



**Effective Pro-Jewish, Pro-Israel Messaging**

# Changing the Narrative: The Focus Project

**We face a perfect storm with antisemitism on the rise** from the right, the left and overseas, increasingly endangering the lives of Jews – even in the U.S., where words have led to actual deadly bullets.

**Our adversaries are effective using traditional and social media** to spew their hateful rhetoric that is becoming mainstream.

**To defeat them at their own game, we must rise above** our respective agendas and deliver a consistent and cohesive narrative that can reach all Americans

**The Focus Project does just that – by bringing together top communications experts** from leading Jewish organizations to develop weekly talking points on issues related to antisemitism and the delegitimization of Israel.

**In our short existence, we've successfully grown our subscriber list to almost 38,000 influencers** including rabbis, legislators, journalists, and many community leaders. Our open rates far exceed industry standards and our readers repeatedly incorporate our points in their own communications, further extending our reach. We do this on a very tight budget and at no cost to our readers.

**Harnessing expertise and experience from a wide spectrum of Jewish organizations** to deliver resonant key messaging week after week is a game changer. But changing the hearts and minds of a larger community of Americans will not happen overnight. We must redouble our efforts now to change the narrative and make our country safe again for Jews.

# Rising Antisemitism, Anti-Israel Activity



**> 2,100 antisemitic incidents reported last year - highest in > 40 years - since ADL began tracking including deadly attacks in Jersey City, Monsey, Poway**

**Jews made up 63% of all reported hate crime victims in 2019**, according to a recent FBI report

- **Jews and Israel blamed for world's woes** – from Covid-19 and white privilege to media control and colonialism – especially on campus
- **Antisemitic and anti-Zionist language, imagery normalized** in politics, print, social media and academia



# The Perfect Storm

"Today...we're seeing a perfect storm....[antisemitism] from the political right and the political left, and ...from Islamist extremists..." - Professor Deborah Lipstadt Author, Antisemitism: Here and Now

- **Islamists:** Billions of overseas funds leveraged to spread antisemitism and de-legitimize Israel through local and national groups.
- **Left:** As U.S. reckons with racism and social injustice, Jews often targeted and blamed. Israel described as racist and colonialist, while the Jewish experience of discrimination is dismissed, forgotten.
- **Right:** Elements of the population with roots in white supremacist and militia groups feel more empowered to act on conspiracy theories and false grievances against Jews, with sometimes deadly results.

"The Jews Will Not Replace Us!"  
- Charlottesville Marchers

"I'm not an anti-Semite. I'm anti-termite."  
- Louis Farrakhan

"From the river to the sea, Palestine  
will be Free"  
- SJP SFSU

# The Jewish Messaging Challenge

- **Antisemites, anti-Zionists highly disciplined about messaging** – operating consistently across all media channels, academia and the political spectrum
- **Jews, allies, and supporters of Israel speak with many voices**, often contradicting each other and acting on different priorities, even when they agree
- **Inconsistent messaging and competing agendas** are vastly overwhelmed by the uniform narratives of the opposition, diluting our own efforts
- **Mainstream media is often challenged by implicit bias** and does not adequately cover many antisemitic acts or movements to delegitimize Israel

# Responding to the Challenge

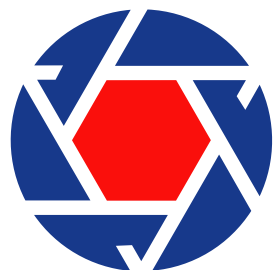
**Today's complex social, political and media landscape demands an effective, consistent response:**

- Greater message discipline, consistent repetition and greater sophistication
- Rise above internal differences – to beat our enemies at their own game
- Working together as a 'force multiplier' against growing threats

Republicans and Democrats faced similar problems. Both adopted the practice of distributing consistent talking points to legislators, party officials, media pundits, activists and donors within their parties.

**The Focus Project is modeled on these operations.**

# Who We Are



**Addressing today's challenges through resonant,  
consensus messaging**

The Focus Project is a joint initiative of a broad coalition of U.S. Jewish community organizations.

The Focus Project develops and distributes messages to help influencers and influential organizations combat antisemitism and de-legitimization of Israel. Our objective is to enable our community to speak with more consistency and focus so that its messaging has greater resonance and reach with the general public.

# What We Do

The Focus Project is designed to inform and influence tens of millions of Americans who could be natural allies in fighting antisemitism and defending Israel's legitimacy.

## We achieve this by:

- ✓ **Creating weekly talking points and contextual background** based on the consensus view of our partner organizations, leveraging the knowledge and experience of our subject matter experts.
- ✓ **Distilling our messages into accompanying social media posts** that can be easily shared by subscribers.
- ✓ **Sending these to an expanding list of influencers and influential organizations** within and beyond the Jewish community – from elected officials and journalists to campus leaders and clergy – bringing clarity, consistency, and resonance in messaging to their constituencies.

Our work changes the narrative, enhancing the safety of the American Jewish community and preserving the vital bonds between Israel and the American people.

## We do not:

- ✗ Try to unite all Jewish organizations
- ✗ Attempt to solve all problems
- ✗ Strive to better connect Jews to Israel
- ✗ Promote a specific political agenda



# What Sets The Focus Project Apart?

- No other resource brings together leading Jewish organizations from across the political spectrum to create effective consensus messaging on antisemitism and demonization of Israel.
- Our messaging is direct, well-researched, and balanced.
- The Focus Project has no specific political agenda. We rise above the noise and we don't just preach to the choir.
- We focus on one main issue each week for maximum impact and resonance.

# A Collaborative Process: Developing Our Weekly Talking Points



**Knowledge Based:** A select group of subject matter experts from our partners, with decades of experience in media, policy development, communications and government affairs participate.



**Timeliness:** Weekly topics are identified and selected through vigorous, structured debate.



**Balance:** Consensus on priority issues is reached.



**Context & Simplicity:** Concise, clear, contextualized and well sourced points are carefully crafted for maximum impact.



**Utility & Clarity:** Points are designed to be easily shared and forwarded by subscribers.

# Distribution



**Email**



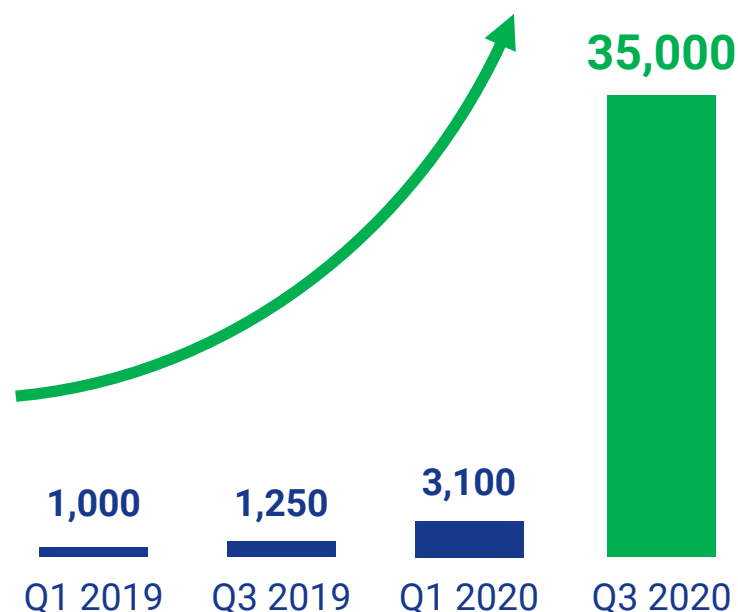
**SMS**



**Facebook** (private group)

- The Focus Project distributes its flagship edition directly to individual subscribers.
- We also syndicate our newsletter to nearly a dozen organizations. These allow us to reach unconventional subscriber categories, such as Christian Evangelicals, state legislators and chaplains.
- Through individual outreach, we continue to increase our number of legislators through careful and bipartisan targeted outreach.
- We offer the talking points to individual subscribers and organizational partners at no cost.

# Explosive Growth, Consistent Use



Our growth trajectory indicates that **we are on track to become one of the most successful communications projects** the Jewish community has built together

Our subscriber growth continues and is growing exponentially.

Focus Project Weekly Talking Points starting October 2017



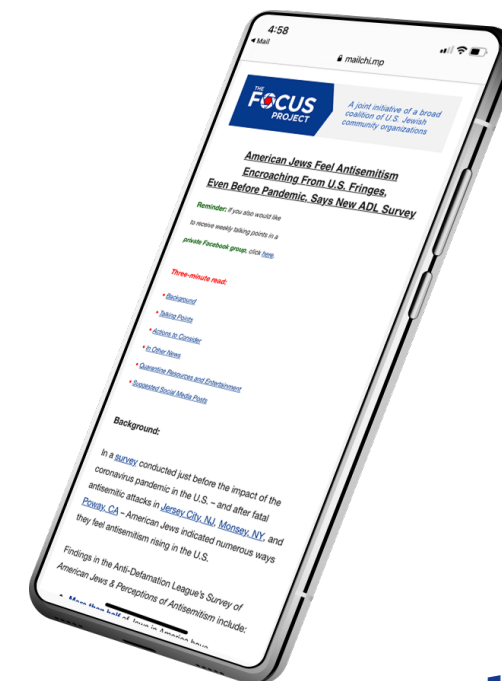
Total direct and syndicated subscribers: **~38,000**



Overall average open rate: **34%**



**> 80%** of our subscribers opened the talking points at least once in the most recent quarter



# Subscriber Engagement

Regular engagement with our subscribers enhances the quality, consistency and relevance of our talking points. Our most recent survey, completed in September 2020, gives us confidence that we are on the right track, and that the quality of our work continues to set and reach high standards:

**> 93%**

of subscribers found our talking points helpful

**85%**

of subscribers have shared the talking points in one or more ways, and nearly 30% used them more than six times in the last six months

**96%**

see our talking points as ideally or close to ideally politically balanced



# Time is not on our side.

**We need to act effectively. We need to act now.**

We must fight against the rising tide of antisemitism and de-legitimization of Israel coming from all sides. We face a perfect storm that must be overcome.

We can't ignore it and we can't deny it. Jeremy Corbyn and the British Labour Party taught us that.

Our well-financed adversaries craft simple messages and repeat them endlessly. This is an effective strategy, and we need to beat them at it. We can do it best if we do it together. These times demand such unity.

The feedback we receive **proves that we are making an impact** and filling a critical need. But changing hearts and minds doesn't happen overnight. It requires repeated and consistent messaging. **Our partners and collaborators are a critical element in changing the narrative.**

**This is the struggle of our time, and we all must rise to the challenge.**

# The Focus Project is a Game-Changer in the Jewish World

