

Campaign Strategy

An introduction

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Putting together a **strategy** (or plan) helps ensure that all your knowledge and enthusiasm are used in the most effective way and that you don't waste your time. Creating a campaign strategy doesn't need to be hugely complicated. It's just about breaking down the things you think need to be done into a series of steps that all logically follow each other.

Strategy people love using words like **aims, objectives, goals, activities, vision and mission**. They all mean different things to different people. It doesn't really matter what terms you use as long as everyone in the group understands what terms you are using. Use whatever you feel comfortable with.

We like to use the following:

- Goal** → The change we want to see
- Objective** → The specific things we will do to try to achieve the goal
- Tactic** → The things we will do to try to influence our target/s



Here's some examples of these elements of a campaign strategy in action:

This one is inspired by the work of **UK Feminista**

Goal: the widespread use of positive images of women in the media.

Objective: persuade the editor of the Sun newspaper to stop the page 3 feature.

Tactic: ask companies to stop advertising in the Sun newspaper until page 3 is dropped



This one is inspired by the work of a group of **residents from Blackpool in Lancashire**, who have been supported by Campaign Bootcamp's Everyday Activism project.

Goal: improve the quality of life for people experiencing homelessness in our town

Objective: increase the number of emergency beds for homeless people.

Tactic: meet the leader of the council and ask them to change council policy

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GOAL: (the change we want to see)

The goal is usually quite broad and is the big thing you want to see changed. It speaks to your values and the change you want to see.

Discussing and agreeing your goal can be a helpful process for the group as it can help to uncover some of the values that are important (or not!) to the group.

If the goal is broad, it gives you plenty of scope to change the more immediate objectives as you progress.

In the *Activists' Handbook*, Aidan Ricketts talks about the importance of using a broad campaign goal to show how significant the issue is to the public. He gives the example of campaigning to stop a lead refinery being built. The danger is that some will label this objective as the work of NIMBYs (Not in My Backyard). However, by also using a broader campaign goal such as 'to preserve a healthy living environment in our town' the campaign is able to clarify some of the values that underpin it.

The Ruckus Society in the US suggests that this part of the strategy should be 'big-picture, transformative and compelling'.

The author Titus Alexander (*Campaigning is OK!*) suggests there is no such thing as an unrealistic goal, only unrealistic timescales. He gives the example of the campaign for a minimum wage, which took over 100 years or the campaign ending apartheid, which took over 80 years.

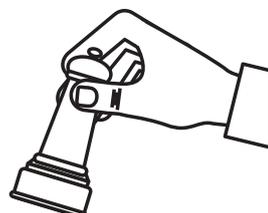


OBJECTIVE: (the specific things we will do to try and achieve the goal)

Your objective should make it clear exactly what the purpose of the campaign is, for example 'To abolish the government's Safe Country Review refugee policy'.

If you change your objective (because maybe your research reveals something important) or you are defeated or indeed you achieve your campaign objective, you still have your overall goal to guide what action you might take in the future.

If your group has enough time and energy you may decide to work on more than one objective in your attempt to achieve your goal. Looking at our earlier example from Blackpool the goal was 'to improve the quality of life for people experiencing homelessness in our town'. Two objectives could be 'increase the number of emergency beds for homeless people' as well as 'stop the closure of the 'pop up' cafe in the Library'.



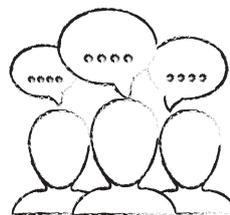
TACTICS: (the things we will do to try and influence our target)

- Your target is the person or group of people that have the power to realise the change you have described in your objective. In their 'build a campaign' workshop, the campaign group 350.org suggest that your target should be a person rather than an organisation as this will make it easier to understand what might influence them.
- Often people get very excited about choosing and working on a tactic, for example 'Come on let's all go now and throw eggs at our MP!' Working out what your goal and objective is first helps make sure you are using the right tactic. Otherwise you may end up wasting a lot of time, energy, enthusiasm (and eggs!)
- Campaigns are rarely won after one tactic has been used – you will probably use quite a few different tactics before victory is yours.
- We look at tactics in much more detail in the Tactics resource sheet.



A GOOD STRATEGY SHOULD:

- Be logical. Check the logic of your strategy by asking, 'If the tactic is successful, will it lead to the objective being reached?' and 'If the objective is reached, will it help realise the goal?'
- Be easy to explain to your next door neighbour.
- Change as your campaign evolves.



OTHER RESOURCES

The UK Feminista Campaign Planner takes you through a series of steps to 'kick-start your own campaign' <http://ukfeminista.org.uk/take-action/>

350.org is a worldwide network that opposes new coal, oil and gas projects, their Build a Campaign toolkit is an excellent set of activities on strategy design:

<http://archive.workshops.350.org/toolkit/campaign/>

The Australian 'activist educators' the Change Agency, produce an in-depth 'People Power manual' which is made up of lots of practical activities to help a group put together a comprehensive campaign strategy <http://www.thechangeagency.org/campaigners-toolkit/activist-education/books/people-power-manual-campaign-strategy-guide/>

Action Strategy: a how to guide from the Ruckus Society is particularly good on helping you to ask the critical questions about which tactics you should use:

<http://www.toolsforchange.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/RuckusActionStratGuidedraft7.pdf>

The New Economy Organisers Network (NEON) has lots of great resources. Its Systemic Campaigns Framework will help you to make sure your campaign strategy tackle the roots causes of the problems we face: <http://neweconomyorganisers.org/resources/>