

THE NINE BUILDING BLOCKS OF AN EVIDENCE-BASED CAMPAIGN PLAN



When it comes to running a campaign that will build power, persuade targets, and win, the first and most important step is to design for success. Here are nine essential considerations for how to design a campaign plan that “considers the evidence” at each step of the planning process. And remember: it’s not a plan unless it’s written down!



VISION AND VALUES

Envision about the world you want to bring into being. Then consider formalizing that into a **vision statement** to which you can refer to keep from being pulled off-course. Break down that vision into the beliefs and values that will guide your work, and make your assumptions and values explicit in order to build commitment and alignment throughout your campaign.



LAY OF THE LAND

Thoroughly describe the existing conditions and context facing your campaign: what is currently known about your issue, how has the issue evolved over time, which constituencies are affected, what kind of opposition are you likely to face, what sorts of resources (supporters, relationships, material, etc.) can you draw on to **build power**, and what has been attempted in the past? In doing so, consider opportunities to build greater support for your issue through increased human and financial resources and deeper relationships.



GOALS, OUTCOMES, AND THEORY OF CHANGE

Now that you understand the issue environment you’re going into, determine the appropriate goals and outcomes that are feasible given your available (or foreseeable) resources. From there, clearly identify the **theory of change** your campaign will operate under: why and how completing certain actions should produce certain desired outcomes.



TARGET SELECTION

Your strategy will depend in large part on the target around which your campaign is oriented. Remember that your target should be an individual who has the power to deliver or deny you a victory, while your opponents are those who are actively working to prevent you from getting what you want. To select the correct target for your campaign, take into account the resources you can bring to bear and contextual factors like electoral and/or political conditions, local impacts, preferred venues, and time horizons. The target of your campaign is almost always a person, not a company or a government body.



INTEGRATING EQUITY

While your campaign is likely designed to make the world better in some way, it is just as important to build in **principles of equity and justice** from the very beginning of the planning process. That means considering who is included in crafting solutions and making decisions, who is intended to benefit, and who might be negatively impacted (even inadvertently). While not an exhaustive solution in itself, following the **Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing** is a good start to ensure your practices are equitable and not transactional.



TACTICS TO BUILD POWER AND SCALE

Consider how you will influence and pressure your target to provide you with what you want. Take stock of what they are sensitive to. If they are receptive to direct lobbying, step up your **policy maker contact** game. If they are responsive to constituent pressure, show them your power to turn supporters out for town halls, rallies, and mass mobilizations. See also our tipsheet on encouraging supporters to **take meaningful actions**.



COMMUNICATIONS AND MESSAGING

Developing a strong **communications strategy** depends on understanding and aligning your audience(s), your message(s), your **messenger(s)**, your mode(s) of contact, and your ask(s). In other words, framing is powerful but it's not magic – you have to put all the pieces together for your communications to be effective. For further guidance on designing effective communications programs, check out our tipsheet on **communicating on climate**.



EXPERIMENTATION

Too often, we make important decisions according to gut instincts or because “that’s the way we’ve always done it” without consideration to whether there are better ways of doing things. We encourage all advocates to try new things – as long as they’re coming from some grounding in (lowercase-t) theory. To see what sorts of experiments advocates have tried out and learned from in the past, review **those tags** in our Resource Library.



EVALUATION AND ITERATION

The only way we grow as individuals and as a movement is if we take the time to measure and evaluate the impact of our work. Think about ways you can measure your campaign’s effectiveness in quantitative and qualitative terms. Were you able to remain accountable to your stakeholders and supporters? What worked well and what would you do differently next time? And, importantly, where and with whom will you share your insights and lessons learned? (Hint: you can always **reach out to the Lab!**)

