



ADVANCING EQUALITY THROUGH SUPPORT, EDUCATION, AND ADVOCACY

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OVERVIEW

Over the past decade, our nation has made unprecedented progress for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) individuals, but the fight for equality is far from over.

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ABOUT

PFLAG works to empower families, allies, and LGBTQ individuals to be proud of their identity and ensure that society values all LGBTQ people. PFLAG upholds its vision by providing peer-to-peer support, educating people on the issues that are important to the community, and advocating for inclusive policies and laws.





“PFLAG was founded by Jeanne Manford who had a gay son.” Diego Sanchez, PFLAG’s advocacy director, told me. “On TV one night she saw footage of a gay man beaten at a protest, and she was horrified. Upon closer look at the video, she realized that the assaulted man was her son.” Manford, who had lost her first son to a drug overdose, knew she had to act. “She decided that she couldn’t stand by and let her gay son feel unsupported by his parents.”

“That year she marched in the New York City Pride parade with a sign that read ‘Parents of Gays Unite in Support for our Children.’ She was lauded for marching with her son and was asked by many LGBTQ youths if

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she could talk to their mothers,” Diego continued. “She decided to establish a place where parents of LGBTQ individuals could gather for support.”

PFLAG held its first meeting on March 26th, 1973 in the basement of Metropolitan-Duane United Methodist Church. This original meeting site, which has since been renamed the Church of the Village, is now registered as a historical site by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation.

Today, PFLAG is the nation’s largest LGBTQ family and ally organization. Its network consists of more than 400 chapters, which crosses nearly all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

“We are about support, community education, and advocacy. People need support as they did in 1973, but it’s a new kind of support, especially with families that have gender non-



conforming or transgender children. Even in 2017, there are still places - pockets in America - where it isn't safe to be gay."

THE CHALLENGE

"We needed to consolidate our tools," Brooke Smith, Field and Policy Manager, told me. "Before Salsa, we were using Blackbaud's Net Community for our email communications and donor forms. We used Capwiz for advocacy. It was very time-consuming for staff." This piecemeal workflow process adversely affected advocacy efforts, donor communications, and constituent growth and retention initiatives.

"Time is the enemy," Diego added. "If you are using your time to figure out how to make different pieces of technology talk to each other, you have lost part of your team's efficiency."

The Solution - List Management, Email Segmentation, Reporting

"One of the things that we didn't do, before we had Salsa, was segment [our list] based on their interests and based on the things that they wanted to be involved with," Diego continued. "LGBTQ advocacy is a massive umbrella term, and peoples'



interests vary from education to healthcare to health and immigration, and beyond. Salsa has made it easy to find the people who care about particular topics and personalize our communications to them."

The need for segmentation extended beyond interest targeting. With chapters across the US, Brooke needed to be able to support PFLAG's members with resources and tools that were relevant to them.

"I have clients in both very rural and urban areas," Brooke explained. "My job is to [remotely] help individuals establish new [PFLAG] chapters, and give existing chapters the tools they need to organize and accomplish their local objectives, regardless of how friendly their community is. Salsa makes list management easy and delivers clean, well-formatted emails to our constituents."

Reporting was another pain point. With three different tools, it was difficult to track progress and capture





outcomes accurately. “The most important thing to our Executive Director is measurement,” Diego said. “You manage it if you can’t measure it. Before Salsa, we didn’t have proper tools to be able to gauge our progress. [The LGBTQ rights movement] is a marathon to bring equality to our country. Salsa helps us manage our energy and resources in a way that keeps us strategically on track and measure our effectiveness so we can self-correct as necessary.


THE RESULTS

Since starting with Salsa in 2016, PFLAG has grown its supporter base by 6,000 constituents. In 2016, PFLAG National also experienced explosive chapter growth across the country, an expansion to their Straight for Equality program and PFLAG Online Academy learning sessions, and an advocacy slate that was full-to-bursting with meetings at all levels of government.

All of these – combined with the launch of their brand new website – have set a strong foundation for the crucial work to come. “Salsa helps all of our chapters grow and flourish. We have power in people, but if we can’t get them the information they need, they won’t know to come to PFLAG to get support. Our messaging is integral to our mission and purpose... filled with love and strength.” Diego shared. “Without Salsa, we wouldn’t be able to keep our members informed with the news, updates, and action alerts they need to organize quickly and effect change. [Salsa] is productive, cost effective, and we can easily measure our core performance indicators. We can instantly see if people are opening our emails and taking action. With Salsa, we can send relevant information that sparks our community to act and together we are saving one life at a time.”



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