigns are preceded by physical campaigns. Events are hosted, products launched and services provided that have been projected to produce the desired objectives. But one of the greatest challenges of utilizing purely physical campaigns is sustaining momentum beyond the campaign activity. In the absence of constant engagement and, without avenues for continued action, campaigners are likely to return to the cause only when another activity arises.

Digital campaigns provide the opportunity to connect the initial momentum of a physical campaign into a broader, global community that shares enthusiasm for the cause. This allows the campaign to evolve into a movement for change. As Jeannette Weisschuh, Director of Economic Progress Initiatives at Hewlett-Packard puts it, “campaigns start as a controlled movement. But once you connect people online, they form their own communities and generate an uncontrolled movement that reaches a global audience”.

Act strategically

What can business do to launch successful digital campaigns? Five strategies are key:

1. **Go digital, with the right tools.** Take campaigns online. Galvanize consumers, employees, investors and the public for global education by activating social media channels and leveraging the extensive networks of business. Be strategic about using tools that correspond with each stage of the digital campaign. As Katherine Sladden of Change.org illustrates, “sending emails provides necessary context and information about the plan of action; utilizing social media builds the buzz to foster the movement”. With a clear delineation of digital tools, campaign content and delivery can be tailored to target audiences, increasing the likelihood and frequency of participation.

2. **Establish a connection.** Research shows that emotional appeal has a positive effect on campaign participation. Sharing authentic, personal stories is an effective way to generate this. In the words of Adrian Lovett, Executive Director of campaign organization, **ONE** in Europe, “people need to connect on a human level”.

   (RED), an awareness and fundraising campaign for HIV and AIDS, provides a prime example. [On its website](http://www.officialsite.com). (RED) shares the story of Motselisi, a five year old girl in Lesotho that is HIV positive. (RED) traces her story from when it met her at 11 months, highlighting how the AIDS treatment it supplied helped restore her health. Being able to connect with a real story showing the impact of funds raised by (RED) inspires people to donate to their cause.

3. **Make specific asks.** Following through with the plan of action for a campaign only happens when campaigners know exactly what is to be done and when. Specific asks such as ‘click here’ and ‘sign this petition’ are clear markers to make participation easy and effective. They make participation easy and effective.

4. **Democratize participation.** Utilize technologies that empower campaigners to participate in the growing movement. This helps expand the reach of the campaign and channels energy from the campaign into lasting, positive action. For example, #WithSyria is a global campaign launched on the third anniversary of the Syria conflict that calls on political leaders to pledge to do all they can to end the crisis in Syria. The campaign utilizes the image of the ‘Girl with the Red Balloon’ as a symbol of hope. It democratizes participation by urging campaigners to replicate the image and share it via social media using the #WithSyria hash tag.

5. **Report back.** Campaigns are sustained through constant feedback loops. Reporting back on a campaign’s success (or failure) helps earn supporters’ loyalty during the campaign and in the future. It also ensures accountability to campaigners and to the business, the latter of which enhances learning for future campaigns.

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16 Jeannette Weisschuh is Director of Corporate Affairs and Economic Progress Initiatives at Hewlett-Packard. She was a panelist at Tech4Ed London 2014: Harnessing the Digital Power of Business for Education Campaigns.

17 Kate Sladden is a Senior Campaigner at Change.org. She was a panelist at Tech4Ed London 2014: Harnessing the Digital Power of Business for Education Campaigns.


19 Adrian Lovett is Europe Executive Director of **ONE**. He was a panelist at Tech4Ed London 2014: Harnessing the Digital Power of Business for Education Campaigns.
Girls’ Education

The Girl Rising Social Action Campaign

Intel Corporation, USA (Technology)

Partners: 10X10 Girl Rising Social Action Campaign and NGOs focused on girls’ education

Make the business case.
Investing in education is fundamental to Intel’s vision. Intel also harnessed research showing the gender gap in education to make the case to invest in girls’ education.

Capture the moment.
The Girl Rising film raises awareness about girls’ education and delivers the message that educating girls changes the world. The ‘moment’ is created when the film creates an emotional connection between the viewer and the girls whose stories are featured.

Create a movement.
Go digital. Intel used its Twitter handle, Facebook page and online communities to help build the movement around Girl Rising. Intel’s Twitter following from the campaign grew by 3900% in 2013, from 10,000 followers to over 400,000.

Establish a connection. Nine personal stories are shared. Each story conveys the extraordinary journey of a girl who overcomes extreme barriers to be educated. Emotional connections are made through the sincerity of the stories and familiarity of cultural contexts.

Make specific asks. The Girl Rising website asks participants to share the film by arranging a screening, investing in girls by donating and joining the movement by signing up to mailing lists.

Democratize participation. Intel distributed DVDs of the Girl Rising film to advocates and communities around the world for free movie hosting. Through GATHR, it provided a platform for communities to unite and request screenings in their neighborhoods.

Report back. Girl Rising shares results of its impact on its website.

Impact.
The Girl Rising film is one of the top 100 grossing documentary films in the United States. More than $5.3 million has been mobilized to support the campaign and its NGO partners.
Extreme Poverty

**Global Citizen Festival**

**Hewlett-Packard**, USA (Technology)

**Partners:** Global Citizen Partners: Hewlett-Packard + HP LIFE, Cotton On Foundation, Results UK, NPH New Zealand, Make it Happy, Global Partnership for Education, MADE in Europe, Save the Children, Restless Development UK, UK Department for International Development, United Nations, Ubuntu Education Fund amongst others.

**Make the business case.**

HP’s mission provides the business case to engage in education. Termed ‘HP Living Progress’, it states that the company will apply its technical solutions and expertise to address critical issues in education, health and the environment.

**Capture the moment.**

The Global Citizen Festival is held in Central Park, New York City. It is an action-rewarded, awareness driven music festival focused on ending extreme poverty. Over 60,000 people attend the Festival. The Festival is the ‘moment’.

**Create a movement:**

**Go digital.** HP and its partners utilize Twitter, Facebook, web pages and live-streaming platforms to engage campaigners online. Over 20 million people participated through live stream. The campaign recorded over 2.6 million web page views, 5.9 million Twitter impressions and over 100,000 Facebook impressions. Over 250,000 people took 900,000 actions on issues of global health, universal education, women’s equality and global partnerships.

**Establish a connection.** At the Festival, HP shared the story of Bano Fatima, the winner of its HP LIFE Entrepreneur Contest, to showcase the importance of entrepreneurship education for economic growth. The Festival also connects with the masses through celebrities and music, a medium the world identifies with.

**Make specific asks.** On the website, participants are invited to sign a petition to end extreme poverty. They are also invited to take clear actions on ten specific issues affecting the world’s poor.

**Democratize participation.** An active process of obtaining Global Citizen Tickets was developed. Participants were required to join the movement, take action on issues affecting the poor and collect points to win tickets, choose a desired show and enter a draw to win two tickets.

**Report back.** Outcomes from the Festival were reported in a press release. The impact of the Festival is also documented in a report.

**Impact.**

25 policy and financial commitments were secured from business, government and organizations to end extreme poverty by 2030.
Make it sustainable
Create greater impact

Can the vessel change its form?

Campaigns that evolve into movements are not immune from being transient phenomena. They can quickly be associated with only a certain aspect of a cause, and die out as soon as publicity around that portion ceases, whether or not the desired change has been effected.

Sustainability is important for change to occur and can be achieved through the following:

1. **Explore new avenues for impact.** The multifaceted nature of global education provides a variety of avenues through which change can be effected. Expanding the scope of an education campaign while maintaining a chosen theme can result in greater impact on the learning crisis. For example, while focusing on girls’ education, business can explore options for an awareness campaign to expand to fundraising for projects on the ground and then to persuade governments to take action. Maintaining the chosen theme is critical to ensure that the business case, objectives and resources remain aligned.

2. **Build strategic partnerships.** Once a new avenue for impact has been identified, build strategic partnerships that support its realization efficiently. Eighty percent greater impact can be attained with 20 percent of business resources if partners complement their strengths and weaknesses. Business working with business and other organizations to leverage a pool of core competencies can result in more impactful change than an isolated effort.

3. **Treat each new venture like the first.** Consistency is key at every turn and transition in a campaign. "Once you are committed, ensure you follow through" GUCCI’s Chief Marketing Officer, Robert Triefus, recommends. throughout its evolving lifespan, a successful business-led education campaign must stay true to the business case, have a clear objective and theory of change, and where applicable, grow from a moment to a movement.

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20 Robert Triefus is the Chief Marketing Officer of GUCCI. He was a panelist at Tech4Ed London 2014: Harnessing the Digital Power of Business for Education Campaigns.
Education, Health and Justice

CHIME FOR CHANGE

GUCCI, Italy (Personal Goods)
Partners: Kering Foundation, Catapult, Facebook, Hearst Magazines, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Twitter, P&G

Make the business case.

GUCCI is committed to its role in the global community and actively pursues social responsibility as a key pillar of its core brand values. Building on its partnership with UNICEF on its Schools for Africa project, the company decided to expand its commitment to girls and women’s empowerment.

Capture the moment.

GUCCI founded CHIME FOR CHANGE (CfC), a global awareness campaign to raise funds and awareness for girls and women’s empowerment. It serves to convene, unite and strengthen the voices speaking out for girls and women around the world, and focuses on the three main areas of education, health and justice. In June 2013, CfC presented the SOUND OF CHANGE concert, a global concert event in London to bring girls and women’s issues to the world’s stage. The concert was broadcast in over 150 countries. This was the ‘moment’.

Create a movement:

Go digital. CfC utilized Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, as well as a crowd-funding platform, Catapult, to engage participants online. 320,000 ‘likes’ were recorded on Facebook, as well as 100,000 new followers on the weekend of the concert. On Twitter, 1 billion impressions were made using #CHIME, #ChimeforChange, and #SoundofChange. 35 million people were reached on the concert weekend and 23,000 Twitter followers were gained. On YouTube, the top 3 concert videos were viewed 3.5 million times, the launch film was viewed 164,000 times, the #ShoutingBack short film was viewed 242,000 times and 2,500 subscribers were added to the YouTube Channel.

Establish a connection. On its website, CfC pools information on several projects in its focus areas and provides stories and films on them. These help establish an emotional connection.

Make specific asks. The clear ask on the website is for visitors to donate to projects.

Democratize participation. The Catapult crowd-funding platform that CfC leverages on its website democratizes participation because it empowers web visitors to invest in projects for girls and women’s empowerment of their choosing.

Report back. Catapult ensures CfC reports back in real time to participants who donate to projects. For example, it indicates the total amount needed for a project and shows how much has been raised towards it. It also gives information about the recipients of the funds and how the funds will be utilized.

Create greater impact:

Explore new avenues for impact. CfC explored mobile technology as an avenue to scale its impact.

Build strategic partnerships. To achieve this, it partnered with Twitter and Women Who Code to create #CHIMEHACK. The event connected 105 engineers to issue experts and nonprofits to identify ways for disruptive technology to create mobile app solutions to support girls and women.

Impact.

CfC has raised $4.5 million to fully fund more than 280 projects in 81 countries, across 87 non-profit partners. Examples from a 90-day impact reporting snapshot include: 5,000 patients in Afghanistan received healthcare and education for a month, 12,915 vaccines were distributed to prevent neonatal tetanus and 120 girls received scholarships to attend secondary school in Malawi. GUCCI has also been able to build its corporate image as a responsible company in the fashion industry.
Summary

Business can lead change for education

The world is truly becoming a global village, presenting new solutions to age-old problems. The rapid adoption of digital tools worldwide offers a timely opportunity to bring broad public support and attention to the global learning crisis.

The private sector has the power, tools and rationale to lead. Through effective digital campaigns that galvanize business’ extensive network of consumers, employees, investors, and the public, a series of positive actions that make a difference for global education can be realized. The time is now. We must not miss this opportunity.

Acknowledgments

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The Global Business Coalition for Education (GBC-Education) brings the business community together to accelerate progress in delivering quality education for all of the world’s children and youth. We believe that education is the birthright of every child and the key to expanded opportunity and future employment. For companies, investing in education promotes economic growth, leads to more stable societies, fosters healthy communities and makes it easier to do business. Education spurs innovation and increases the skills of employees, the income potential of consumers and the prosperity of communities where business operates.

GBC-Education’s assets include the voice, capabilities, resources and innovations of our leaders and member companies. In the first year of operation, 20 of the world’s most influential companies joined the Coalition, and we are expanding significantly. Our members believe that their influence, core business, social responsibility, strategic investments, thought leadership and philanthropy – when used in collaboration with peer companies, government, nonprofit and the educational community – are powerful tools to increase the number of children and youth who are in school and learning.

By joining us, companies become part of a global movement of businesses committed to changing children’s lives through education.

A business-led, action-oriented organization, GBC-Education focuses on four core functions: Connect, Cooperate, Showcase and Discover.

CONNECT: While many companies already engage in education through philanthropic or social investment programs, these actions require coordination to have greater impact. GBC-Education’s forum increases companies’ effectiveness by creating “members-only” spaces for company leaders to connect and identify cutting-edge opportunities for collaboration. We work with our members to leverage economies of scale.

COOPERATE: In addition to connecting companies, we create avenues for cooperation with governments, bilateral and multilateral agencies, foundations and civil society organizations. We connect members with high-level policymakers to advocate for quality education and learning and expose companies to the latest initiatives being spearheaded by education organizations around the world.

SHOWCASE: We show that business is an active partner in educating the world’s children and youth. GBC-Education highlights its members’ work and their thought leadership to large international audiences to communicate the importance of getting involved in education and to inspire others to action.

DISCOVER: We facilitate research projects that identify opportunities for effective investments in education and establish best practices to guide corporate efforts, seeking to bring real educational outcomes for children and youth.
Please direct any comments or questions related to this policy brief to the Global Business Coalition for Education by contacting Kevin Kalra, Senior Project Coordinator at kevin@gbceducation.org.