

**HERITAGE
ACTION
FOR AMERICA**



**THE DEFINITIVE
GUIDE TO
CONSERVATIVE
GRASSROOTS
ORGANIZING**

FELLOW CONSERVATIVE,

We are excited to help you strengthen your leadership skills and take your efforts as a grassroots organizer to the next level. Being a conservative activist takes a lot of commitment, and we want to provide you with the knowledge, tools and tips to ensure your success.

Active conservative groups throughout a community are key components in ensuring a strong, flourishing civil society. Change happens most effectively on the local level, when decisions are made and actions are facilitated by members of the community where the change is happening—not by bureaucrats and politicians in Washington.

In this guide you'll gain insight about how to utilize social media to your group's advantage, gain networking tips, learn how to effectively lead a meeting and more.

Thank you for inviting us to join you on this journey to grow your grassroots group.

Sincerely,



Mike Needham
CEO, Heritage Action for America



CONTENTS

Growing Your Organization	04
Growing Your Influence	04
Coalitions	05
Building Your Brand	06
Logos, Design and Messaging	06
How to be an Effective Communicator	07
Public Speaking	07
Online	08
Leading a Meeting	10
Planning an Event	11
Fundraising	12
What is a Sentinel?	13



GROWING YOUR ORGANIZATION

GROWING YOUR INFLUENCE

Growing your influence is crucial to growing as a leader, and for growing your group. Here are some tips to get started:



IDENTIFY CONSERVATIVE LEADERS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Whether it's the chair of your local tea party organization, county GOP, or another group dedicated to achieving the same goals, you need to build relationships with these leaders in order to make the biggest impact in your community.



VOLUNTEER IN THE COMMUNITY

Go a step further than just being present in your community, be active and engaged! You don't always have to ask for people to attend a meeting, you can build relationships while taking the time to give back. Dedicated citizens committed to improving their communities are the foundation of a flourishing civil society.



HOST A TABLE AT LOCAL EVENTS

Is there an upcoming event in your community that is expected to draw a crowd? A good way to spread awareness of your group and collect email addresses of prospective members is to be present at local events and host a table. Be sure to have materials to hand out and a quick "elevator pitch" of your group's mission. Take down these potential member's contact information and let them know about your next meeting.



VOLUNTEER FOR AN ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN

One of the best ways to grow your influence is to work with people supporting a common cause or candidate. Whether it be through making phone calls, knocking on doors, getting signatures on petitions, or having dinner with a fellow volunteer after a hard day pounding the pavement, working on a campaign is a great way to meet people as well as share ideas and contacts that will last long after the campaign is over.

Whether your group decides to participate in a local food drive or even host your own philanthropy event, it's important to give back.

COALITIONS

BUILDING COALITIONS IS A STRATEGIC MOVE TO ADVANCE YOUR CAUSE. GET CREATIVE!

- ▶ Find groups with similar missions
- ▶ Find groups that care about the same issue
- ▶ Find groups that are working toward the same outcome
- ▶ Partner up with other groups in hosting events, as well as co-sponsoring causes in which you have a common denominator

FIND GROUPS THAT CARE ABOUT THE SAME ISSUES

The more groups that support something, the greater the impact it can have—even with your member of Congress.

CREATE LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN YOUR GROUP

By creating specific roles, you will ensure quality of your efforts and keep members active through their assigned duties.



EXAMPLES OF LEADERSHIP ROLES:



DIRECTOR OF POLICY

Someone dedicated to updating members about policy changes at the local, state or national level.



DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Someone dedicated to coordinating external events.



DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Someone dedicated to monitoring and posting content on Facebook and Twitter.



DIRECTOR OF RECRUITMENT

Someone dedicated to identifying potential new members and inviting them to meetings or events.

BUILDING YOUR BRAND

LOGOS

From emails to social media, including logos is an easy way to brand your group.



DESIGN AND MESSAGING TIPS:

- ▶ Keep the design simple
- ▶ Use a standard font and color theme for all publications and communications
- ▶ Adopt a defined, consistent message
- ▶ For emails, be sure to stick to one topic per email
- ▶ Every social media post and email sent should be purposeful and have a clear message
- ▶ Use a template for emails to keep a standard format

HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR

PUBLIC SPEAKING

Keep your message short and concise — you only have a few seconds to grab attention.

PUBLIC SPEAKING TIPS:

- ▶ Identify your audience and what they care about—cater your message to what will resonate most with them
- ▶ Typically, 110–150 words per minute is how fast you speak. Trying to slow down your sentences may feel unusual, but it's easier for the audience to follow
- ▶ Avoid filler words (like, so, um, uh, etc.)
- ▶ Try not to talk too much with your hands; if it feels uncomfortable to keep your hands at your side, try clasping them and holding in front of your stomach
- ▶ If there is a podium, you can rest your hands on top of, or on the side of it, but make sure to stand up straight and present a strong image
- ▶ Create an outline and make it clear for the audience to follow
- ▶ Emphasize and repeat your key points
- ▶ Posture is pivotal. Good posture and body language convey a positive message to the audience and give you a sense of confidence



ONLINE

WEBSITE OR BLOG:

- ▶ Are you trying to reach a large number of people? Then maybe a website is useful for advancing your group. There are some great website builders you can use such as [wordpress](#) or [wix](#) to get started.
- ▶ Are you looking for a way to tell stories or updates? Then maybe a blog is useful for your group.


FACEBOOK AND TWITTER:

- ▶ Create both a Facebook page and Twitter account for your organization.

LOCAL:

- ▶ Monitor the local media outlets and discover what topics they are covering
Letters to the Editor - an effective way to articulate your argument in support or opposition of an issue, used to reach members of your community.

SET A GOAL OF POSTING REGULARLY

- ▶ Try posting three times a week as a baseline, then adjust accordingly. Schedule posts ahead of time using services such as [Tweetdeck](#).
- ▶ Post links to your social accounts on your website so members can follow.
- ▶ Make the posts eye catching through article links, videos or photos in order to prevent stagnation on the page. The content should be relevant to recent events or long-term goals associated with your group.
- ▶ Learn and use Twitter lingo. For example:
RT = Retweet, and it is reposting or sharing an already existing tweet from another user. Click this symbol under the Tweet: 
Mention = tagging someone in a tweet so they receive a notification. This is done by placing the **@** symbol before the username.



An example of a letter to the Editor:

NO HEARING, NO VOTE ON CONFIRMATIONS

Democrats claim the Senate has a constitutional duty to hold a confirmation hearing for the president's nominee to the Supreme Court (Chief Judge Merrick Garland). They are telling their supporters a convenient fabrication — one that is worthy of five Pinocchios.

The truth is our Founding Fathers had the wisdom to create a system of checks and balances that allows for nominees to the bench to be appointed "by the Advice and Consent of the Senate." It remains within the president's power to make his nomination to the Supreme Court, but the Senate is under no obligation to confirm that nominee. The Senate made this clear — an eyelash short of 200 years ago.

There is no doubt Democrats will make it politically uncomfortable on the Senate Republicans; therefore we must make the Republican majority in the Senate hear our cry of support for no hearings no votes.

The Senate Republicans must stand their ground and make use of the "Biden Rule." One must remember Vice President Joe Biden opposed a successor to the Supreme Court during an election year when he was a senator from Delaware.

There must be no hearings and no votes until the American people have been allowed their opinion in November — regarding who should be making this important appointment to the Supreme Court.

TIPS FOR WRITING LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Letters to the editor are an effective way to articulate your argument in support or opposition of an issue, used to reach members of your community.



Keep your focus on one particular issue, and be sure to back it up with facts! Don't insinuate or proclaim anything unless you can back it up with solid evidence.



Keep a formal and polite tone throughout the letter.



Make a personal connection to the topic you're writing about, it makes it more compelling and credible to the reader.



Keep it short. Most local papers have a limit of up to 250 words, some larger outlets have shorter limits — be sure to know these requirements.

LEADING A MEETING

Prepare the following:

TALKING POINTS

- ▶ What are the key points you want to get across? Write them down in an outline that's easy to follow

Heritage Action has great talking points on a wide range of issues, check out heritageaction.com/sentinel to find out how to access them

KEEP YOUR GROUP ENGAGED

- ▶ Try something new:
 - Short videos followed by discussions
 - Guest speakers
 - Group discussions

SCHEDULE

- ▶ Everyone values their time, make sure your meeting has substance and purpose

Establish the next meeting time before everyone leaves, and give time for announcements at the end of meeting. Follow-up later via email.



A schedule ensures the meeting stays organized, on topic and on time.

PLANNING AN EVENT

Events are a great way to promote your group and engage with the community. The event should have a clear purpose.

▶ RSVPs

- ▶ Tracking RSVPs as they come will ensure your event runs smoothly
- ▶ [Eventbrite](#) is a great resource to use for online registration

▶ PERSONAL INVITATIONS

- ▶ Follow up with individuals so they know the invitation was more than just a mass email, and their presence is genuinely requested

▶ WORD-OF-MOUTH

- ▶ Word-of-mouth form of communication is extremely effective and you can get an immediate answer, if not you can usually tell how someone is feeling based on their body language (if not in person, listen to their tone)
- ▶ Ask other organizations if they can make an announcement to their members

▶ PROMOTIONS

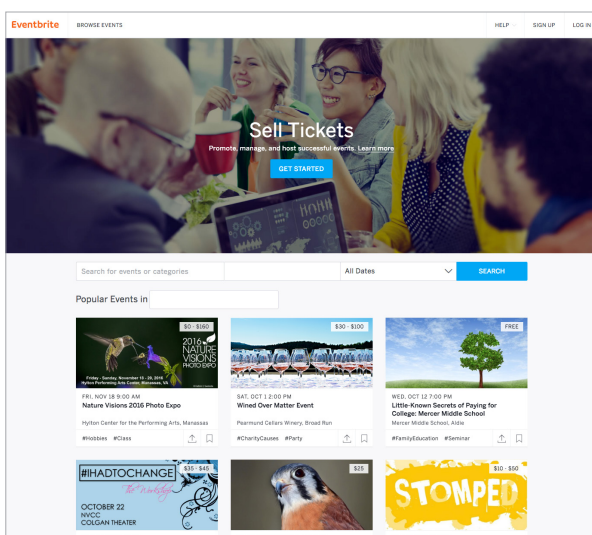
- ▶ Press releases

Do you want your event open to the press? If so, knowing how to write a press release is important because it's a unique formula. Many refer to the format as an inverted pyramid—the most important information goes at the top

- Use AP style guidelines for grammar and keep the release short
- Email the release to local media outlets that may be interested in covering the event, and follow up via phone call

AP STYLE TIPS

- ✓ Capitalize titles if it proceeds the person's name
- ✓ Write out numbers one through nine, 10 and above use numerals
- ✓ Write out percent, don't use the % symbol
- ✓ Include a dateline at the beginning of the release
- Example: ORLANDO, Fla.
- ✓ Know proper state abbreviations
- ✓ Who should you send a release to?
- Guests, reporters, community forums



Use online resources to help add interest and keep track of events.

FUNDRAISING



PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are strategic and usually long-term. Your partner(s) are equally invested in the success of your event and will pour resources into promotion.



SPONSORS

Asking for financial support for your event from local businesses is a great way for them to advertise their brand. Don't be afraid to ask people to become a sponsor of your event, and be sure to give them credit whether that's in your program, a shout-out at the event, on a t-shirt, and so on.



GET CREATIVE!

You don't have to fundraise just in the instance of an upcoming event, you can generate funds for your organization all year, and you can have fun while doing it.

EXAMPLES:

- Host a casino night
- Have a share-it night at a local restaurant
- Host a barbecue contest



WHAT IS A SENTINEL?

Sentinels are knowledgeable conservative activists who take meaningful action to hold their Member of Congress accountable.

Sentinels come from all backgrounds across the country with the common goal of holding Congress accountable. Heritage Action works with you individually, building your knowledge, growing your influence, and preparing you to take meaningful action. Sentinels commit to partnering with us to stand guard for freedom, lead in their circles of influence, and communicate with elected officials. They know the issues, grow their activist skills and networks and go out and lead in their communities.

Take the first step today to becoming an even more effective conservative activist.

4 SIMPLE STEPS TO BECOME A HERITAGE ACTION SENTINEL

01

COMPLETE AN INFLUENCE PROFILE

Submit a 3 minute questionnaire about your past experience and more information.

02

SPEAK WITH OUR PLACEMENT SPECIALISTS

A Heritage Action DC team member will arrange a phone call to discuss your specific interests, answer any questions you have and help identify what training, support and coaching you need to deepen your activist journey.

03

MEET YOUR ACTIVISM COACH

You will meet your Heritage Action grassroots representative who will work with you to build your activism skills, provide direct information from DC and walk alongside you in the journey to turn the country around.

04

BECOME A HERITAGE ACTION SENTINEL

Get exclusive access to a weekly briefing call direct from Heritage Action's DC based team, access to issue briefs, FAQ sheets and an online community of activists.



Complete your influence profile today:

<http://heritageaction.com/sentinel>

 [@heritageforamerica](https://www.facebook.com/heritageforamerica)

 [@heritage_action](https://twitter.com/heritage_action)

Make a Donation: 202.548.5280

As a 501 (c)(4) and sister organization of The Heritage Foundation, Heritage Action for America is a widely respected government relations team and group of committed conservative activists doing the hard work of Congressional accountability.