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Using Social Media in a Levy Campaign

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In the fall of 2010, Columbus Metropolitan Library (CML) faced a significant levy in an unfortunate economic climate. Its current 10-year levy was expiring and for the first time in 24 years an increase was being asked of voters. The levy was to replace its current 2.2 mills and add .6 mill which added \$5.24 per month in taxes on a \$100,000 home. Like many libraries throughout the state, CML was impacted significantly by state budget cuts. Since 2008, the library made \$11 million in cuts to deal with the state's funding decrease and knew this levy was imperative to maintaining customers' demands. This election also marked a Governor's race and CML knew the campaign needed to be grassroots in order to share its message in a saturated market.

Executive Director Patrick Losinski said, "I don't want any of us to wake up on November 3 and wonder what we could have done differently."

So the marketing and communications campaign committee got to work developing a social media plan. Social media was only one component of what made this levy a success. Would it have passed without social media? Maybe. However, CML would have missed a major opportunity to interact with voters without it.

Social media allowed CML to directly answer questions on Facebook and Twitter. If the campaign wasn't monitoring and responding, who knows what could have happened. While social media offers amazing tools, it can fuel negativity, the last thing a campaign needs. Social media does offer the perfect forum to rally support and awareness and that's exactly how it was utilized for Issue 4.

In the end, Issue 4 was on the ballot in 619 precincts throughout Franklin County and passed in 591 of them.

Here's how the campaign used social media leading up to Election Day.

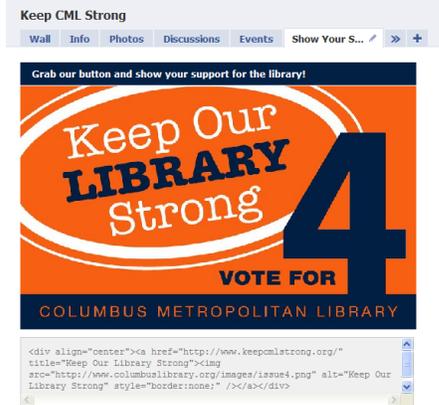
Facebook:

- The campaign developed a [Facebook page](#) to share information with staff, volunteers and supporters.
- The campaign encouraged people to write on the Keep CML Strong Facebook page Wall to keep momentum going.
- At the end of the campaign, almost 3,000 people had "liked" Keep CML Strong.



Badge:

- The campaign developed a custom Facebook tab that would allow others to show support.
- This badge was developed so supporters could share the image on their websites and blogs.



Twitter:

- The campaign utilized Twitter in the same way it did Facebook. It encouraged conversations and answered questions.
- The campaign followed politicians, community organizations, reporters and bloggers.
- The campaign used [Hootsuite](#) to schedule Tweets.



Twibbon:

- A Twibbon is an image that appears on people's Twitter and/or Facebook profile photos.
- [Here's](#) the image the campaign used and several people added the Twibbon to show their support for Issue 4.

Blogger Relations:

- Reaching key local bloggers was a critical component of the social media plan.
- The campaign organized a blogger event at a local wine bar (it did not pay for alcohol) where Patrick Losinski discussed details of CML and the levy.
- The results were impressive. Several bloggers wrote stories about Issue 4, "liked" the campaign on Facebook, Tweeted information and became volunteers.
- This [article](#) was written by a local blogger who has 18,000 Twitter followers and is influential in the social media universe.

Tweet Ups:

- A Tweet Up is an event where individuals on Twitter can meet in person and Tweet live.
- The campaign's Tweet Up, held in mid-September, was promoted using Twitter, Facebook and [Twtvite](#).
- The hashtag #4Issue4 was used for easier tracking and searching.
- Patrick Losinski answered questions and addressed concerns from the group. Tweets generated from this event reached approximately 26,000 individuals.

For additional information, please contact Julie Theado at jtheado@columbuslibrary.org.