

Module 3: Finding Out

Aim of the module

By the end of the session participants should:

- be clear what information they need to find out
- have identified some sources where they can find this information from.



Total time for the module: 2 hours 5 to 2 hours 40 (including a 15 min break)

Activity 1 Introduction

5 mins

How to do it?

There is a risk in rushing into a campaign too quickly without first analysing the situation properly, otherwise the danger is a frustrated group of campaigners and a lot of energy wasted. Likewise it's important to work out exactly what research needs to be done and what information is needed. This needn't be a daunting task.

The trainer may want to offer a personal example of the importance of doing some research or give the following example: (someone who has tried to get counselling for a long period of time might be an expert in knowing how hard it is to get counselling. They may therefore spend a long time writing a petition and holding street stalls about how we need to petition the NHS for more counsellors. If they had done some fact finding, they might have known that their local NHS was already willing to hire more counsellors and want to - but there are not enough qualified staff in the area. Had the group known the root causes of the problem, that there were not enough trained people to apply for jobs, and that the local NHS were already in agreement with their cause, they may have decided to spend their time in a different way).

What do we need to know?

This set of activities is designed to enable participants to use their own skills and knowledge to examine the context of their campaign and to then identify where any gaps in knowledge may lie that need to be filled by some research.

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Activity 2: ‘What do I need to know to win the argument?’

40 mins

Aim of the session

By the end of the session participants should:

- Have identified any gaps in knowledge that are necessary for presenting a robust argument for change.

How to do it?

Participants go into pairs and are asked to think about either A) a friend, relative, neighbour who maybe doesn't share your opinion on this issue, or B) the target of your campaign e.g. a politician. Think about a situation where you are explaining your campaign goal to the person and the questions that they might ask you and what your response would be. This can be done in one of two ways, either

- 1) Form a group of a minimum of four people. Role play the conversation with four people, one as the person identified above, one of the campaign team, one to write the questions asked and one to write the answers given (on A5 pieces of paper, different coloured paper for questions and answers)) so forming a large flow diagram on the floor. Allow the conversation to flow but give permission for those recording the conversation to stop it if they are falling behind. (if there are enough people available you may want to ask for someone to volunteer as an observer. The observer could be asked to look out in particular for the lines of argument that were most effective / less effective, good use of body language etc.) After 5-10 minutes of role play the group looks at the flow diagram produced.
- 2) Draw what the conversation may look like as a flow diagram with your brief explanation of the campaign goal and what needs to be changed in a box at the top (in a few sentences).
Beneath this box write some of the questions they may ask you. From each of these questions write your responses and the subsequent answers and questions in boxes linked by arrows. Mark those questions that you are unable to answer or are not happy with your answer to, with a star.

The group discusses which responses were well handled and then identifies with stars those where the argument could have been stronger. (If there is an observer they may want to offer their observations at this stage. As the trainer you may want to encourage them to offer some positives first before they offer areas for improvement)

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At the end of each activity the question is asked ‘What additional information is needed in order to strengthen the argument so that the tricky questions can be better answered or what different strategy could have been used in addressing the difficult questions’ ?

Trainer tips

- *Note: if there is more than one group doing this activity you will need to take into account how much longer the feedback will take.*
- *Note: this activity is about developing the content of your argument, if you want to further develop this by looking at what else might help strengthen your argument then it is worth considering doing a Closed Eye group activity asking people to think back to ‘a time when you successfully changed someone’s mind’. Ask people to share what ‘behaviours’ they used, create a list and then ask the group if the list can be renamed ‘behaviours that can help us to win the argument?’*
- *Note: if you feel the group is not yet close to developing their argument the following activities can help build an argument: Activity 2) above (while stressing that this a way of building your argument rather than testing it) Activity 3) below ‘Why is our solution the best?’ or Module 6: Optional activity ‘What is our argument?’*
- *Note: if you feel the description ‘role play’ will strike terror deep into the heart of your participants consider the following:*
- *‘Sometimes it’s a good idea to not use the term ‘role play’ as it can put many people off ‘I often frame it as ‘practice what you would say’ Anna*
- *‘In the Syrian group, we used this role play to start to pull out the for and against arguments and to note them down, and we will go back to it as they develop their asks and how to put them across’ Sue*

What stuff do I need?

Option 1:

- A5 pieces of paper, one colour for questions and a different colour for answers)
- marker pens

Option 2:

- flip chart
- marker pens

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Activity 3: Why is our solution the best?

40 mins

Aim of the session

By the end of the session participants should:

- Have identified any gaps in knowledge that are necessary for presenting a robust argument against any other solutions.

How to do it?

When campaigning it is vitally important to be able to clearly articulate why our choice of solution is not only a good one but also what the disadvantages are of other possible solutions.

1. Stick together two pieces of flip chart. Draw a grid on the sheets of 6 equal sized columns and 5 equal sized rows.
2. Encourage the group to think about any other possible solutions (or existing perceived ‘solutions’) to the problem that the campaign intends to address, including any solutions that any opponents might talk about or use.
3. It maybe useful to get the group to think about solutions under the following headings (in the rows): political solutions, legal solutions, market solutions, voluntary solutions and others (or these could just be used as prompts). Write these solutions in the columns and record the perceived advantages and disadvantages of each of the solutions.
4. The group reflects on where their arguments against other solutions may be weak. At the bottom of the grid any extra information that the group needs to gather in order to strengthen the argument for the group’s solution or to be able to effectively challenge the alternative solutions, is recorded.

Trainer tips

Note: if it is the case that the group can not think of any solutions other than their own, more research is needed. This can be done in a number of ways: using the example above:

1. *a simple google search of ‘what do about dog mess/fouling?’ gives lots of leads(!) as does ‘how stop dog fouling council/government or ‘what solutions dog fouling/poo/mess problem?’ or dog fouling campaign? searching news stories may also work.*

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2. *Making some phone calls: asking the local council 'what are they doing to about the dog poo problem?' and as part of that conversation 'Do they know of any studies, articles, reports worth looking at? 'Who else might it be useful to talk to?'*

What stuff do I need?

- flip chart
- marker pens

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Optional activity 1: PEST analysis

60 mins

Aim of the session

By the end of the session participants should:

- Examine the context of the campaign issue and the external factors affecting it.
- Identify some of the gaps in knowledge.

How to do it?

This activity will enable the group to use its own knowledge to examine the context of the campaign i.e. the things that are going on outside of the organisation that affect (or may affect in the future) the campaign issue.

1. Take four sheets of flip-chart paper and write the following four headings - one on the top of each sheet. POLITICS, ECONOMY, SOCIAL (PEOPLE AND CULTURE), TECHNOLOGY. It may be necessary to check with the group what they understand by these terms before starting the activity.
2. Under each of the headings the group is encouraged to list the things/factors/trends that are relevant to the campaign issue. The following factors may be used to prompt/stimulate/guide discussion (although participants may have their own)
 - POLITICS: What government policies/laws (national, county, local, other) may affect the issue now and in the future? What is the expected direction of future politics (or trends) that may affect the issue? Are there any future political events to consider (e.g. elections).
 - ECONOMY: what is it about the economic situation that affects the issue now? What is the economic situation of specific population groups affected by the issue? What is the expected direction of the economy? Effect of the issue on workers and people's income. Effect on industry
 - SOCIAL (PEOPLE AND CULTURE): public perceptions of the issue, the view of different media, information about the population (age, gender, race, class, health, education, access to services etc). attitudes and practices of any particular population group.
 - TECHNOLOGY: people's access to technology, the impact of technology and the internet.
3. Ask the group to identify any issues that they think are of particular importance to the campaign issue and to mark these on the flip charts with a star.

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4. In the right hand column ask the group to identify any of the issues with stars that the group feels they need more information on in order to be able to proceed with confidence. Ask the group to identify what further information is required and to write this in the column.

The Resource sheet 'PEST analysis' can be used by participants as a prompt or to take away in case the group want to the activity in their own time

Trainer tips

This activity may be made more sophisticated by using the acronym PESTLE, so enabling participants also to consider Environmental and Legal issues.

What stuff do I need?

- Flip chart
- marker pens

Resource sheet: PEST Analysis

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<h3>Activity 4: Our research question</h3>	<p>10 mins</p>
<p>Aim of the session</p> <p>By the end of the session participants should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have identified what ‘research questions’ need to be answered and who will do what. 	
<p>How to do it?</p> <p>The previous activities have enabled the group to consider where some of the gaps in knowledge are that may need filling in order to strengthen the argument of the campaign. (i.e. PEST, winning the argument and why is our solution the best?) As a result we should now have a number of ‘research questions’. These should be written so that they are clear and it is obvious exactly what information needs to be gathered.</p> <p>Write the research question/s that the group has identified. Make sure that all members of the group are clear what the question is.</p>	
<p>What stuff do I need?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flip chart • marker pens • blu tack 	

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<h3>Activity 5: How can I find out?</h3>	<p>15 mins</p>
<p>Aim of the session</p> <p>By the end of the session participants should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better understand how to find answers to their research questions 	
<p>How to do it?</p> <p>Using the research question/s agreed previously, identify which places may already have the information you need or which methods you might use to gather the new information you need. The following list and accompanying resource sheets should help you to do this.</p> <p>At this stage it may be worth either asking people to volunteer what they will go away and do before a future meeting or to divide up people and support them to start doing the research now</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From information that already exists. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Think about who else is working on this issue or related issues (campaign groups, think tanks, professional organisations, academics, networks, conferences, people that work in the target organisation or used to work there, etc.) b. Formal records and sources of information 2. By finding out some new information for yourselves (original research): there are lots of ways of doing this including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Surveys (questionnaires etc) b. One on one interviews (door to door) c. Focus groups d. Informal chats with people in public spaces <p>Agree who will do what to try and get answers to the ‘research questions’ identified.</p>	

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Share with the group the campaign planner to show how this part is an important step in trying to put together a campaign plan. The group may want to put something in the 'What do we need to find out so we strengthen our argument?' box

What stuff do I need?

- Resource sheet: How to Find Things Out: Information about Parliament
- Resource sheet: How to Find Things Out: Finding local information
- Resource sheet: Finding out for yourself: Focus Groups
- Resource sheet: Finding out for yourself: Questionnaires
- Resource sheet: Finding out for yourself: Community Conversations
- Resource sheet: Campaign planner