

Using the Internet for Effective Campaign Strategies

Conducting internet research is useful in planning and strategizing for your campaigns. Vast quantities of information can be found immediately at the tap of your fingertips. However, it is not always so easy. Internet search engines can point you to the information that you need, but you may feel overwhelmed and confused by irrelevant or questionable information. So, the question is, how can you improve your searches to find reliable information? What are some strategies to perform effective searches? We hope that the guide below will allow you to search efficiently, find reliable information online, and as a result, develop a stronger and more effective campaign.

This tool is intended to be used when conducting internet research to complete your [Strategy Chart](#) and its components ([Decision Maker Matrix](#), [Circles of Influence](#), etc.). The following guide contains information on useful websites, key search terms, and combination searches that may yield enriching details about your community. As always, take whatever you find on the internet with a grain of salt. Information is subject to accuracy and should always be double checked with an email or phone call. Even a meeting date/time listed on the local Kiwanis website may be incorrect. Meeting locations may have changed, or last minute cancellations may not be indicated on the website.

The chart on the second page is modeled after the Midwest Academy Strategy Chart. On the chart you find helpful hints that pertain to the particular column of the strategy chart. Below is a list of other useful tips and hints for information in general that may not necessarily fit into a distinct column, but could yield details that you may find helpful for your overall campaign.

Hints and Tips

- For basic information about your city, visit www.sos.ca.gov/admin/ca-roster.htm and search The California Roster by year for the most up to date information.
- Visit websites such as www.at-usa.com/California. Example: click on Los Angeles, you will be directed to <http://www.at-la.com/index>. To find all the Lions clubs in LA County, type in Lions and a list will pop up. To find out information about your city, type in “name of city” and there will be a whole directory of information.



- For news and media in your community, type in “name of city” in conjunction with the words “blog”, “blogspot”, “wordpress”, “patch”, “tribune”, “news”, “tumblr”, “weekly”, etc.
- If your city has an online newspaper or blog, and if there is an article related to your issue, scour the comments section for any possible information that you can use in your campaign.
- To search for more information about your city, type in “name of city” + “tobacco/smoking/cigarettes/healthy/health/wellness/your policy area”.
- Typing key terms in double quotation marks will help to filter the results in your searches and narrow down information pertinent to you. As a caveat however, be sure to do searches without quotation marks as well. For example, a search for “Alexander Graham Bell” with quotes will miss pages that refer to Alexander G. Bell.
- Social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter are also great places to find information. There is a trend of individuals and organizations opting to create a Facebook or Twitter page to disseminate information, and the pages may be updated more frequently than a website.

USING THE INTERNET FOR EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES

COLUMN IN MIDWEST ACADEMY STRATEGY CHART	GOALS: Determine the long-term, intermediate, and short-term goals of your campaign.	ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS: Address your haves, needs, and barriers.	CONSTITUENTS, ALLIES, AND OPPONENTS: Identify your key supporters, coalition members, and opponents.	TARGETS: Get to know your key decision makers very well.	TACTICS: Put it all together: Tactics are what your allies do to your targets to reach your goal.
HELPFUL TIPS	Research if your policy needs to go through a particular commission or board before it goes in front of council. That will help you determine if you need a short term goal for your campaign.	This section will help you determine what your city has to offer in terms of resources such as meeting space. If your city contains a branch of a county library, you may be able to hold your meetings there for free.	For influential organizations (such as hospitals) head to the leadership page on their website and look up individuals who are part of the board of trustees, administration, etc. Also, larger clubs such as the Rotary or Democratic Club may publish periodic newsletters. Those publications are also great places to find information.	Past election campaign websites are great places to dig up information on current key decision makers. You can find out who supported them in their last election and what issues were important to them. Use terms such as: "name of city/ council member" + "election"	Note that most cities will organize some type of event around various holidays. During the summertime cities will also host events in the parks such as concerts, food trucks gatherings, outdoor movies, etc. If your city is hosting a food truck event for example, it is a great place to meet folks, conduct surveys, and gather petitions because people are standing in long lines waiting for their food.
USEFUL WEBSITES	Browse your city's official website for any information on city commissions and boards related to your issue.	Browse your city's official website for any locations such as libraries or community centers where you can hold your coalition meetings.	Many clubs and organizations have a website that lists all of the chapters/local clubs in the state. Here are some examples: Lions: http://ca.usalions.com/ Kiwanis: http://sites.kiwanis.org/Kiwanis/en/MembershipInterest/FindAClub.aspx Democratic Club: http://www.cdc-ca.org/e107_plugins/clublist/clublist.php	Browse your city's official website for council bios. In addition check out: Smart Voter: http://smartvoter.org/ca/ Vote Smart: http://www.votesmart.org	Browse your city's official website as well as other websites for calendars of upcoming events. Examples: National Night Out: www.natw.org/nno/locator.html Shakespeare events: (great for surveys/petitions while people are waiting for the event to begin) www.shakespearebythesea.org/locations.html
KEY SEARCH TERMS	If the city website is lacking information you can use terms such as: "name of city" + "board", "ad hoc", "committee", "commission"	Terms: "name of city" + "parks and recreation", "library", "community center"	Terms: "name of city" + orgs such as "Kiwanis", "Rotary", "Lions", "Soroptimist", "Optimist", "Chamber of Commerce", "fire department", "YMCA", "youth", "community center", "senior center", "church", "young professionals", "health and wellness", "AYSO", "neighborhood watch", etc.	Terms: "name of council member" + "city name" "name of council member" + "tobacco"/"smoking"/"cigarettes" "name of council member" + "job/occupation" "name of council member" + "city name" + "Facebook" / "Twitter" / "Google Plus"	Terms: "name of city" + events such as "festival", "fair", "holiday", "fiesta", "farmer's market", "5k/10k run walk", Or: "name of city" + "event", "public event", "concerts in the park", "movies in the park", "food truck", "health fair"