

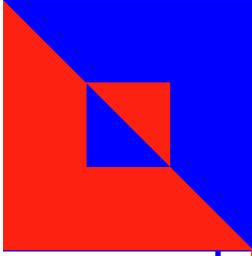
Student
Activist
Handbook

Christine Donovan
and
Felipe Witchger

University of Notre Dame
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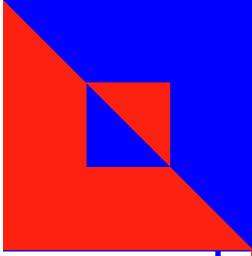


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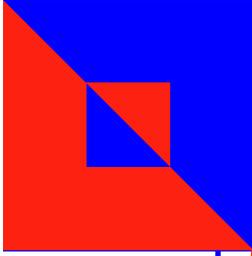
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Chapter 1

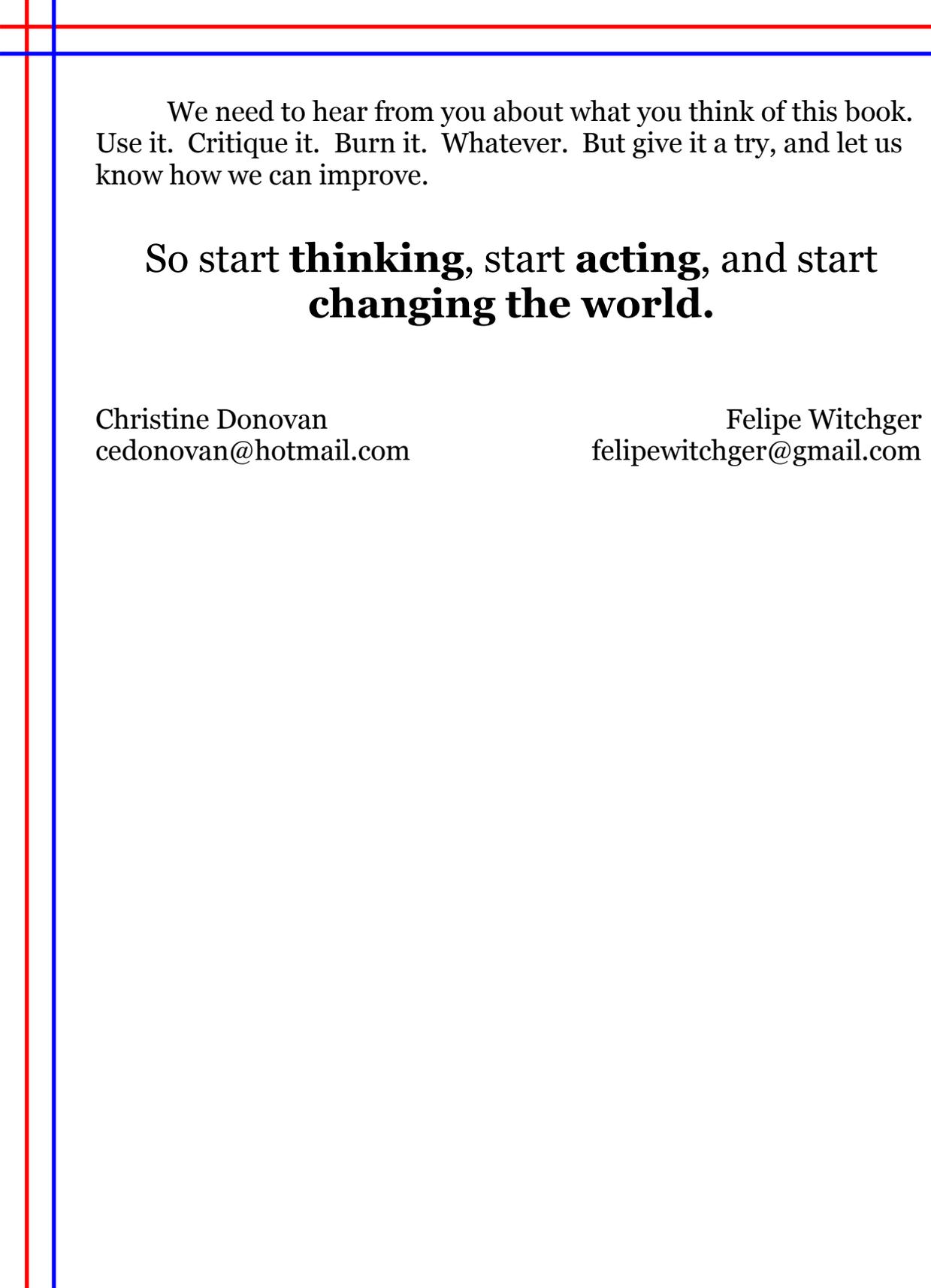
Introduction

So, you want to **change the world...**

The fact that you picked up this book shows that you have experienced something in the world that isn't what it should be. You have seen something that clashes with your values and you want to respond. You are angry, or frustrated, or sad, or excited – you're ready to act. The idea of "activism" may be completely new to you, or you might be a trained veteran. Regardless, at least one chapter in this book will help you along the way.

Our goal in this handbook is introduce the tools necessary to engage the people around you – both the people who agree with you and the people who do not – in a way that promotes change. We have compiled the best information we have found from books, articles, classes, conversations and experience. We have discussed the ideas in this handbook with high school and college activists, university professors, religious and secular leaders, community organizers, directors of non-profit organizations, social workers – anyone who would listen.

This is only the beginning. It could be several hundred pages longer. We're giving you the bare bones – you have to flesh it out. Think critically about what we say, and use the pieces that suit you. Put it to use – that's the key.

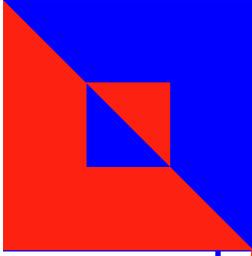


We need to hear from you about what you think of this book. Use it. Critique it. Burn it. Whatever. But give it a try, and let us know how we can improve.

So start **thinking**, start **acting**, and start **changing the world**.

Christine Donovan
cedonovan@hotmail.com

Felipe Witchger
felipewitchger@gmail.com



Chapter 2

Defining the Issue and Planning a Strategy

You may have a solid idea of the issues you want to pursue, or you may sense injustice, but not have a feel for the heart of the matter. Charting the course for your campaign can be one of the most difficult aspects for your group. Focusing on a specific issue that matters to you and your community helps give you the stamina to sustain your campaign, and planning ahead will help guide you through the small steps that lead to big change.

This chapter suggests criteria for forming your campaign and focusing your message; identifies the targets of your issue; and guides strategic planning.

From Concerns to Campaign

Translating the observations that make your blood boil into a viable campaign can be difficult. Use these points to consider the central issues and to help you communicate your ideas:

Choosing an Issue:

1. Is it **important** to you? To your community? Is it worth the effort? Develop a realistic vision.
2. Can you envision a **strategy** for achieving victory over your target? Do you have the stamina to keep working until you win? Consider time, energy, and money.
3. Do you **understand** your message well enough to convey it to other people? How can you **educate** the general public with a clear, concise message?
4. Who is your **target**? The target is the person who holds the power to change the injustice you are fighting. A good issue needs a clear target – an individual person – or the campaign may lack focus.
5. Does it build **leadership**? For a college campaign, this is *crucial*. Since most leaders will be active in the campaign for only a few semesters, the issue must allow veteran leaders to give new leaders a chance to expand their leadership skills. The issue must lend itself to leadership development so new leaders can emerge and mature.

Defining your Message:

1. Frame your message so that it engages people's **reason** and **emotion**.
2. Lay down a **timeframe** that is both flexible and realistic.
3. Refine your **message** so it is attractive to a diverse constituency but is still faithful to your values.
4. Clarify the **economic concerns** showing that it benefits your supporters.

Strategic Planning

- **Think long-term.**

As you are starting to build your group you must consider long-term, intermediate, and short-term goals.

- **Input and output.** When planning, consider the following questions:

- What **resources** do we have to put in to our campaign?
- What do we hope to get in **exchange** for our efforts?
- What problems do we want to **solve** with our efforts?

- **People are power:** Constituents, Allies and Opponents

- **Finding constituents and allies.** Considerations:

- Who cares about this issue? What individuals or organizations are already working for related causes?
- What do they stand to win or lose?
- What power do they have and how are they organized?
- Be expansive, even far-fetched.

- **Using your power base.** The bigger your base, the greater your support, the more people you have to draw from.

- **Identifying opponents.**

- List all the groups, individuals and institutions that stand to lose or be very upset if you win. What will your victory cost them?
- Try to **evaluate** how actively they will oppose you and what they will spend to defeat you. Take note of the power of each opponent.

- **Targets**

- **Primary Targets**

The person who has the power to give you what you want is often referred to as the “target” of your campaign. This doesn’t imply that the person is evil, but rather by virtue of having the power to give you what you want, the person is the focus of the campaign.

- **The target is always a person**

Even if the power to give you what you want is actually held by an institution such as a council or a board of directors, find out the name of the person who can make the decision, or at least strongly influence it and

- **The target is always a person**

Even if the power to give you what you want is actually held by an institution such as a council or a board of directors, find out the name of the person who can make the decision, or at least strongly influence it and make that person the target. This helps narrow the focus of the campaign and helps members feel that winning is possible.

- **Personalize the Target**

A campaign to change a person's mind is much more manageable than one to change the policy of a big institution. Individual decision makers have human responses such as fairness, guilt, fear, ambition, vanity, or loyalty. These don't effect the institution or formal body as a whole. Such responses only come into play if you personalize the target.

- **Secondary Targets**

A secondary target is a person who has more power over the primary target than you do. But, you have more power over this person than you do over the primary target.

- When you list secondary targets, write down what power you have over them and what power they have over the primary target.
- Don't feel obliged to have a secondary target if you have power over the primary one.

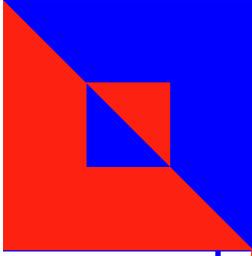
- **Tactics**

The steps in carrying out your overall plan. They are what your allies and constituents (and your opponents, if you are really crafty) can do to your targets to put pressure on them.

- Tactics should be **fun**.
- They should be **within the experience of your members**, but outside the experience of your targets.
- Each tactic should have an **element of power** behind it.

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Chapter 3

Organizational Structure

When you bring a group of talented people together, your collective potential for change goes through the roof. In order to utilize your group members' abilities, you need to create— don't stop reading after this one— a structure. We're not asking you to put together a hierarchy, or to stifle energy or creativity. We're trying to help you get the job done. Designing your group structure to encourage innovative thinking and public accountability can create a culture of responsibility and efficiency.

This chapter underlines the challenges of organizing on a college campus; offers organizational structures that help to overcome those obstacles; suggests a reorganization of the traditional committee structure; and explains the key stages of group development.

Organizing on a College Campus

These particular challenges require a unique set of considerations. Some of the basics on organizational structure still apply, but campus activists must organize with a few additional factors in mind:

- **Member turnover** – Regardless of how devoted your members are to your campaign, most members will be active for, at most, four years. More likely members will have three semesters of full involvement.
- **Temporary leadership** – Member turnover means leader turnover. Even if you expect your campaign to last less than a year, plan long-term and train underclassmen as leaders. They need to establish both leadership skills and the group’s respect before the founding leaders graduate. Allow them opportunities to exercise their power as leaders even before it appears necessary.
- **Busy leaders** – A student’s time is occupied with a student’s work rather than an activist’s. Unlike in larger campaigns, organizations on a college campus rarely have full-time or paid staff members. Dividing responsibilities amongst several leaders can ease the load and avoid overwhelming members.
- **Academic calendar**—Midterms, finals and heavy workloads tend to pull leaders temporarily out of commission. Vacations cause your campaign to lose momentum and member support. Plan your events and make your goals with this in mind.

A Word on Committees

The idea of forming a committee to focus several people on completing a task seems ideal, but unregulated committees often drag work out and leave the chairperson struggling to finish the work alone.

- **Avoid committee inefficiency by:**
 - **Creating ad hoc committees.** Rather than establishing a long-lasting committee that focuses on “Student relations”, consider creating smaller, temporary structures that organize a student rally or plan a student-oriented advertising campaign. Dissolve the committee when the job is completed.
 - **Calling it a “task force” or “work group”.** These words imply and impel action. Also, members may be more comfortable finishing their work and disbanding after completing their work if they don’t have the long-lasting connotations of the “committee” title.
 - **Patrolling size.** Ask for as many committee (or “task force”) members

you need, and no more. Having more hands may seem to get the job done faster, but having more heads can often slow down the decision making process and remove accountability.

- **Training your committee chairs in facilitation.** By developing their ability to lead a meeting, leaders will dramatically reduce unnecessary and unfocused discussion, allowing the group to decide on and enact a plan. See Chapter 5 on Meetings and Facilitation.
- **Celebrating!** When a committee finishes a job, celebrate the victory. Meet for dinner, coffee, anything to give you time to discuss and enjoy your success.
 - **Sharing success.** Congratulate committee chairs on a job well done. Your compliments will follow them back to their committee members.

Organizing to Meet Your Needs

Structuring a student organization demands a set of techniques and structures that address these issues. Your group's individual needs will demand its own unique structure, but many campus campaigns struggle with similar obstacles. Some points to consider:

- **Create broad-based leadership.** Create a group of leaders who work together to collaborate on the planning and execution of the group's mission.
- **Develop a structure** with multiple channels of communication and accountability. As your group grows, diving it into smaller committees may help.
 - Select committee chairpersons and have them meet to make decisions concerning the campaign's overall plan.
- **Delegate.** An individual leader cannot do it all. Most times, even a group of leaders cannot do it all. When planning for future events, delegate the task to the most appropriate person, people, or group.
- **Be considerate of your leaders.** When choosing someone to direct a project, consider their skills, work style, preferences and schedule. Don't give tasks to someone whose skills and time constraints don't fit the project's needs.

Be honest and explicit. When asking someone to take on a project, tell them directly what the project entails and how long you expect it to take. If they are both capable and willing to take on the job, they will take it. If not, they shouldn't take on the project.

- **Look beyond your leaders.** You may find someone in the group who has not assumed a leadership position, but who is well suited for the job. Be on the lookout for new leaders willing to take on responsibility.

The Benefits of Broad-based Leadership include:

- **Adaptability** – It creates an organization with a culture of change because the group’s directors are always changing.
- **Longevity** – Having multiple leaders makes transitions from year to year much smoother because new leaders’ inexperience will be offset by veteran leaders’ familiarity with their role.
- **Varied points of view** – With more leaders comes more ideas about the organizations historical successes and failures, and consequently more ideas about how to formulate and achieve future goals.
- **Accountability** – When leaders are part of a group, they are held accountable for their actions and for completing or neglecting their duties. This sense of accountability

The Stages of Group Development

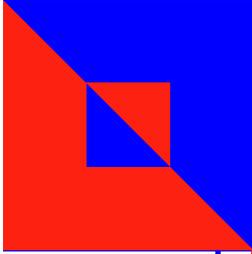
As a new organization forms, finding a structure that fits the group’s needs can take a substantial amount of time. Groups often go through the following stages as they develop their structure:

- **Forming** – In this first stage of group development, strangers come together tentatively and overly politely. This is the courtesy period when members get to know each other.
- **Storming** – Once people let their guard down and do away with courtesies, the Storming phase begins. This phase is characterized by power struggles and conflict. If the discomfort overwhelms the group, they will return to the Forming stage. Ideally, with good facilitation, the group will learn to manage conflict, negotiate, compromise, and move on to the Norming phase.

- **Norming** – Once the formalities fade and conflict unites a group, its members begin to define their common mission and their common identity. The group sets its norms and uses them to organize themselves as a team.
- **Performing** – In this phase, members act synergistically, relating to one another with ease and familiarity and abiding by both defined and implicit group procedure. Members focus more on the importance on the task at hand than on their own personal benefit.

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Chapter 4

Recruitment and Leadership

Without followers, a leader is not a leader. Without a leader, a group lacks direction. Training capable leaders and recruiting group members are equally important to a campaign's strength and sustainability.

This chapter discusses a strategy for recruitment; explains steps to leadership development; and offers suggestions for building group unity.

Recruitment

The **BLACK** strategy

- **Be prepared** – Know what you want to get out of the person, create a mini-strategy.
 - **New Person:** Have a couple questions which can spark conversation and get the person to start talking about him or herself.
 - **Acquaintance:** Review what you know about them and try to identify their self-interest.
 - Be ready to tell them **who you are** and **where you're from**. Show them your common ground and why they have the same problem with the issue that you do.
 - Be able to quickly **legitimate yourself**, showing your credibility by mentioning mutual friends.
 - **Tell them about your organization** and remind people that they have heard about you before. For example, you are the group that got fair trade coffee on campus.
 - **Be transparent** about your agenda and emphasize that you do not have ulterior motives.
- **Listen** – Attentively try to identify their self-interest by carefully asking questions which stimulate personal reflection on why this campaign is important for them. Show your sincerity in trying to get them involved. By being genuine you will demonstrate the importance of the issue to you.
- **Agitate** – Explain the whole story to incite them to be passionate and angry as well. Try to get them to realize how the problem is not only bad, but its unfair.
 - Know the definition. Agitate means “to stir up people as to produce changes” – not to offend or be obnoxious.
 - Don't passively accept excuses for people not getting involved.
- **Commitment** – Give them something to do next. Try to match the needs of the organization with the person's self-interest and talents. At the least, get their email address and invite them to a meeting. Make it clear what will happen next – don't leave it opened-ended.
- **Keep 'em** - Follow up in a timely manner to invite them to a meeting and reiterate what they can do to help.

Leadership Development

- **All groups have leaders.** Whether you are the outspoken organizer or the quiet supporter, leaders take on many forms and can play many roles. Some common definitions of a leader are someone who has followers or someone that can get people to come to an event.

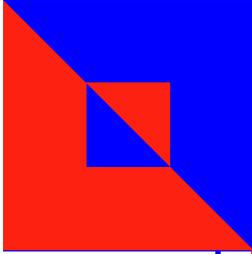
- **Relate, relate, relate.** Essentially, how you create, sustain, and develop relationship will determine the quality of your leadership.

- **Create community.** This is fundamentally important. Thinking creatively of ways you can participate in activities together will create new environments for interaction. Building fun and stimulating memories into the group's history is the only sure way to fortify the relationships that will create a sense of belonging and a deeper desire to contribute. This is especially useful for those who will be in leadership roles and planning for the future. Continually stimulating and reinvigorating your members will keep them active and fresh. It will also promote flexibility and adaptability for the organization.

- Opportunities for community-building
 - Attend a retreat or protest
 - Take a road trip
 - Play team sports
 - Pray together
 - Prepare and eat dinner

The Beginner's Guide to Being a Horrible and Hated Leader

- **Listen poorly**
- **Roll your eyes when others speak**
- **Give big, energizing speeches that last too long**
- **Never follow through**
- **Do nothing**
- **Ignore people altogether**
- **Give no positive reinforcement**
- **Show complete apathy towards everything**



Chapter 5

Meetings and Facilitation

Regardless of your issue, your venue, your target, or your constituency of members, you will inevitably need this chapter. Good groups make good group decisions. Good decisions require good meetings. And good meetings have structure.

In our experience, meetings tend to take on a mind of their own. Honing your skills as a facilitator and preparing both yourself and your group members for meetings increases your efficiency and productivity.

This chapter questions the need for meetings; highlights the key points of an agenda; outlines basic meeting skills; and describes traits and skills necessary for good meeting facilitation.

Do you need a meeting?

Ahh, the eternal question:

I have concerns – is calling a meeting the best way to address them?

- **Identify your objectives.** Ask yourself the following questions:
 - Why do I want to hold a meeting?
 - Why would I participate in the meeting?
 - What do I want to achieve with the meeting?
 - What do I want to achieve after the meeting is over?
- **Objective vs. audience.** “I want to talk about the fundraising campaign” is not an objective. It has no purpose other than providing a speaker with an audience. “I want to reach a specific decision concerning an upcoming fundraising event” is an objective. Objectives must have a clear question and meetings with real objectives end in clear decisions which lead to action.
- **The exception:** When a group is still forming its structure and identity, you may need to have an occasional “We don’t know what’s going on and we need to discuss” meeting, but try to move beyond them once the group becomes more defined.
- **Consider other options.** Once you have identified your objectives, decide whether a meeting is the best way to accomplish them, or whether another method (memo, email, phone call, etc) would accomplish the same objective or whether a meeting is necessary.

Agenda

Everyone should know what to expect before coming to a meeting. Write and email the agenda to participants a day (or an hour – we understand that you’re in college) in advance to give everyone time to prepare. Include:

- **The title of meeting.** Most meetings have a name or description and a title will help convey the general topic.
- **Who called the meeting?** It can be important to identify who convened the meeting so that questions and additions to the agenda can be directed to the person responsible.
- **The date, time, place.** Include a basic and realistic breakdown of how the meeting will run. Include a start time and an end time and stick to both.

- **The purpose.** Naming the objectives on the agenda gives participants an idea of what's going to happen and, more importantly, whether or not they need to be there.
- **The essential players.** State who needs to attend and whether or not others are invited to attend.
- **Preparation is key.** If participants must do homework before the meeting to prepare, let them know when you send out the agenda. Keep expectations simple and realistic.
- **Please bring...** If you want participants to bring anything, such as edited documents, completed forms, or other resources, tell them in advance.
- **Define Roles.** By naming the chairperson, the facilitator (if different), the recorder, and the expected attendants, group members can determine whether or not they need to attend the meeting.
 - By naming the group members that are expected to attend, it allows people to get a sense of the size and flavor of the meeting.
 - Additionally, it creates a sense of accountability and gives the opportunity for all to see what interests will be represented.
- **Agenda items**
 - **Order of items.** Organize the items starting with the most important and ending with planning for the next meeting.
 - **Persons responsible.** Who is responsible for introducing the subject and further carrying out this area of concern?
 - **Process.** This helps communicate whether you want the group to simply listen to a presentation or to become involved in solving a particular problem or making a decision.
 - **Time Allocated.** Realistically estimate of the time necessary to deal with the issue.

Meeting Method

- **Ground rules.** Everybody should know how the meeting is going to be run. Making this clear will help avoid a “structureless” meeting.
- **Decision Making Method.** If decisions are going to be made its essential that everybody understands how they are going to be made (general consensus, simple majority vote) and who will have the final say (chairperson or group as a whole).

Meeting Environment

- **Keep it cold.** Many facilitators believe it keeps people awake.
- **Seating arrangements.** Make sure you have enough chairs for everyone attending the meeting and that they are positioned in a way that everyone will be able to see everyone else.
- **Ambience.** For serious, businesslike meetings, host them in a professional environment. Casual meetings can be held almost anywhere.
- **Keep it down.** Hold your meeting in an environment with relatively little background noise.

Choosing a Seat:

- **Want to stand out in the group? Choose a seat opposite the group or meeting's leader.**
- **Prefer to blend in? Sit a seat or two away from the leader.**

Basic Meeting Skills

- **Opening Remarks.** This one or two minute talk needs to be carefully prepared because it will establish direction for the meeting. There are several requirements for opening remarks.
 - **Be positive, but honest.** Praise progress, but admit to upcoming tasks.
 - **Focus.** State the purpose of the meeting. This may seem repetitious, but it is necessary to maintain direction.
 - **Review progress.** This is vital when working on long-term projects, and it serves as inspiration for future work.
 - **Summarize positions.** If the agenda includes a controversial topic, use this time to sum up both sides. The facilitator must be careful to display all arguments impartially or risk tainting the participants' perspectives.
 - **Call for action.** Identify the meeting's key objectives and call the group to action concerning the decisions that need to be made.
 - **Be Concise.** Like this. (Get it?)

Recipe for a Fantastic Facilitator

2 sticks (8 oz)	<i>Empathy</i> – Understand their feelings and needs.
5 tons	Active listening skills
1 teaspoon	<i>Humanity</i> – Be willing to show your strengths AND weaknesses.
2 teaspoons	<i>Constructive criticism</i>
2 tablespoons	<i>Acceptance</i> – Let them know that you accept who they are.
¼ cup	<i>Clarity of explanation</i> – State your objectives explicitly and concisely.
3 teaspoons	<i>Flexibility</i>
1 stick	<i>Specificity</i>
1 part	<i>Encouragement</i>
1 part	<i>Summarizing</i>
5 parts	<i>Delegation</i>

DIRECTIONS:

Combine ***Empathy*** and ***Active listening skills*** and apply it in all your interactions within the meeting. Add a pinch of ***Humanity*** to remind them that you are all on the same playing field. Depending on the group's needs, use ***Acceptance*** and ***Constructive criticism*** to move the meeting along. Once the group begins to discuss, fold in ***Flexibility***, ***Specificity***, and ***Clarity*** as you respond to their comments so that the entire group feels that you understand clearly and are willing to discuss. For best results, soak each member in ***Encouragement*** throughout the process and ***Summarize*** all proposed actions at the end, mixing in ***Delegation*** to make sure all the groups objectives are accomplished after the meeting adjourns.

Yields dozens of productive meetings.

- **Maintaining direction.** The leader/facilitator is responsible for keeping the meeting on track and moving through the agenda.
 - Dangerous digressions. Meetings tend to move away from the key issues gradually. The facilitator must pay attention and correct the meeting's path as soon as digressions occur.
 - If an individual moves the topic away from the objectives, the leader should redirect him or her gently but forcefully back to the issues. A few helpful interjectors:
 - "John, that's interesting. We ought to look into it further. Now about..." and return to the central theme.
 - "Elizabeth, if you can get us more information on that, I'm sure we'd be interested. On the present matter, I believe..."

The Almost Ten Commandments of Facilitating

- 1. Thou shalt follow the planned agenda as long as it addresses the group's needs.**
- 2. Thou shalt allow everyone to speak and (a very different idea) to be heard.**
- 3. Thou shalt not judge. Rather, thou shalt listen attentively and empathize with the speaker's experiences.**
- 4. Thou shalt provide relevant suggestions for procedures that will help the group accomplish its goals.**
- 5. Thou shalt assist the group in evaluating its performance.**
- 6. Thou shalt be sensitive to the group's needs and invite feedback to address them.**
- 7. Thou shalt summarize the group's ideas and decisions both as the meeting progresses and before adjourning.**
- 8. Thou shalt not feel the need to respond to every statement.**
- 9. Thou shalt delegate all action items and set dates for their completion.**

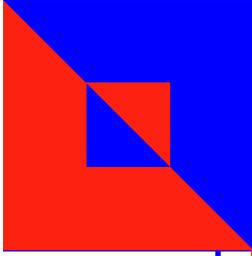
- **Group balance.** It is the facilitator's job to make sure the shy member and the "overparticipator" contribute equally. Helping each member reach his or her performance potential may mean limiting the participation of some and asking direct questions of others.
- **Action Items:** The heart of the meeting.
 - An action item is a decision that requires action outside the meeting – anything from writing a report to having a relational meeting.
 - Action items create responsibility by making each person publicly accountable for an action.
 - Keep a running list of action items throughout the meeting.
- **Ending the Meeting.** A good ending means a better beginning when the group reconvenes and everyone feels that their time was well spent. End with the following so people feel they have spent their time well:
 - **Recap of discussion.** Review the steps you took to arrive at the decisions. This legitimates decisions and affirms those who contributed positively.
 - **Summary of areas still requiring consideration.** If any topics of discussion must carry over into future meetings, identify them and delegate responsibilities.
 - **Review of assignments.** At the end of the meeting, review the list of action items and delegate or eliminate each task, specifying when each will be finished.
 - **Setting the next meeting.** If another meeting is necessary, do this before adjourning.

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Chapter 6

Fundraising

Posters, flyers, the pizza you promise at your meeting to “encourage participation” – all of these require money. Although your organization’s strength lies in its people, you still need money.

This chapter offers suggestions on overcoming the fear of fundraising; identifies the key elements and methods of fundraising; addresses the issue of tax deductions; explores how to seek out prospective donors; and warns against the possible dangers of accepting donations.

A Few Words

- **Fundraising is difficult.** It's hard to convince people to give you money, and it's hard to overcome the uneasiness of asking for it.
- **Fundraising is frustrating.** You will hear 'no' far more often than 'yes'.
- **Fundraising is necessary.** So get started.

Overcoming Fear

- Realize that people frequently give money to churches, organizations, and schools. Asking someone to give you money is nothing out of the ordinary.
- Train new fundraisers by pairing them with veterans, and work in teams for brainstorming and letter-writing sessions.

Keys to Fundraising

- **Make a statement.** In your fundraising efforts, make sure to clearly assert (1) the vision and goals of your group and (2) how you plan to accomplish those goals.
- **KEEP GOOD RECORDS!** Make note of who your donors are, how much they give, and how often they give. Keep the list updated and refer to it when crafting future fundraising campaigns. This list is your most valuable fundraising tool.
- **Personalize** your methods. The more personal the interaction, the greater the success rate. Personal meetings work better than letters to friends and colleagues which work better than calling strangers.
- **Build the donor base.** Operate on the "Move them in, move them up" philosophy: get new donors now and encourage existing donors to contribute more money more often.
 - **Regularly ask** donors who have given once to give again. Increase the frequency of your requests.
 - Always **thank donors** for their previous contributions and demonstrate what projects their money has helped.
 - **Your goal:** convince donors to become regular (monthly, annual, etc.) givers.

- Create a **diverse base**. Appealing to givers of large donations brings in more funds, but demonstrating support from several smaller donors adds legitimacy to your efforts. Seek both types of givers.
- **Plan ahead**. Fundraising works best when done in conjunction with another event – a holiday, an anniversary, etc. Look ahead on the calendar to plan when to initiate fundraising campaigns.
- **Be specific**. Tell potential donors where their money will go: towards an advertisement in the local or campus paper; towards information pamphlets, etc.

A Note on Tax Deductions

- Many organizations encourage donations by reminding potential donors that the money they give to the organization is tax deductible.
- This **DOES NOT** apply to your campaign unless you have declared 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, which requires a lengthy process and is likely not an option for campus organizations. **DO NOT** promise a tax deduction to your donors unless you have declared this status or you have addressed the issue with your national or international organization you're affiliated with.

How to Reach Prospective Donors

Discuss the following questions:

- Who are the potential donors?
- What are their interests, concerns, and prejudices?
- What will stir them to make a gift?
- What are the motivating forces?
- What are the exchange potentials and how can we emphasize them?

Methods of Fundraising

- **The direct mailing** – Send solicitations for donations in the mail. This method yields the lowest success rate.
- **The phone call** – Call either past donors or potential donors referred by previous givers. Cold calling (calling strangers who have shown no interest in your cause) has a very low rate of success. This method is lightly more successful.
- **The special event** – Often a concert, a dinner or an auction designed to bring in funds. Unfortunately these events often cost so much and require so much planning that they bring in less money than expected.

The Major Donor Campaign

A five-point plan and the most successful fundraising option.

- **Gather a committee of members. Have them brainstorm a list of possible donors.**
- **Write a letter explaining your campaign. Address each envelope by hand and write the letter to a specific name rather than a generic “Dear Sir”. Include a card soliciting the donation and a stamped, addressed return envelope.**
- **Call your donors four to five days later. Have your member who knows them personally make the phone call. Thank them if they’ve already responded to your request. If they haven’t, offer to meet with them personally to explain the campaign.**
- **Those who are pressed for time will often give you a solid ‘no’ or ‘yes’ at this point.**
- **If they agree to a meeting, bring information on the issue and keep talking until they give you a donation.**

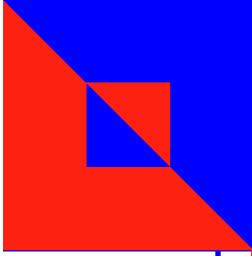
Fundraising Scruples

- **Consider the source.** Make sure that you support the person or group offering you a donation before you accept their money. Are you willing to accept “tainted” money or will that “taint” your campaign?
- **Watch for strings.** Large donors may try to exert power over your campaign or request that their money be used in certain ways. Be sure you know what strings are attached to money before you accept it.
- **Be honest.** Present your group and your issue truthfully. If you misrepresent your work, you will lose credibility.

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Chapter 7

Media and Public Speaking

The power of media coverage can make or break a campaign. If your group plans ahead, you can use the media to raise awareness about your issue and to arouse public sympathy. But if you approach a media event without preparation, you risk suffering a negative portrayal of your group or your issue.

This chapter explains the basic tools of media relations; offers campus-specific advertising advice; describes the idea of “framing” your issue; discusses the importance and the methods of engaging the senses during public actions; and gives practical advice on giving an interview, choosing a spokesperson, writing a speech, and speaking in public.

Tools of the Trade

- Establish a **sound bite** – A “quotable quote” that captures the campaign’s focus. This is the line you want to appear in the press, so it must be well-crafted and familiar to every potential spokesperson (members, leaders, public figures supporting the campaign).
- Keep a running **press list** – A comprehensive list of reporters and editors. Include campus, local and national TV, radio, newspaper, magazine, or other relevant media. Watch for changes in assignment. Reporters often shift from News to Sports to Community. Make sure you invite the most appropriate person.
- Seek **interview and talk show opportunities** – A great way to get your face and voice on air, and far more common at local or campus TV and radio stations than you may think. Call, write, or email your story and solicit an interview.
 - Have your sound bites ready!
 - Send a member who stays cool under pressure and understands the campaign’s past history and future goals.
- Monitor your **reporter relationships**. Designate certain members of your group to greet reporters at an event, guide them around and offer interview material.
- Write **Letters to the Editor** – Create a “Circle of Scribes”
 - Designate a group of members as your “scribes.”
 - Have the group meet to discuss what message they want to present in the media.

How to write a press release:

- Offer a suggested headline.
- Use active words that grab attention.
- If your press release is “for immediate release”, say so.
- Give the “Who, What, Where, When, Why and How”.
- Offer facts and figures, such as the number of attendants at a rally.
- Focus on your actions rather than your ideology. Readers and viewers like storytellers more than preachers, and journalists report accordingly.
- Keep it under one page.
- Email AND fax your press release to ensure its arrival.

- Each member writes a personal letter to the editor treating the issue.
- Members mail letters six or seven in a week. Often a few letters will be printed.
- Keep thorough **records** – Catalog clippings, recordings and videos of your media appearances.
 - This adds legitimacy to your group when you present to decision-makers or potential donors.
- Seek **media-related donations** – Donors are more likely to invest if they can see tangible results from their money.

Getting the Word Out on Campus

A quick list of channels to use for spreading the word on a campus:

- **Advertise and recruit** in student unions, cafeterias, and restaurants.
 - Hang posters
 - Distribute flyers (stay outside – going inside can lead to legal trouble)
 - Set up table tents
- Use these techniques in any **major gathering spaces**:
 - Classroom buildings
 - On- and off-campus housing
 - Athletic events
 - Concerts or other special events, especially those that focus on social issues
- Utilize the efficiency of **email**. Write to clubs, academic departments, social action groups, etc. and ask them to forward the message to their members.
 - Focus especially on those groups whose interests overlap your own.
 - Ask your group members to contact officers and administrators whom they know personally rather than sending them a general, blanket email from a stranger.
- Give **classroom presentations**.
 - Approach professors you know personally asking them to give you a few minutes at the beginning or end of class to present your campaign.
 - Ask them to refer you to other professors who have similar interests and would allow you to present.
 - Mention the referring professor when requesting a future presentation.
- Tap in to **student government**. Having the endorsement of your student government lends legitimacy to your campaign and can ease the process of securing funding and publication approvals. On that note:
- Get your publications **approved**. Most campuses require approval before

they allow for the distribution of posters or flyers. Get this *before* you print 1,000 copies.

- **Word of mouth** is the oldest and most effective method of spreading a story. Talk about your issue, your actions, your goals, and your history with anyone who will listen – roommates, friends, professors, coworkers.
- Recruit **faculty** assistance and expertise.
 - Most of them have been at your school longer than you. Ask them what methods have succeeded in inspiring change, and which have failed.
 - Request a lecture. Faculty members may be willing to give a guest lecture at no cost, which offers your campaign a chance to educate the public.
- Place **signs** in dorm or office windows. It makes a simple, but constant statement.

Framing Your Issue

- Your campaign presents an opposition to the majority view and you must portray your issue in a way that puts a new spin on it.
- Identify the inspiration for your campaign. What brought your attention to the issue and what motivated you to organize around it?
- Present the issue in light of this focus. Focus on the problems you identified, directing public attention away from the dominant view and towards the injustices you are challenging.

Framing

To understand the idea of framing, consider the frames used in the abortion issue:

- **Pro-choice:** The legalization of abortion is an issue concerning personal freedom of action and arguing against government intervention in individual treatment of one's own body.
- **Pro-life:** The legalization of abortion is an issue concerning the rights of an unborn child which portrays abortion as murder and governmental authorization of abortion as complicity in mur-

Creating Events

Giving the media a complete package

- Never assume that your issue alone will attract support. Instead, organize your action to show the media that it's an event worth covering.
- Couple the results of organized research and effort with a public action: have an assembly to commemorate a petition delivery; organize supporters to gather outside of an important meeting; launch advertising campaigns in conjunction with food or clothing drives.

Creating Sensory Events

For rallies, vigils, and other public gatherings, appeal to all the senses.

- **TV reporters need good visuals to accompany good stories – distribute candles, flags, etc. to the audience; make the speakers' background visually appealing and representative of your campaign; create a banner and make sure it can be read from a distance. A general note for visuals: Make sure viewers can understand your symbols without additional explanation.**
 - **Radio needs good sound – arrange for the gathered participants to chant, sing, clap, etc. while the spokesperson is being interviewed.**
 - **Print reporters need good sound bites and good visuals for pictures.**
- Location, location, location. Hold actions in the most appropriate place: the courthouse if you're protesting recently-passed legislation; a senator's office if you want to influence his or her vote; a corporate office if your message opposes its practices.
 - Do-It-Yourself media coverage. Take your own photos – some local newspapers will accept and use them. Think about camera angles before the event.

The Art of the Interview

- **Know your message.** Enter the interview with a clear idea of what you want to say. Have your statement written before you come to the interview.
- **Use only your message.** An interview is not a conversation. If the interviewer asks you a question that you don't want to answer, don't answer it. Respond by referring to your message.
- **Take your time.** If you need time to think between an interviewer's question and your answer, take it. TV and radio stations do not want dead air. Your pauses will be eliminated in the editing room.
- **Take Two – or more.** If you express an idea clumsily, say it again. It emphasizes the idea's importance and it gives the editors good footage. Editors want a polished product, and they will use the best take you give them.
- **Stick to your guns.** Don't let an interviewer badger you into answering a question. Say what you want to say, and nothing more.
- **Every second counts.** Remember that any small statement can be removed to stand on its own.

Choosing a Spokesperson

A few options:

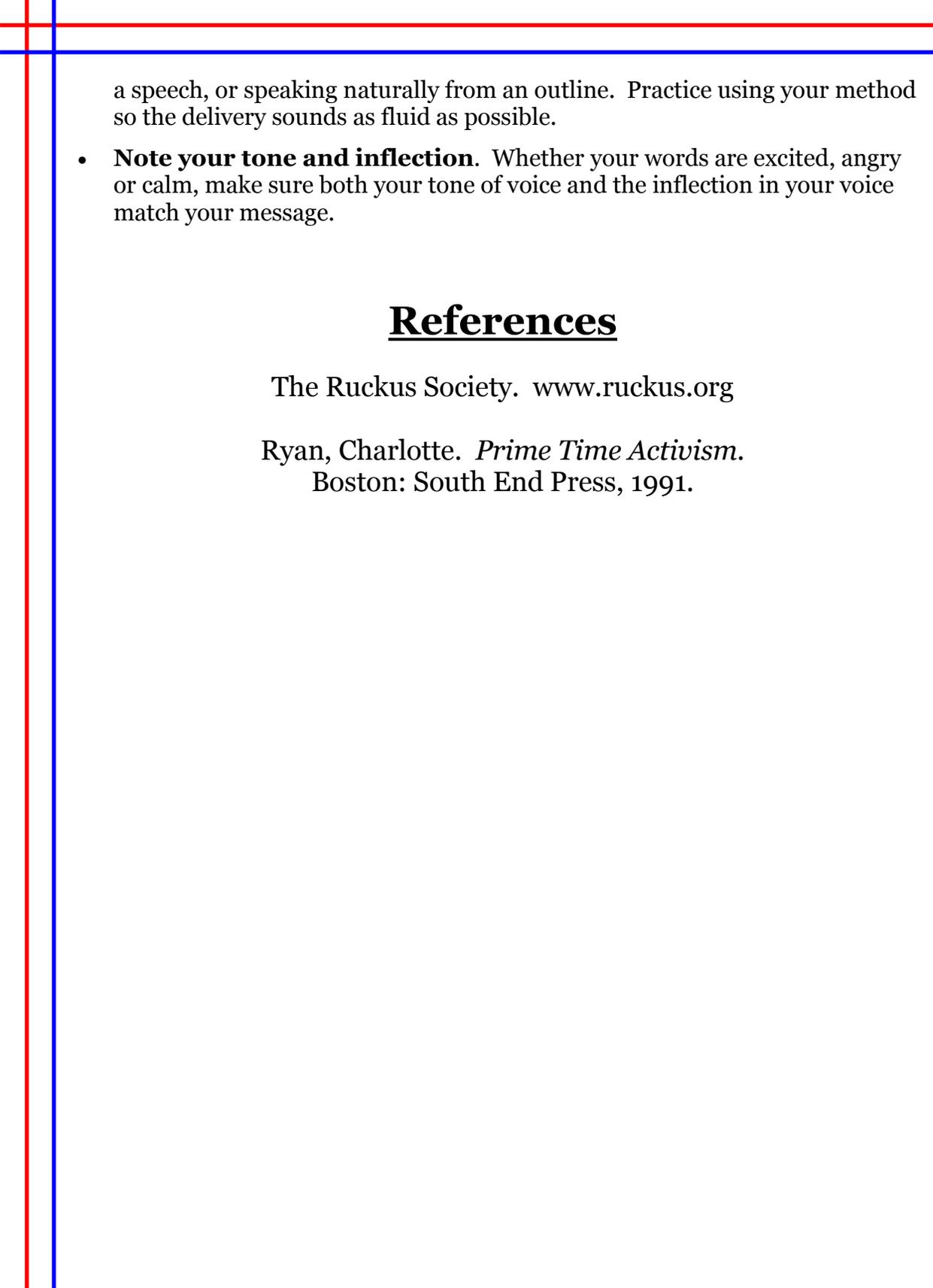
- A recognizable **public figure**. If you have support from a public official or a celebrity of any kind (eg. Class presidents), consider asking them to appear publicly or in interviews promoting the campaign. Equip them with sufficient information and sound bites.
- A person who is **personally affected** by the issue. Invite war veterans, single mothers, underpaid workers or whoever best represents your campaign to serve as its face. This adds a personal touch and appeals to the emotion of your audience.
 - Since these people are often emotionally attached to the issue, be sure they can maintain composure and discuss the issue intelligently and calmly. As always, give them solid information and sound bites.

Speech-Writing

- **Clarify your issue.** Write your speech using clear and active language.
- **Know your audience.** When writing your speech, consider where your audience is coming from. Use the following questions and whatever else fits your situation:
 - What does your audience know about this issue?
 - What details or ideas do you need to supply?
 - What will intrigue them?
 - What is important to them and how can you relate your issue to their values?
 - How can you “unfreeze” them? Your audience is locked into a certain mindset. What interesting fact or new twist will jolt them into thinking again?
- **Make it personal.** Tell a story from your own experience to bring the ideas closer to home.

Public Speaking Checklist

- **Think before you speak.** Prepare your speech and practice, practice, practice.
- **Keep it clean.** Strike the phrases “Like,” “I mean,” and “you know?” from your vocabulary. They weaken your speech and make you sound unsure and insecure.
- **Turn it up and slow it down.** Speak loud and slow enough for the audience to hear and understand you. Place a person in the back of the room who will signal you to speak up or slow down.
- **Test** microphones and other electronic equipment before the audience arrives. Technical mishaps during a speech distract the audience from your words.
- **Make eye contact.** Contrary to popular belief, this often helps speakers feel more comfortable. It reminds you that you are worth listening to, which bolsters your confidence. This also pulls in the audience because they feel that you are speaking directly to them.
- **Sit or stand up straight.** It makes you appear confident and authoritative.
- **Memorize – or not.** Decide on a method of jogging your memory while you speak. This may be reading directly, speaking from notes, memorizing



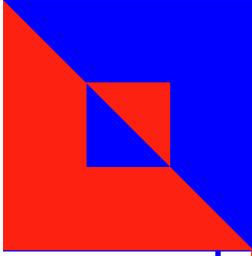
a speech, or speaking naturally from an outline. Practice using your method so the delivery sounds as fluid as possible.

- **Note your tone and inflection.** Whether your words are excited, angry or calm, make sure both your tone of voice and the inflection in your voice match your message.

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Chapter 8

Direct Actions

Although a great deal of your campaign's work will occur within planning sessions and logistical meetings, direct actions will serve as one of your strongest modes of spreading the message. Whether it's a silent march or an energetic rally, direct actions are designed to engage the public with your issue. Your focus may be to educate, to agitate, or to instigate, and this chapter will guide you through the basics of direct action.

This chapter explains the purposes of direct action; discusses action development; and provides a checklist for direct action media

The Functions

Purposes of **direct actions within campaigns**:

- **Announcement or alarm** – Meant to shine light on a situation that you feel calls for action.
- **Reinforcement** – Used when your campaign has been in progress for a while, but you need to remind people that the evil or injustice has not gone away .
- **Punctuation** – Reminds public that the issue continues to be pertinent – often useful on anniversaries or to highlight a milestone in the injustice (eg. The nation-wide prayers vigils after 1000 and 2000 death mark in the Iraq War).
- **Escalation** – Raises the stakes in an ongoing struggle. Shows targets that you're serious enough about your issue to declare it publicly.
- **Morale** – Serves to raise spirits when your campaign has suffered setbacks.
 - CAREFUL not to misuse direct action. The need to boost morale takes a backseat to the campaign's need in a given moment for the message and power of s direct action. If an action won't help you advance your campaign, find another way to boost morale.

Action Development

- **Key questions** to ask before using direct action:
 - Presuming your overall campaign goals are clear, ask yourself again: Why is an action warranted at this particular point?
 - Does the proposed action have a reasonable chance of benefiting the campaign - of sending a message, moving the debate or raising its profile?
 - What about the political follow-up to the action: Will you be able to exploit the political opportunity your action seeks to create?
- **Crafting your action**
 - Brainstorm in a group. Anything goes in brainstorming stages. It may help to move outside your common meeting places to stimulate creativity.
 - Unspoken rule of activism: It's ok to steal ideas from other groups. If you hear about a successful action that you think will work for your group,

don't be afraid to use it. Put your own spin on it to make it personal.

- **On anger:** Many activists develop a sense of “righteous anger”. Be careful that your action does more than simply express the fact that you are angry – tell them why.
- **Pick your audience** and address them specifically.
 - Is it the general public? Government officials? Corporate executives?
 - Keep the message from getting too universal – choose an audience and try to reach them with your action rather than trying to speak to everyone.
 - The more specific the target, the more that target will feel your energy and power. Identify the real culprit and address them directly.
- **Context**
 - **Actions don't occur in a vacuum.** What time of year is it? What's going on locally, nationally and internationally that affects people's opinion of your issue?
 - You have worked hard to understand your issue – your audience probably has not.
 - Avoid jargon specific to your work that could confuse your audience.
 - Educate and inform – press release, letters to the editor, etc. all help to educate the public. Do this BEFORE your action.
 - **KISS** – Keep it Short and Simple. Important for actions because people have a limited capacity to absorb new information. Hit the most important information and send them out to think and act.

Checklist for Direct Action Media

- **One month to one week before**
 - Designate a few people as the **heads of media strategy**. A committee will never reach a consensus on press releases, sound bites, etc. Designate people you trust and let them work without second-guessing their decisions.
 - Select a **simple message** that highlights only the key points.
 - **Choose visuals** that speak for themselves. If they require explanation, many viewers won't understand.
 - **Create a sound bite** – A media team job. Keep it under 10 seconds.

- **Choose a date and time:**
 - Morning events are more likely to be covered by the following day's paper.
 - Monday through Thursday are the best days. Viewership is lowest on Friday. Monday is the best day- as the week goes on, it becomes more and more likely that another big story will eclipse yours.
 - Consider the above points in relation to the other events going on.

- **One week to a few days before**
 - **Write a press release.** Share, discuss and revise.
 - The press release is an advertisement for the action – it is not the message itself. Headline is key.
 - **Update press list.**
 - **Practice sound bites** and mock interviews.
 - **Assemble a press kit.** Include a press release, fact sheets, background papers, maps, or anything that gives reporters NECESSARY information. Don't overwhelm them or they won't read it.

- **The day before**
 - **Finalize press release.**
 - **Alert the media.** Let them know as much as you're comfortable, which may mean sending them a map and may mean an entire press kit. Call the reporter who will be covering that action or the local news editor and be prepared to tell in 30-60 seconds:
 - What you're doing,
 - Why you're doing it,
 - Why it will make a good story.

- **The night before**
 - Gather everyone involved to review the press release to emphasize the main message and the sound bite.

- **The morning of**
 - Call again to make sure someone got the message.

- **As soon as the action begins** (which means as soon as participants arrive or as soon as you unveil your banner or symbol)
 - Call news outlets and tell them calmly and in a businesslike way that you

have a peaceful protest underway. Tell them where and why you're having it.

- **After the action**

- When the action ends, call the reporters who expressed interest in the story and tell them that the action ended, what time it ended, and what was the outcome. Give them your contact information where you will be reachable for the rest of the day and into the following day.

Need Ideas?

Most people are familiar with the sit-in, the boycott, the vigil, the protest, and the rally, but the list goes on and on. We recommend Gene Sharp's *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* which holds his list of "198 Methods of Nonviolent Action". Check it out, and get creative.

References

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