



C77 CONSULTING
DIGITAL STRATEG

Case Study: Northern Pass

A highly-charged political fight over proposed power lines in New Hampshire...

While serving as Director of Digital Strategy for [Saint Consulting](#), I was asked to provide a comprehensive digital engagement strategy, a social media strategy, and campaign data management solution. Our client, a conservative-by-nature public utility firm, had very little exposure to social media and had a high degree of trepidation and skepticism at the senior and middle levels of management. Particularly, I was asked by client especially to provide strategy, coaching and guidance for project communications team to maximize chances of success while minimizing the likelihood of social media adoption going awry.



What Was Needed:

Client had retained an [excellent media agency](#) to handle advertising buys, editorial assistance, and day-to-day social media advertising. Client also had a very strong internal team of public relations and communications practitioners. The client finally had an experienced team of subject-matter-experts who could translate highly-technical engineering topics into regular-person language.

What the client really needed to give this magical mixture the spark of life was first to get senior communications leaders on-board with the idea of social media adoption. Second, they needed an integrated social media / digital engagement strategy, coupled with a solid grassroots/grasstops citizen advocacy campaign. They also needed guidance on how to adopt, manage and execute such a program over the long-term.

What We Did:

- Provided high-level briefings, Q&A sessions, and strategic counsel to senior communications leaders on value of social media, usage of social media in public affairs arena, and dealing with opponents, angry citizens, and crisis situations
- Designed a structure, framework and plan by which client could quickly adopt social media usage for their project
- Consulted and coordinated with internal communications team, web vendor, and media agency on messaging, editorial planning, content calendar, and social media execution
- Worked with existing website vendor to reconfigure project website, moving from technical-details and bland corporate-speak style presence to one featuring issue education materials, multiple clear calls to action, and content designed to engage citizens and answer citizen concerns
- Regularly reviewed analytics and provided recommendations on content mix and performance improvement
- Constructed, administered and managed a state-wide voter database and stakeholder-tracking system to support outreach efforts
- Deployed a customized, rotating-content support letter generator to put pressure on state legislators on multiple issues

How It Went:

- Client adopted vast majority of recommendations and began an immediate, aggressive social media adoption

- Overall team produced content at an extremely high rate, sharing written content, infographics and video on a daily basis through social and web channels
- Team identified thousands of project supporters and blunted the attacks from project opponents on social media and at public-forums
- Generated hundreds of positive comments on the project to the Department of Energy, exceeding client expectations
- Generated hundreds of supportive comments and emails to state legislators on important house and senate bills that would have threatened success of the project
- Created a loud and clear positive voice on behalf of the project, stealing considerable momentum from virulent, vocal opponents

While the fight over the Northern Pass rages on, and likely will for years to come, the primary mission was achieved: we helped a very large, conservative public utility that had never formally used social media become a content marketing and social media [powerhouse](#). The project has gained significant traction and garnered the support of thousands of New Hampshire residents.

<http://www.c77consulting.com/project-view/case-study-northern-pass/>