

Power Mapping guidance

Source: <https://commonslibrary.org/>

This tool will guide your group through a power mapping analysis to inform your campaign strategy with a thorough picture of the players, and their power. It runs step by step through a collaborative exercise where your group can all contribute to a visual map of power holders and power relationships affecting your issue and campaign.

This critical exercise will strengthen and inform your work and set you up to build power and win.

Purpose of power mapping and analysis process

To assist the campaign group:

- Consider all players of relevance to its campaign and identify key players to target during the campaign
- Provide an analysis and visual representation of where power relationships stand in relation to the issue and how the campaign team might intervene
- Identify relationships between key players and assess relevance to your strategy
- Identify further information ('research questions') needed to further develop the power map and inform you campaign strategy

When to do it

This process works best when the campaign has already:

- Established a clear goal: something concrete and specific (eg have your local Council adopt a smoke-free outdoor areas policy)
- Identified the people who can actually make your goal happen for you ie the decision-maker
- Looked at the broader social, political and economic environment that impacts the issue and goal (eg through a PEST analysis)

Who to involve in the process

Everyone who is In the campaign group! This process is about democratizing knowledge and building a collective understanding of the power dynamics around the campaign – so the more people the better e.g. people familiar with the area of focus, those familiar with the local community or communities of interest

Equipment needed

A large surface area for your map, visible to the entire group: pens, post it notes
...could be divided up into the following:

- decision-makers
- organised stakeholders
- influencers
- core constituencies ie people directly affected by the issue who may not be part of an organised structure
- Additional poster paper labelled “ResearchQuestions”

Time needed

It really depends on the complexity of your campaign and issue and the size of the group. Recommend 90 mins for an initial session. This is likely to generate a series of research questions that can be done out of session and results brought back to the next meeting.

How it's done

Identifying all the players

- Ask the group: who is the person who can make the decision that achieves the campaign goal? Be specific – named person and role. In some cases, may be more than one person eg if the whole Council needs to pass a resolution.

Write these names on separate post-it notes of the same colour and place on the 'decision-makers' poster paper

- Ask the group to quickly brainstorm names of organised stakeholders and influencers. Each name goes on a post-it note of a different colour to that used for decision-makers and stuck to relevant poster paper, or write straight onto poster paper
- Ask the group to consider the core constituencies – who are the people directly affected (eg parents of primary school aged children) who may not necessarily be organised.

Mapping the players

Taking each player at a time, ask the group where this player sits in terms of

- (a) influence over the decision
- (b) support for our goal

and place the relevant post-it note on the appropriate spot on the grid

This step should involve a lot of discussion and conversation – the aim is to share the knowledge in the room.

Note – don't get too stuck on exact placement of the players on the map – the focus is on the positions relative to each other rather than any 'right' or 'wrong' placement.

Identifying relationships

Have the group look at the power map and the placement of all the players. Ask people about any known links between any of the players, and draw lines between them to show the connection.

This helps identify potential avenues for the campaign group to reach decision makers indirectly and to influence the influencers.

Research questions

These will arise from the conversations taking place while trying to place each player on the map. Some examples of questions needing more research:

- Does this organisation have a view about our issue?
- Who are the key leaders in a named stakeholder organisation and what are their relationships with decision makers?
- Political factions or alliances of decision makers?

Analysis and strategy and next steps

Have the group look at the map and consider the following:

- Which people or groups influence the decision maker and support your issue? How can you involve them in your campaign?
- Think about your decision makers – what communities do they identify with? Where do they spend their time? How does your issue affect their electoral constituency? Are they subject to competing views or priorities?
- For key players – what is holding them back from adopting our ask or agreeing with our position?
- Are there people or groups who are influential in terms of power, who you should recruit as allies?
- For those groups or individuals where you have no direct relationship and who may be important to your campaign, how will you connect with them?
- Are there some players who are not of great relevance to your campaign (low in power, neutral position on your issue and not well connected to other stakeholders)?
- Are there 2-3 obvious spots on the map where your actions may have the greatest impact?

Strategy and action plan

Your campaign strategy will start to emerge and develop from this analysis of power around your issues:

- Who are the players key to our success?
- How can we influence the decision maker(s)?
- Who do we know that influences the decision maker, and how can we involve them in our strategy?
- For any of the players not already supportive, can we move them to be more supportive?
- How can we neutralise the impact of those with opposing views?
- How can we organise the people directly affected?

Next steps

- Assign people to find the answers to the research questions identified
- Develop a 'target table' that captures the essence of what is now known about each of the relevant key players and assign responsibility for actions

[Activist skills - Power mapping](#) You Tube video

[Real Food network, an example](#)