The Art and Science of Organizing

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For the Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment

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WHAT IS AN ORGANIZER?

LABOR ORGANIZING

Proud to be Union
COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

IDENTITY GROUP ORGANIZING
An organizer is someone who leads from behind.

Organizers help those people being organized to take leadership and speak up for their own interests.
Cesar Chavez

Broader Definition

Any attempt by an organization to mobilize large numbers of volunteers to change the world in some way.
**BROADER DEFINITION**

Any attempt by an organization to use large numbers of volunteers to change the world in some way.

**DOES EVERY GROUP ORGANIZE?**

- **EARTHJUSTICE**
  - Because the earth needs a good lawyer

- Society for Conservation Biology
Why Organize?

- To get more stuff done
- To build power
- To generate leaders

Get More Stuff Done

- 1 person x 1 hour = 1 unit of activity
- 1 person x 1 hour recruits 1 volunteer
- Leading 1 volunteer to spend 3 hours
- 1 hour has been transformed into 3 hours
BUILD POWER

GENERATE LEADERS

- Leaders for your organization
- Leaders for your movement
IT WORKS LOCALLY TOO!

MISSION v. CAMPAIGN
ORGANIZING
CAMPAIGN ORGANIZING

- An effort aimed to influence a future public decision.
- Clear point at which you’ll know if you’ve won or lost.
- Defined time period.
- A subset of what the organization does.

MOST COMMON CAMPAIGNS

- Candidate or ballot measure
- Legislative or city/county
- Executive or agency action
- Corporate campaigns
Focus on building strength and efficacy of the organization and movement.
# Key Campaign Tactics

- Campaign plan
- Centralized responsibility
- Clear tasks for volunteers
- Shorter conversations
- Little leadership development

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<tr>
<th>Campaign Tactics</th>
<th>Mission Tactics</th>
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<td>- Strategic plan</td>
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“With great power comes great responsibility.”
“You must give your volunteers power, if you want them to take responsibility.”

**WHEN FOCUS ON CAMPAIGNS?**

- Decision of consequence
- Clear decision-makers
- To demonstrate political power
- Need to align your energy
### When Mission Organizing?

- When you have no campaigns!

### When Mission Organizing?

- When future victories depend upon building more support
- When leadership development is critical
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**Reflect in Pairs**

What are examples of organizing that your organization has done?

Has it been predominantly campaign or mission organizing?
### Organizer as Artist

- intuitive/good instincts
- inspirational
- visionary
- observant/aware
- creative
- an active listener
- passionate
- curious
- persistent
- a good communicator
- driven/has stamina
- patient
- loves people
- irreverent
- humorous
- empathetic
- adaptable
- imaginative
- resourceful

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### Organizer as Scientist

- Analytical
- A good researcher
- Disciplined
- A lifelong learner
- Results oriented
- Detail oriented
- A good time manager
- Strategic
- Strong on follow-up
- Well organized
- Keeps good records
- Focused on data
- Follows best practices
- Accountable
- Understands power & how to analyze it
REFLECTION

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF ORGANIZING
ORGANIZING AS ART

- Vision
- Leadership
- Magic of One-on-Ones
VISION

- **Oxfam**: A just world without poverty (5 words)
- **Habitat for Humanity**: A world where everyone has a decent place to live. (10)
- **The Nature Conservancy**: Our vision is to leave a sustainable world for future generations. (11)
- **Smithsonian**: Shaping the future by preserving our heritage, discovering new knowledge, and sharing our resources with the world (17)

MUST BE AT LEAST PARTLY POSITIVE

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<th>Against toxics</th>
<th>For health</th>
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<td>Fight threatening development</td>
<td>For neighborhoods where families can thrive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Against irresponsible timber harvests</td>
<td>For a community where people and wildlife can flourish together</td>
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“We Believe....”
Leadership is . . . “the ability to have others willingly follow.”
5 EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

1. Model the way
2. Inspire a shared vision
3. Challenge the process
4. Enable others to act
5. Encourage the heart.

ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS
Task-Focused
○ We talk, they listen
○ Use the mouth
○ Present our ideas/program
○ Takes your energy
○ Involves selling/lobbying
○ People work together only on tasks

Relationships-focused:
○ We listen, they talk
○ Use the ears
○ Find out their ideas and concerns
○ Builds on their energy
○ Involves thinking through
○ People develop a fuller relationship

BOTTOM LINE . . .
Relationship focused organizing requires a healthy diet of one-on-one meetings between those being organized and those doing the organizing.
AND THE RESULTS

REFLECTION
### ORGANIZING AS SCIENCE

- Data driven
- Efficient in the use of time
- Understands power
**Volunteer Plan Example**

Original plan: 2 shifts per day of 4 hours x 5 days = 10 volunteers

Second plan: 4 shifts per day of 2 hours x 5 days = 20 volunteers

Third plan: 2 people per 4 shifts/day of 2 hours x 5 days = 40 volunteers

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**Where Find My 40 Volunteers?**

- How many people to ask for every yes – past data said 5, therefore 200 calls.
- But wait – that’s 200 conversations. Data at the time said you needed to call 500 names to get 200 conversations.

Suddenly it no longer seemed a priority to table at the county fair!
your mileage may vary

EFFICIENT USE OF TIME

Three resources:
- Money
- People
- Time
EFFICIENT USE OF TIME

Three resources:
- Money
- People
- Time

UNDERSTANDS POWER

- Not naïve about how public officials make decisions.
- Sometimes it’s a reasoned decision based on the facts . . .
- But on controversial issues, it’s almost always based on other factors.
CHALLENGES FOR SMALLER ORGANIZATIONS

- Data
- Time

DATA TOOLS FOR SMALL ORGANIZATIONS

- Online CMS increasingly affordable, in reach for organizations with $25,000 budgets.
- If not, google’s suite of tools from Sheets to Forms makes it easier to collect and keep track of data online.
- Challenge: commitment of organizers to keep and track data on volunteers.
TIME

- Avoid the social media drain
- Plan out large blocks of time
- Delegate whenever you can

REFLECTION
ORGANIZING WITH A CAMPAIGN MENTALITY

A CAMPAIGN MENTALITY MEANS

- Clarity about which campaigns to take on.
- Apply campaign concepts beyond just campaigns.
- Adjust your work to your particular lay of the land.
CHOOSING THE RIGHT CAMPAIGN

- Will it have a significant mission-related impact?
- Is it winnable?
- Will it excite our base?
- Will it strengthen our coalitions?

CONCEPTS FOR CAMPAIGNS

- Campaign plans
- Votes to win
- Targeting
- Powermappings
**Campaign Plans**

- Follow the 10% rule
- Planning saves you time in the long run
- Plan gives the team confidence

**Votes to Win**

Outside of campaigns

- “We’ll know we’ve won if . . . “
- “We’ll know we’ve been successful if . . .”
TARGETING

| Ours | Undecided | Theirs |

NOT ALL UNDECIDEDS ARE THE SAME

- Engaged publicly, but sees both sides.
- Unaware, but likely to pick sides quickly once they become aware.
- Disengaged entirely from thinking about the issue.
IN GENERAL YOUR CAMPAIGN SHOULD

- Build and generate turnout or activity by “ours.”
- Some percentage of whom become volunteer.
- And use those in the “Ours” camp to
  - Help move some undecideds into ours.
  - Help more of “ours” become volunteers.
### POWERMAPPING

1. Identify people or institutions of influence
2. Identify connections among them.
3. Identify allies not yet on the map who can influence the influencers
4. Analyze the map. Look for the most promising pathways.

### YOUR LAY OF THE LAND MATTERS

- Every organization faces a unique lay of the land based on where it’s focused and the issues it’s addressing.
- There are no one-size-fits all solutions.
**QUESTION FOR PAIRS/TRIADS:**

- What are the biggest differences in the challenge posed by organizing in urban, suburban, and rural settings?
- What are some practical steps you can take to address those challenges?

**URBAN CAMPAIGNS**

- Tend to have more “Ours” on the issues progressives work on.
- But it takes a lot more people to be seen as powerful.
- Ton of competition for attention.
**SUBURBAN CAMPAIGNS**

- Fewer who pay attention to local elected officials
- A generally supportive, but somewhat less engaged public – except on issues that impact them directly.

**RURAL CAMPAIGNS**

- More strident opposition to what groups in this room normally advocate.
- More likely opposition – if there is opposition -- holds the real power.
- Personal relationships are even more important.
- More attention paid to local media.
WHY ORGANIZE?

- To get more stuff done
- To build power
- To generate leaders

AVOIDING BURNOUT

- Recruit, recruit, recruit, so you can delegate, delegate, delegate
- Give up power so others can take on responsibility.
- Take time to experience what you’re protecting.
- Celebrate successes.
ACTION PLANNING

EVALUATION FORM
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