

How to Create an Advocacy Campaign



An advocacy campaign is a strategic effort designed to influence public opinion, policy decisions, or actions on a particular issue. These campaigns aim to bring about change by raising awareness, mobilizing supporters, and applying pressure on key stakeholders, such as governments, corporations, or communities. Advocacy campaigns are often centered around social, environmental, economic, or political causes, and they typically involve a variety of communication and engagement tools like social media, public events, petitions, lobbying, and storytelling.

Why an Organization Should Create an Advocacy Campaign

- Advance a Mission or Cause
 - Advocacy campaigns align with an organization's mission and goals, helping to drive meaningful change on issues that are central to its work. For nonprofits or mission-driven entities, these campaigns amplify their impact.
- Raise Awareness
 - Advocacy campaigns help educate the public and stakeholders about critical issues that might otherwise be overlooked. Increased awareness often leads to greater support and engagement.
- Influence Policy and Decision-Making
 - By organizing and mobilizing supporters, an advocacy campaign can put pressure on policymakers, businesses, or other influential groups to enact or change laws, policies, or practices.
- Engage and Empower Stakeholders
 - Advocacy campaigns give individuals and communities a platform to voice their concerns and contribute to change, fostering a sense of empowerment and participation.

Why an Organization Should Create an Advocacy Campaign (Continued)

- Build Organizational Credibility and Visibility
 - Campaigns can position an organization as a leader or expert in its field, increasing its visibility and strengthening relationships with its audience, partners, and funders.
- Drive Social or Cultural Change
 - Advocacy campaigns can challenge norms, shift attitudes, and inspire collective action, leading to lasting change at a societal level.
- Attract Funding and Resources
 - Successful campaigns often attract donors, grants, and partnerships, as they demonstrate the organization's ability to achieve tangible results and mobilize people around a cause.

By creating a well-planned advocacy campaign, an organization can not only make progress on a pressing issue but also build stronger connections with its audience and partners, furthering its long-term mission.


Use the template below to create your advocacy campaign. Be as inclusive as possible when considering your problem, goals, audience and power.

1. REVIEW THE ORGANIZING SENTENCE:

On one piece of flipchart paper, write out your organizing sentence. Fill in the who and what purpose sections you drafted during the shared purpose exercise.

ORGANIZING SENTENCE: We are organizing (who)_____to pursue (what purpose) _____by (how: theory of change)_____to achieve (what objective) _____by (what date) _____.

*Bus boycott example: We are organizing African-Americans in Montgomery to achieve racial justice (or end institutionalized racism) by organizing a boycott of the buses to compel the bus company and city council to desegregate them for as long as it takes.




Now you will build a strategic goal based on an analysis of who your constituency is, what they want, and how they can get what they want. Follow the steps below.

- GETTING FOCUSED: WHO ARE YOUR PEOPLE? WHAT IS YOUR GOAL?

Step 1: With your team, fill in the table below:

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Step 2: Review criteria for a good strategic goal

- Focuses effort
 - Motivates participation
- 

- Leverages resources
- Builds capacity
- Can be emulated

Step 3: Decide on a Strategic Goal

What concrete outcome will you aim to achieve that will help your constituents get what they want? First openly brainstorm and build upon each idea, then use your criteria above to evaluate them, and make a decision.

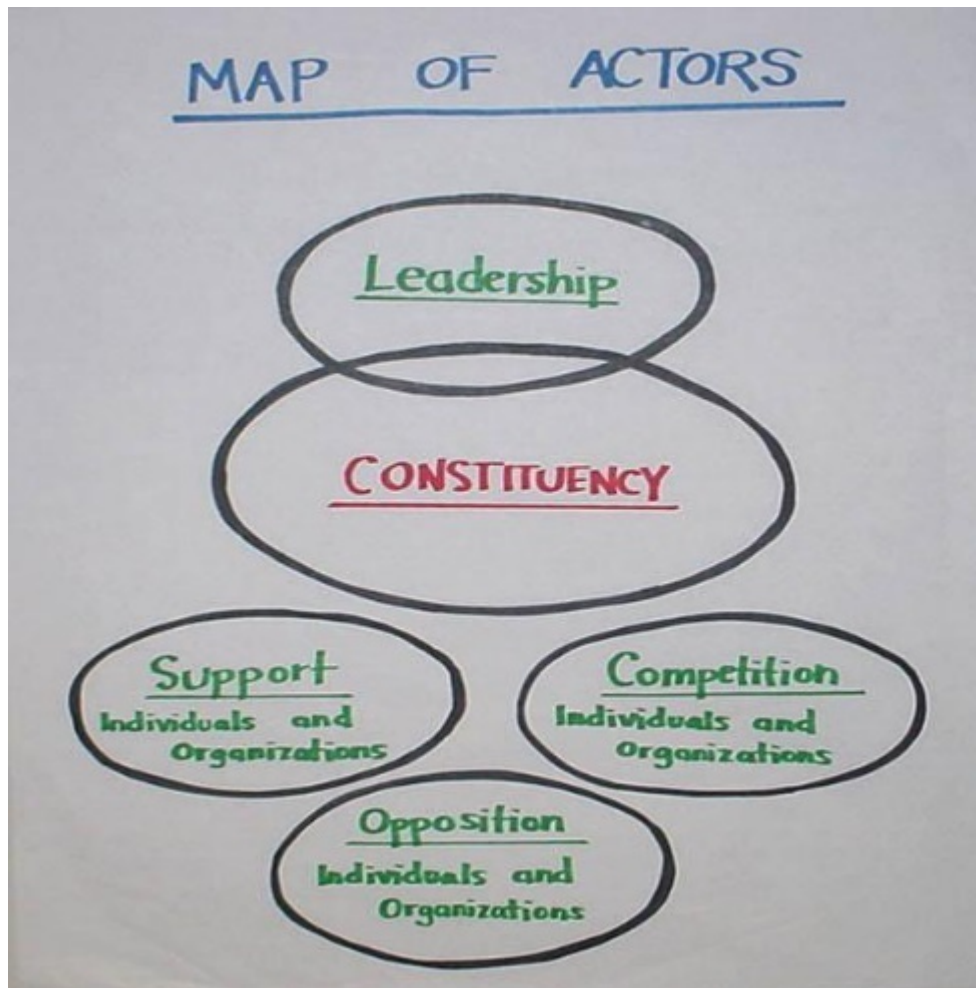
What is the goal of your campaign?

- WHO ARE THE ACTORS

Step 1: Create the map

Draw a map-of-actors chart like the one you see below on flipchart paper. Write the names of all of the actors on sticky notes, indicating their resources and their interests. Then place them on the map of actors where you think they are most likely to be. Start with yourselves. Use what you learned from building relationships to fill this out. Brainstorm other actors involved in your efforts, at local, state, and national levels by name or specific position wherever possible. Put these names on post-its and add them to the map. Include the following:

- - Who might be members of your constituency?
 - Who might be your opposition?
 - Who might be your allies?
 - Who might be competitors and collaborators?
 - Who might play other key roles, depending on how they are mobilized (courts, press, voters, etc.)?



- WHERE'S THE POWER? DEVELOPING YOUR THEORY OF CHANGE

Your theory of change is your hypothesis about how to organize your constituents' resources to affect those who hold the resources/power to solve the problem. What would it take to get these different actors to take actions that further your strategic goal? At what point will they actually feel your constituents' power? Which candidates do you need to develop, support, and/or hold accountable?

Think back to your goal, above: Who holds the resources and decision-making power needed to achieve that goal?

Fill in the corresponding table below:

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the resources
to achieve the goal,
complete the following:

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- REVIEW YOUR WORK, SUMMARIZE, VISUALIZE:
- Review your team's work so far in this section and discuss these questions:
 - Are we clear on our constituency?
 - Do we want to specify our goal more concretely?
 - Are we clear about our theory of change?

On two pieces of flipchart paper, write out the following:

2. Write out your organizing sentence.

ORGANIZING SENTENCE: We are organizing (who)_____to pursue (what

purpose) _____ by (how: theory of change) _____ to
achieve (what objective) _____ by (what
date) _____.

*Bus boycott example: We are organizing African Americans in Montgomery to achieve racial justice by organizing a boycott of the busses to compel the bus company and city council to desegregate them for as long as it takes.

- - Draw a picture of your strategic goal. What would the world look like if you achieved it?