Organizer Skill-Building

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Movement Organizers of 20th Century

- Martin Luther King Jr.- civil rights
- Chief Justice Earl Warren- civil rights
- Rachel Carson- environmentalist
- Woodie Guthrie- anti-fascist
- Jackie Robinson-civil rights
- Thurgood Marshall- civil rights/ anti-segregation / defense of wrongly accused African-Americans
- Noam Chomsky- libertarian socialist
- Malcolm X- black power
- Cesar Chavez- farmworker’s rights & unions
- Delores Huerta- farmworker’s rights
- Harvey Milk- gay/LGBTQ
- Ralph Nader- environmentalist / consumer protections
- Gloria Steinem- women’s rights
- Gandhi- nonviolence / anti-colonial oppression
- Barack Obama- health care for all, strengthen social security & public education
Where does this information come from?

• PIRG- Public Interest Research Group
• Started 1971 to wage campaigns that would serve public good
• Example campaigns:
  • Register people to vote
  • Provide resources for hungry and homeless population
  • Support reforms to protect water, air, and environment generally
  • Textbook affordability

https://studentpirgs.org/
What’s my background?

• Presenter: Katie Koscielak
• Trained at UC Berkeley
• CalPIRG Climate Change Intern
• Campaigned for the passage of AB 32 (2006)
• Successfully lobbied student government for passage of Climate Action Resolution (2006)
• Campaigned for TGIF (2007)
• Current job: Sustainability Analyst/Coordinator at Humboldt State University
• Parlayed organizer skills to following campaigns/causes:
  • Resource Green: responsible hazardous waste disposal (light bulbs, batteries, mercury), elimination of Styrofoam and single use plastics, compost education
  • Napa Valley Film Festival
  • The Collective Sound
  • Portland Farmer’s Market
  • Redwood Coast Energy Authority
  • Master’s Thesis in Mexico City
    • If These Walls Could talk: Graffiti, Place and Culture in Iztapalapa, Distrito Federal, Mexico City
  • Zero Waste Humboldt Board President
• https://katiekos.weebly.com/
What is community organizing?

• Coordination and mobilization carried out to promote the interests of community
• Identifying people and structures that can make solutions possible
• Method of being organized and tactical to achieve results
• Keywords: Tactical, strategic, community

“Change won’t come from the top, I would say. Change will come from a mobilized grass roots.”

- Barack Obama, Dreams of My Father

“PUSH [People United for Sustainable Housing] isn’t just about making noise, its about having concrete goals and winning victories for people.”

—said about work of Aaron Bartley (Buffalo NY organizer, Harvard Grad)
Strategy

• Define your action strategy
• Evaluate the success of your strategy
  • What is the goal?
  • Is our strategy achieving results?
  • What’s working? What isn’t?
  • Is our group gaining support?
9 Rules of Community Organizing

1. Nobody’s going to come to the meeting unless they’ve got a reason to come to the meeting
2. Nobody’s going to come to a meeting unless they know about it
3. Make an ask! And do it with ample time before the deadline
4. New recruits need tasks, need to see behaviors modeled, need training
5. Anyone can be a leader
6. Sometimes winning is losing (Fight Win Fight Win Fight Lose Fight Harder)
7. Tactical strategies achieve results
8. It takes time to get things done
9. Celebrate & have fun (even if you’re not winning)
Today’s organizer methods

• Preparation & Initial methods:
  • Class Announcements
  • Phone Banking

• During the Campaign method:
  • Running a Meeting

• Outreach & Engagement methods:
  • Petitioning
  • News Conferences
  • Op-Eds & Letters to the Editor
Prep/Initial Methods:

• Discussion:

• When you are getting started on a campaign, what are some of the first steps?
Class Announcements

• Preparation
  • List of faculty- phone numbers, emails, class time
  • Course schedule
  • Plan 3-5 min presentation
  • Prioritize classes
  • Keep records of who you contact, who you present to
  • Email or utilize office hrs
  • Practice, come prepared, arrive early

• During
  • Write group name on board
  • Speak slowly, loudly, clearly, use eye contact
  • Don’t forget the ask!
  • Be yourself
  • Bring a new recruit

• After
  • Collect interest cards
  • Follow up!

• Example: Green Campus recruitment
Phone Banking

• Directed & personal communication
• Used for outreach, reminders, follow up, recruitment, contact lawmakers, etc
• The Obama campaign used phone banking as a #1 method
Phone Banking How To

• Prep
  • Know what you want
  • Call 1 day after initial encounter
  • Remind the person how you got their name
  • Ask whether it’s a good time to talk
  • Listen for interest
  • Describe your goal
  • Ask for commitment
  • Keep records of your contacts
  • Establish a rating system

• During
  • Have a plan (# of calls, # of hrs, # volunteers)
  • Borrow or arrange for phones
  • Sign up phone bankers as specific times
  • Make the event fun (food, competitions, etc)
  • Prioritize & organize the names of the people you are calling
  • Coordinators check in with phoners
  • Challenge volunteers to do more (volunteer again)
Focal point during campaign:

• Discussion:
• Why do we hold meetings?
Running Mtgs

• Answer Why do we hold meetings?: making group decisions, developing a plan, delegating responsibilities, building accountability & community

• Mtgs are not the best for: disseminating info without getting input, training individuals on particular skills, giving feedback to a particular person on their work

• Running effective mtgs are the MOST important part of a campaign!!
Running Mtgs

• Prep
  • Define goals
  • Prepare agenda
  • Develop list of attendees
  • Identify & coordinate with facilitators
  • Anticipate pitfalls
  • Plan to debrief
  • Figure out logistics- place, size, chairs, chalkboard, sign-in sheet, materials, duration, How will you ensure people will show up (reminder calls), follow up
Outreach/Engagement Methods:

• Discussion:

• What are some of the ways you’ve found out about campaigns you are currently involved in?
Petitioning

• Petitions are used for demonstrating support for your campaign

• Can be a way to: state grievances, organize a union, initiate/propose law, propose change to decision-makers, recruit, educate, create visibility, train volunteers

• Must be: well planned, concerted effort, establish specific timelines & numerical goals, strategized locations
Petitioning

PETITIONING DRIVE GOALS & SCHEDULE WORKSHEET

It is most effective to focus people’s energy on a short petition drive.

1. SET YOUR GOAL. If the goal is to show majority support for an issue, you need signatures from at least 51% of your campus.

   campus size   signature goal
   _______ X .51 = _______(round up)

The average petitioner can gather around 25 signatures per hour.

   signature goal   # of petitioning hours
   _______ / 25 = __________

2. SET YOUR SCHEDULE. You want to get half your signatures the first day and the remaining half over the next two days.

   DAY 1: signature goal   day signature goal
   _______ / 2 = _______

   DAY 2: signature goal   day signature goal
   _______ / 4 = _______

   DAY 3: signature goal   day signature goal
   _______ / 4 = _______

HELPFUL HINTS FOR PETITIONERS:

1. Approach people with a short, upbeat opening.
2. Make sure each person reads and understands the petition before signing it.
3. Answer questions concisely.
4. Get the address, telephone number, e-mail address, and other pertinent information from each signer so that you can follow up with supporters.
5. Identify enthusiastic signers to get involved in the campaign.
6. Hand out stickers to those who have signed so they won’t be approached again.
7. Be friendly, upbeat and confident in your approach.

MATERIALS NEEDED FOR A PETITION DRIVE

- petitions
- pens
- tracking forms for the number of petitions out, and the number of signatures turned in
News Conferences

• News conferences help generate attention

• Consider:
  • Are you releasing new info?
  • Are there good visuals?
  • Is there a local angle?

• Prep
  • Timing & deadlines,
  • Location: accessibility, crowds, noise, parking
  • Speakers: 2 wks ahead, other speakers, what they are going to say, 2-5 min time limit, quotable quotes, no notes!
  • News Advisory: 3 days ahead (who, what, where, when, why)
  • Remind Media
  • Keep records of all contact
News Conferences

• During-
  • Arrive early
  • Stage a greeter
  • Have a sign-in sheet
  • Do not start more than 5 min late
  • Introduce yourself
  • Keep things moving
  • Leave 15 min for questions
  • Stick around for interviews

• After-
  • Follow up: fax releases to people who didn’t show up
  • Call reporters who did come to answer questions, find out if they’ll use the story
  • Send thank you notes
  • Record all media hits, archive
Op-Eds & Letters to the Editor

- Editorial pieces in the opinion pages
- Get message out to a lot of people
- Builds the group by deepening name recognition & credibility
- Lawmakers often monitor opinion pages to get a feel for what their constituents want

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Los Angeles Times

Oil Drips With Money for Alaska

JOHN BALZAR

ANCHORAGE—Who wants to drill for oil in the far north of Alaska? Alaskans do. And do they ever.

More than the oil companies themselves, more than labor unions, more than Senator George W. Bush, Alaskans are desperate to get some fresh crude flowing out of the wilderness here. That's because there is a threat on the horizon. Doom is settling in like fog. The bears are restless in their den. Without new oil, goodness, Alaskans might be asked to pay taxes.

In the generation now, Alaskans have been living high off public lands and the royalties from offshore petroleum. Instead of having to pay state taxes, Alaskans get a juicy cash kickback every year from their governments. But the big North Slope oil fields are slowly drying up.

So, Alaska has dipped into its shrinking state treasury for money to mount the mother of all lobbying campaigns—nearly $8 million to try to convince other Americans and Congress that it's in the nation's best interests to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling so that Alaskans won't have to shoulder the yoke and actually pay for their schools and hospitals themselves.

For pure self-interest, Alaska beats even Enron in trying to shape government policy. In the last year, the state spent $1.35 million in its Arctic refuge drilling campaign and appropriated another $1 million last week.

By comparison, Enron spent $11 million lobbying in 2000 and $13 million the year before, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

I have been kicking around, writing about, planning and working in Alaska on and off for a dozen years now. I love this state and its people.

I also love to pull the fig leaf off their silly myths once in a while. Even though they roar like angry weasels every time.

For instance, you'll hear plenty about national energy independence in the debate over the Arctic refuge. But the real fight is Alaska's fight for money.

National energy independence? The last time we heard that argument was when federal lands in Prudhoe Bay, west of the refuge, were opened for drilling. Back then, Alaskans were promised that North Slope crude would lead the country to self-sufficiency.

Funny, but for the benefit of Alaskans who
Op-Eds & LTE’s

- Op Ed = longer (500-800 words)
- LTE = short

How to:
- For an Op-Ed- get a co-signer (big names help)
- Respond to something they’ve printed
- Find a hook- anecdote, question, provocative statement
- Show, don’t tell
- Back up assertions with fact
- Don’t overstate
- Show emotion
- Keep it to the point!
Activity & Debrief

• Which of these tactics were most appealing to you?

• What methods introduced today has your group used before?

• What methods introduced today has your group not used before?

• What methods might you be interested in using for current/future campaigns?
Questions?

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