



Innovations in Public Involvement Tips and Best Practices

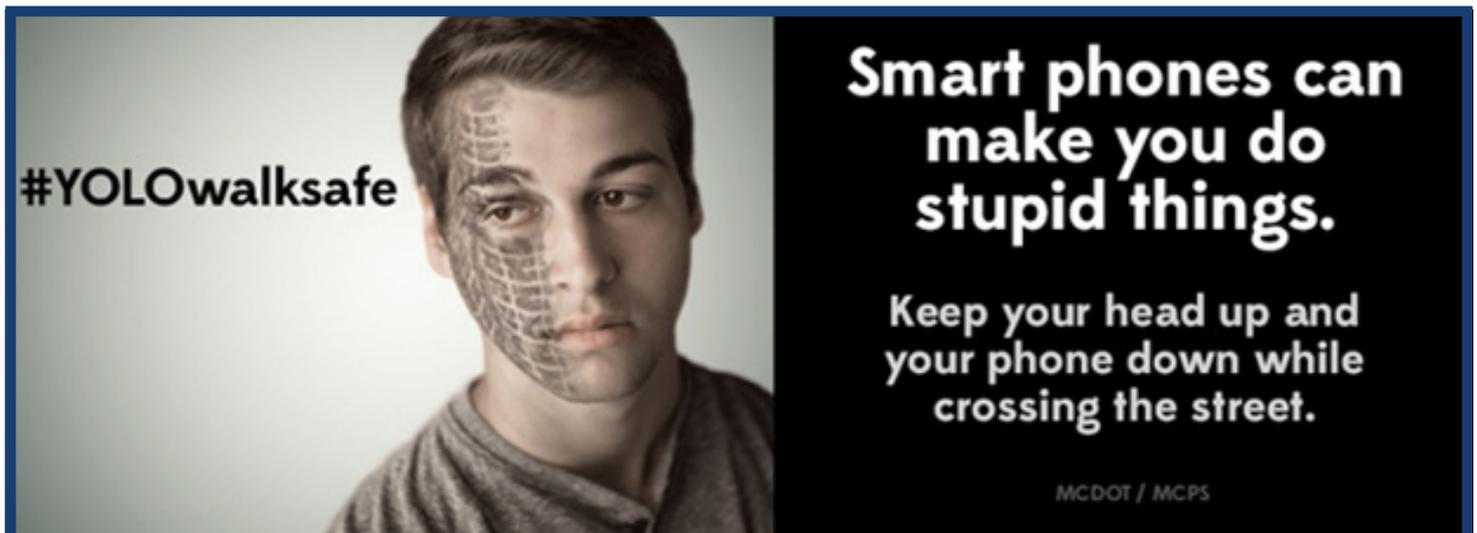
Social Media Photo Campaign

What it is

Social media photo campaigns are a way for an agency to promote a program or raise awareness about an issue through encouraging the public to volunteer relevant photos and other media online. Typically, they convey simple, 'tagline'-oriented messages and have widespread, ubiquitous appeal to maximize participation. There is no limitation on the range of topics a campaign may address. Once a theme is developed by an agency, the public is invited to develop their own content related to that theme and share it with their friends, family, and the general public.

Why it Works

The incredible reach of social media cannot be denied, and there may be no more effective way to quickly spread a message to a large audience. Photo campaigns on social media have an avalanche effect in which a post generates more posts, each of which in turn generates more posts. Participation is attractive to social media users because it is free of cost, relatively quick and simple, and can be fun, exciting, or humorous.



The Montgomery County, Maryland DOT developed a Twitter campaign to promote its pedestrian safety program. The public was encouraged to share its own photos and other media by using the hashtag #YOLOWalksafe.

When to Use It

An agency should create a campaign primarily to spread awareness of or promote a simple message. A picture is often more powerful than words, so this type of campaign should be used for concepts that are highly visual and do not need much explanation. It can be used as a pathway to a deeper message, but the campaign itself should not be bogged down by complexity. Also, it may not be the best medium to draw attention to controversial matters that require in-depth analysis.

Audience

Social media campaigns are mostly used to target younger, media-savvy audiences. However, internet and smart phone usage is expanding rapidly across all demographics, so such limitations on campaigns may no longer be in effect.

Examples

#YOLOWalksafe Campaign, Montgomery County, Maryland:

[Twitter hashtag campaign](#)

[Project Overview](#)

Resources

[“3 Social Media Engagement Techniques that Work” - Blog post on Social Media Examiner](#)

[Research paper on using social media campaigns for public health initiatives](#)

Estimated Level of Effort

Most effort will be directed towards devising a simple and catchy yet effective campaign theme that can generate a popular buzz and then deploying that theme across various social media platforms. Once a campaign is established, some effort is required to maintain interest in the theme by adapting it to stay relevant. Research may also be required to determine effective placement of advertisements if they are being used to promote the campaign.

Cost Considerations

Generally speaking, this should be a nearly cost-free tool for engaging the public. Twitter, Facebook, and other social media platforms allow completely free participation. However, an agency may want to pay for physical and/or virtual advertisements to help promote the campaign.

