

A Guide to Developing Group Strategy for an Issue Campaign

Goals	Organizational Considerations	Constituents, Allies, & Opponents	Targets	Tactics
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Long-term objectives 2. Medium-term objectives: What is winning? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Improving lives b. Empowering people c. Changing power relations 3. Short-term steps to long-term goals 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organizational Resources, e.g., money and budget including in-kind contributions, staff, facilities, reputation, etc. 2. Organizational Benefits of campaign, e.g., <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Expand leadership b. Improve leader skills c. Increase membership d. Expand constituencies e. Raise money 3. Organizational Obstacles to success 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who cares enough about the issue to join or help the organization? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Whose problem is it? b. What do they get if they win? c. What are their risks? d. What power do they have over the target? e. How are they organized? 2. Who are your opponents? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What will your victory cost them? b. What will they do/spend to oppose you? c. How strong are they? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Primary targets (individual decision makers) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Who has power to give you what you want? b. What power do you have over them? 2. Secondary targets <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Who has power over the people with power to give you what you want? b. What power do you have over them? 	<p>For each target, list tactics each constituent group can best use to make its power felt.</p> <p>Tactics must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In context • Flexible and creative • Targeted • Sensible to the membership • Backed up by specific form of power <p>Tactics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media events • Actions to inform and demand • Public hearings • Strikes • Voter registration and education • Lawsuits • Accountability sessions • Elections • Negotiations

Choosing an Issue

Will your group's approach or solution to the problem...

- Improve people's lives?
- Give people a sense of their own power?
- Alter existing political power relations?
- Be worthwhile?
- Be winnable?
- Be widely felt?
- Be deeply felt?
- Be easy to understand?
- Have a clear decision maker to target?
- Have a clear and workable time frame?
- Unite not divide your constituency?
- Build your group's leadership?
- Lead naturally to your next issue campaign?
- Have a pocketbook angle?
- Help raise money?
- Reflect your values and vision?

Thinking Tactically in an Issue Campaign: A Sample Checklist

	Petition Drives	Letter Writing	Turnout Events	Visits With Public Officials	Public Hearings	Mass Demonstrations	Accountability Sessions	Educational Meetings	Teach-Ins	Disruptive Tactics*
Can you really do it? Do you have the people, time, and resources?										
Is it focused on the primary or secondary target?										
Does it put real power behind a specific demand?										
Does it meet your organizational and issue goals?										
Is it outside the experience of the targeted decision maker?										
Is it within the experience and comfort level of your group?										
Do you have the necessary leadership experience to do it?										
Will people enjoy doing it?										
Will it play well in the media?										

* Disruptive tactics may include legal actions as well as actions that skirt or violate the law. Boycotts and similar disruptions of normal social, economic or political activities generally fall within the law. Civil disobedience involves intentional violation of unjust rules or laws.

Sources: Bobo, Kim, Jackie Kendall, and Steve Max. Organizing for Social Change. 3rd ed. Santa Ana, CA: Seven Locks Press, 2001; Center for Tobacco Policy and Organizing (<http://www.californialung.org/thecenter/community>); Midwest Academy (<http://www.midwestacademy.com/page8.html>); Rainforest Action Network (http://www.ran.org/action/toolbox/campaign_strategy.html).