



Communicating through Digital and Social Media

Today, everyone from teenagers to seniors are using digital media to communicate about the issues that are important to them. Social media, in particular, can be a creative way to tell your story to a targeted audience.

Digital media, however, does not work in a vacuum. For it to be effective, it should be integrated into a larger communications plan. Here are some guidelines:

- **Develop a plan early and use it to tell a cohesive story.** Use official MLK Day messaging and templates.
- **Place [MLK Day logos](#) prominently on your website.** Also include key information – the who, what, where, when, why – and display it on the home page. Link to the official MLK Day accounts and pages, so visitors can learn more.
- **Use social media to promote projects, engage with a fan base, and provide customer service.** If a fan or a community member asks a question of your organization or about your project – respond! It's good PR, and lets the general public benefit from that information as well.
- **Engage supporters.** Consider asking influential and active community members to make MLK Day a topic of conversation within their own personal social media networks.

Social Media Tools

Blogs

Blogs are a perfect place to tell your story – they do well in search results and can drive media attention. If your organization already has one, incorporate it into your MLK Day plans. Write about projects, new ideas, and volunteers making a difference and use it to recruit new volunteers or keep your current network up-to-date and inspired.

Keep it simple and don't be afraid to try new things. A post could be anything from a single photo to a how-to guide, to a top-ten list, to a behind-the-scenes look at the planning process. Get creative!

If your organization doesn't currently have a blog, the weeks leading up to MLK Day may not be the ideal time to start one (start planning for next year), but that doesn't mean you can't harness the power of blogging. Try pitching or inviting popular local bloggers to write about your MLK Day projects.

Keep in mind:

- **The best person to write an organization's blog is the person who is most excited to write it.** Find someone that loves to write, is excited about blogging, and is passionate about MLK Day.

- **Post often and consistently.** There are all kinds of theories about how often to post on your blog. The most important thing is to be consistent. You don't have to write once a day, but once a week is good. The rule of "quality not quantity" is important to remember. This will also keep your volunteers excited and revved up for the big day in January.
- **Listen, respond, and engage with those who leave comments.** Blog comments are the ideal response tool. They provide a mechanism for you to receive responses from the public, while allowing for a larger audience to see your response.

Facebook

A Facebook page can help volunteers become more deeply connected to your mission. They can add themselves as fans, write on your wall, upload photos, and join other fans in discussion groups.

You can send updates to your fans regularly, which allows you to stay connected with volunteers throughout the year and keep them informed about other opportunities to serve with your organization.

- Use Facebook to ask and answer questions of your community
- Share project ideas and engage in conversation on the MLK Day page and on your organization's page.
- Like [MLKDay on Facebook](#) and tag us in your posts.
- The events feature is perfect for updating members about MLK Day events and locations.
- Include multimedia content – photos and video!
- Invite others to share their MLK Day experience on your Facebook page

Twitter

Twitter is a micro blogging network that allows you to make a post of 140 characters of text or less. It asks you to answer the question "What are you doing?" However, it can be used for a variety of other mini-posts including links to websites. Twitter also has its own terminology:

- The quick posts are known as "tweets"
- When people post messages, they are "tweeting"
- When someone subscribes to your posts, they are "following you" and becomes one of your "followers"

Twitter can also be used via mobile devices and can provide an instantaneous connection to volunteers.

- Use the #MLKDay hashtag in Twitter messaging.
- Mention @MLKDay in tweets.
- Keep followers up-to-date on MLKDay news and the most current project details.
- Use twitter to discover potential allies and partners in your community.

Pulling It All Together

It's important when building your outreach approach, that you tie everything together.

- **Link your tools** – On your website, include a Facebook badge to your page, a Twitter feed, and a link to your blog. Have each of your tools link to each other to maximize the communication effect.
- **Cross-reference** – When creating a blog post, mention your Twitter or Facebook page. Be sure to include a clickable link. Also, include a call to action to connect.
- **Encourage sharing** – When featuring an event or upcoming get together, ask others to share this information with their network. Use the power of networking in an online community to access the networks of your constituents and spread the word quickly to new audiences.