

THE STRATEGIC CAMPAIGN FOR CHANGE



SOUND PLANNING AND EFFECTIVE NEGOTIATION

We all want to live in a community where the animals are safe and protected. Unfortunately, many of us don't. It is up to us to initiate a campaign to change and prevent harmful and outdated policies.

There are four primary stages to initiating a strategic campaign for change:

- PLANNING** **RESPONDING** **NEGOTIATING** **CONFRONTING**

These stages are not mutually exclusive. You may find yourself responding to a crisis before you have completed the planning stage. You will probably bounce back and forth between confrontational actions and negotiations. This is normal.

PLANNING

Whether you are initiating a campaign for change or responding to a crisis, it is easier to organize people if they are already organized. **Don't wait until a crisis occurs!**

DECIDE WHICH ISSUES YOU WANT TO FOCUS ON.

No matter how hard we try, we simply can't change every negative animal-related policy. Your new group may be bursting with enthusiasm, energy, knowledge and experience. Unfortunately, if you commit to a variety of animal issues you may find yourselves spread too thin to be effective. It is better to organize around one issue, which can be defined broadly enough to allow for sustainability.

GATHER THE FACTS.

Gather statistics, anecdotes, scientific studies, guidelines, reports from similar groups and other current information. Public officials may be particularly interested in information about local efforts. For example, if you are humanely managing a feral cat colony and you are not keeping accurate colony tracking sheets, now is the time to start.

501(c)(3) NONPROFIT STATUS.

If you are organizing a new group, you will want to consider forming a 501(c)(3). A 501(c)(3) is an IRS designation for tax exempt nonprofit organizations. Some people are concerned that this is time consuming and confusing, but the benefits outweigh any initial difficulties that may be involved. In addition to increased legitimacy, gifts to nonprofit groups are tax deductible, which may encourage larger donations.

CONSIDER FORMING OR JOINING A COALITION.

A coalition can be a formal or informal group that is organized around a particular issue. Coalitions can be temporary (i.e., formed around a particular event) or permanent. Gather information about like-minded

Should we join a coalition?

Pros: *combines resources, may increase momentum, larger group of people to activate for events*

Cons: *infighting, delays, disagreement about tactics, increased bureaucracy*

local, state and national groups through phone books, websites and word of mouth. Even if you decide not to participate in a coalition, you now have an excellent list of groups that you may refer to in the future.

IDENTIFY YOUR MEMBERS' TALENTS.

Find out what your members can bring to the group. Members may be willing to speak publicly, design a website, provide accounting services or bake brownies for a meeting.

LOOK FOR FREE RESOURCES.

Sometimes local businesses are willing to provide free or low-cost copying, office supplies or other resources

that you may need. Some companies offer free or low cost website hosting to nonprofit groups.

GATHER EXPERT ENDORSEMENTS AND SUPPORT.

It is very helpful to have local veterinarians, animal control and other prominent people support your organization. They may become members, agree to write letters on your behalf or speak to others in their profession. Be careful not to demand too much of them—they probably will not have time to write letters, speak or trek to City Hall on a weekly basis.

HAVE A RESPONSE NETWORK IN PLACE.

Whatever form your group takes, you will need to have accurate contact information for members, supporters and like-minded groups. It is essential to have internet access. Your group should have an e-mail address from which you can send actions alerts, updates and requests. You may still need a phone tree, but a listserve or a list of e-mail addresses is a much more efficient method of disseminating information.

GET INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

In addition to getting to know people you may eventually need to meet with, you will gain valuable insights into your community. You will learn who

really holds the power, who you absolutely should not approach on animal issues or why you should never

Q. *Help! How do I use the internet?*

A. *Your local library probably has an internet connection that you can use for free. The librarian may be able to offer basic assistance. Check out books on using the internet (see suggested reading list). Internet and website design classes are often offered through adult education programs. If you have, or know, teenagers, ask them for help.*

ask for a meeting with the mayor on Monday. Also, you may be able to preemptively influence officials and avoid any potential crisis!

START A MEDIA CONTACT LIST.

Gather names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses for local and national newspapers, radio and television stations. Highlight known animal friendly journalists and editors. Find out how your organization can publish meetings and announcements in your local paper.

SUGGESTED READING

Bobo, Kim. *Organizing for Social Change: Midwest Academy Manual for Activists*. Seven Locks Press, 2001. An indispensable, hands-on manual for activists. Important chapters for planning include Chapter 9 ("Building and Joining Coalitions") and Chapter 24 ("Financial and Legal Matters").

Brown, Bonney. "Starting a Nonprofit Organization to Help the Animals." 1999. Distributed by Alley Cat Allies.

Brown, Bonney. "Grassroots Organizing to Help Feral Cats." 1997. Distributed by Alley Cat Allies.

Charity.com (www.charity.com/resources). This website provides easy to understand information about forming nonprofit groups in the United States and Canada, in addition to general information for nonprofits.

Complete Idiots Guide to the Internet. Que Publishers, 2001.

Global neighborhood (www.orgsites.com/). Free websites, newsbars and directory listings for your nonprofit group.

Internal Revenue Service (www.irs.gov/charities). Call 1-800-829-1040 to order forms or receive other information. The IRS site contains tax information for nonprofits. There are downloadable forms and surprisingly easy to understand guidelines.

Law for All (www.nolo.com). Nolo's mission is to "make the legal system work for everyone—not just lawyers." From the homepage sidebar, choose "Small Business," then "Nonprofit Corporation" for current, comprehensive information on forming and operating a 501(c)(3).

Levine, John (ed). *Internet All in One Desk Reference for Dummies* (John Wiley and Sons, 2000).

Manusco, Anthony. *How to Form a Nonprofit Corporation* (National Edition). Nolo Press, 2002. This book, in its fifth edition, offers details about preparing articles of incorporation, bylaws and line-by-line assistance in filling out the IRS form for tax exempt status.

The Nonprofit Zone: Helping You Change Lives (www.nonprofitzone.com). Provides a number of free and reduced fee services, including website hosting and development.

"Strategic Communication in the Digital Age." www.benton.org/practice/toolkit. Comprehensive planning information for people who are not afraid of using computers!

Alley Cat Allies • 7920 NORFOLK AVENUE, SUITE 600 • BETHESDA, MD 20814-2525

ALLEYCAT@ALLEYCAT.ORG • WWW.ALLEYCAT.ORG

©2005, Alley Cat Allies

RESPONDING

Now that you are organized, your initial response to a local crisis should not be that difficult!

GATHER THE FACTS (AGAIN).

When you hear that there is a crisis in your area, gather all of the information you possibly can using this classic model. You need to have basic information, but don't get bogged down in details while animals are being harmed or killed.

- ❑ **Who?** Who, if anyone, takes care of the cats? Who decided they should be removed? How many cats are involved? Are any groups already involved with this situation?
- ❑ **What?** What exactly happened? Is there anything available in writing (a citation, order, contract, etc.)? Have any cats been removed? Killed? The "what" is the basic facts of the situation.
- ❑ **When?** Try to prepare a timeline of the situation, making it as specific as possible. This will not only help you stay organized but may allow you to connect events as you find out more ("Hmmm, on June 10 a new head lifeguard was hired and on June 13 an announcement was made that all feral cats would be trapped and removed from the beach.") Don't assume things are connected: perhaps a trap and remove policy had been discussed by beach management for months before the new policy was announced.
- ❑ **Where?** Where is the crisis occurring and who will it affect? A neighborhood? A state? This will help you decide who to alert about the crisis.
- ❑ **Why?** You will never figure out why people do the things they do, but you may be able to find a little insight into a particular decision. Was the landlord's daughter scratched by a cat? Did an opposing group meet with your city council? Or maybe a cat walked across the hood of a car, which was the last straw.

KNOW YOUR ENEMY (AND KNOW THEY PROBABLY AREN'T REALLY YOUR ENEMY).

People often make decisions based on no or bad information. They may not really be against nonlethal population control—they may have just never heard of it. Or a friend of a friend provided them with a tidbit of information about the dangers of feral cats

STATE YOUR DESIRED OUTCOME IN POSITIVE TERMS:

Clark County will allow a managed feral cat colony to exist in Main Street Park.

NAME ONE OR TWO KEY DECISION MAKERS:

Patty Parks, Park Service Director

LIST EACH STEP YOU NEED TO TAKE:

Write a letter to Patty Parks

DESCRIBE THE PURPOSE FOR THE TASK:

To request a meeting

SET A TIME FRAME FOR THE TASK:

Letter will be mailed June 1

ASSIGN THE TASK:

Amy Activist will write a press release.

and rabies. Find out what they know and how they reached their decision. "Dealing" with the crisis may be as simple as providing the decision maker with the truth!

IDENTIFY KEY PEOPLE AND AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS (ANIMAL CONTROL, ELECTED OFFICIALS, PUBLIC HEALTH, ETC).

Review the agency structure, responsibilities and previous policy decisions. Talk to people who have participated in similar campaigns before and find out who really holds the power and who has the ability to influence those people. Narrow your list of decision makers down to one or two key people on whom you will focus your attention.

REQUEST A MEETING.

Send a letter, preferably certified, asking to meet with the key decision maker. Ask for a response by a specific date, and give her time to respond. If she does not respond, follow up with a phone call. She may have been too busy to call you or assumed that you would just give up.

DOCUMENT YOUR EFFORTS WHILE TRYING TO SET UP A MEETING.

Keep copies of letters and write down the dates and times that you leave telephone messages. If she will not meet with you, the situation may require confrontation.

DON'T LET ANYONE MINIMIZE YOUR CONCERNS.

In an attempt to wear you down, you may be passed from one person to the next or told you can meet with a lower level official. Do not agree to meet with someone who doesn't have decision making power.

DEVELOP YOUR WRITTEN STRATEGIC PLAN.

You already have most of the information you need to develop your plan; now organize it.

SUGGESTED READING

Bobo, Kim. *Organizing for Social Change: Midwest Academy Manual for Activists*. Seven Locks Press, 2001. See Chapter 4 ("Developing a Strategy").

MacEachern, Diane. *Enough is Enough: The Hellraiser's Guide to Community Activism*. Avon Books, 1994. Chapters 1 ("Getting Started") and 2 ("Developing Your Strategy") both contain easy to understand guidelines on strategy development.

NEGOTIATING

If you are granted a meeting, you will enter into negotiations with the decision maker. Negotiation is when two or more parties find common ground on issues and each gives something up in the process. Your goal is to minimize what you "give away" without risking the lives of any animals.

Before the meeting...

SUMMARIZE THE FACTS.

Do not go into a meeting with hundreds of pages of information. Rather, bring a one page summary of current information. You may also bring a limited amount of organized, factual information that the official can read after your meeting.

REMEMBER THAT APPEARANCE MATTERS.

You may think your "Cats are Cool" sweatshirt is really cute and it probably is—but if you wear it you will not be taken seriously. Dress professionally.

KNOW WHAT YOU WANT.

Are you asking for a moratorium on a new policy? A pilot program? Money for a spay/neuter clinic? Be

specific about what you want and have a written plan for how you will implement your proposal.

CHOOSE REPRESENTATIVES.

Choose two well-spoken, credible people from your group to attend the meeting. One will take primary responsibility for speaking and one will take detailed notes. Do not send someone who will become overly emotional (e.g., if a caretaker recently had many of the feral cats in her colony killed, she should not attend the meeting). If you will be meeting with several people, it is appropriate to send more than two people from your group. Each person should have a designated role ("Charlie will give an overview of the program; Chloe will share our most recent statistics...").

During the meeting...

DON'T DEMONIZE THE PERSON YOU ARE NEGOTIATING WITH.

She is not evil. She is probably not an "animal hater." She may be ignorant about the facts but that doesn't make her a bad person.

LISTEN! LISTEN! LISTEN!

The decision maker may have some legitimate concerns or may agree with you on many points. Listen carefully to what she has to say.

ASK FOR WHAT YOU WANT.

This may seem obvious, but we can sometimes be so afraid of rejection that we offer a watered down version of what we really want. Unfortunately, this does not leave any room for compromise. After being pre-

sented with the facts and asking for what you want, they may be so impressed that they immediately accept your proposal. This will probably not be the case, but telling them from the outset precisely what you would like to see happen will set the stage for the negotiating process.

POINT OUT COMMON GOALS.

Use phrases such as "We share your goal to..." or "We agree that..." Common goals could include reduced nuisance calls or higher adoption rates.

EXPLAIN THE PROGRAM'S BENEFITS IN TERMS THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO THEM.

Your main (or only) goal may be to save animals' lives. To them, the most important issue may be

money. If it is an election year, they may be concerned about their image. Point out facts that matter to them (e.g., this program is less expensive or this will generate positive media coverage).

BE PREPARED TO COMPROMISE.

Remember, negotiating involves giving something up! Your proposal may be for a city funded non-lethal feral cat management program. The official may like the idea, but she tells you that their contract with animal control does not leave any money

Q. *How do I compromise without risking animals lives?*

A. *These guidelines should help.*

- Set your demands high enough that you can afford to give something up.*
- Decide which parts of your plan are non-negotiable and don't even consider discussing them.*
- Don't reveal your "negotiable" items or you may be asked to forfeit all of them.*
- Even if you expect that you will have to compromise on a particular issue, do not give it up without first making your case for why it is included in your plan.*

left in the budget to fund your proposal. Tell her that your group will perform the service and pay the spay/neuter bills for the first fiscal year. At the end of the year, armed with statistics on reduced euthanasia rates and reduced cat nuisance calls, go back to your contact person and renegotiate your plan.

DO NOT GET EMOTIONAL.

You may feel angry or sad or frustrated, but be careful about expressing these emotions because you may destroy your credibility. Be equally as careful about expressing extreme joy. ("I am so happy; I thought you would never accept this proposal!") Remain even-tempered and calm. If you find your emotions taking over, ask for a break or a drink of water.

BE REALISTIC.

Don't agree to something you can't do. If you are asked to provide a 24-hour response team to all incoming cat calls and you know this isn't necessary or possible, don't agree! You may be asked to do something as part of a compromise. ("We will pay for all spay/neuter services, if your organization will agree to provide a 24-hour response team.") In this case, you may ask for time to talk to reach a decision with the rest of your group.

DON'T FALL FOR DIVERSIONARY TACTICS.

The official may offer to "study" the proposal or say she needs more information. She may set you up for failure by agreeing to your proposal if you agree to a set of impossible guidelines. The meeting could turn into a long discussion about peripheral issues. Don't let this happen! Redirect the discussion.

USE SOUND BITES.

Repeat brief, memorable statements in response to questions and at other times as appropriate.

BE PREPARED TO ADDRESS TOUGH QUESTIONS.

It is not important, or even possible, to have the answers to every question (people often say there are two sides to every argument—actually, there are probably 42 sides to every argument). Don't respond to every part of every question. Don't pretend to know answers when you don't. When necessary, offer to mail them factsheets or articles about their concerns.

REMAIN OPTIMISTIC.

Focus on what you want to happen. Use positive words such as "clearly," "obviously," and "evidently."

GET IT IN WRITING.

If an agreement is reached on implementing your proposal, or any part of it, get it in writing. If you agree to continue the conversation at another time, get it in writing. If the official tells you that she is not the right person to make this decision, get it in writing. Basically, if it is important, get it in writing.

ASK FOR ANOTHER MEETING.

This is particularly important if no agreement is reached or there are still major areas of contention. Even if all the details of the situation are resolved in your favor, it is important to continue the relationship.

After the meeting...

CONTINUE CONTACT.

Whether or not another meeting is scheduled, it is important to continue communicating with your contact person. The first and most important task you have is to send a thank you. Also, send a thank you to anyone who may have been particularly helpful in setting up the meeting (her assistant?). She is probably very busy and may be annoyed by frequent contact. Depending on the situation, you may want to send written monthly or bimonthly updates or reports via regular mail or e-mail, followed by occasional phone calls.

PUBLICIZE THE OUTCOME.

You may want to send a press release, a letter to the editor or otherwise publicize your agreement. This can be framed as a thank you to the public official or as a victory announcement. It may also be an announcement that negotiations were unsuccessful. Either way, it can serve to bring attention to the issue, mobilize new supporters and energize current group members.

SUGGESTED READING

Bobo, Kim. *Organizing for Social Change: Midwest Academy Manual for Activists*. Seven Locks Press, 2001. See Chapter 12 ("Planning and Facilitating Meetings").

Fisher, Roger (ed). *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. Penguin USA, 1991.

Homan, Mark. *Promoting Community Change: Making it Happen in the Real World*. Brooks/Cole Publishing, 1994. Chapter 12 ("Taking Action—Strategies and Tactics") has a section on negotiating skills and considerations.

Negotiating with Others (www.mapnp.org/library/intrpsnl/negotate.htm). Links to articles about negotiating.

CONFRONTING

This is probably what most people think of when they imagine effecting positive change, but it is not always necessary or helpful. Confrontation can be difficult to maintain, may tax resources and can result in a negative perception of your group. Nevertheless, if no one will meet with you, meetings are unsuccessful or the issue needs to be broadcast to a larger audience, confrontation may be necessary.

ACTION GUIDELINES

Actions can be positive and subtle (a community walk) or loud and confrontational (demonstrations). The primary goal of an action is to encourage a decision maker to meet with you to engage in negotiations.

- Stay focused on your goal.** If you need to meet with Senator Smith, plan your actions to move your group towards that meeting.
- Know your limits.** Only plan on taking actions that your group has the resources (including time, money and energy) to sustain until the stated goal is reached.
- Keep track of media coverage.** Keep your original media list updated by adding new media outlets and continuing to note animal friendly reporters. Remember that the media work on strict deadlines so return their calls immediately. Prepare a media kit (press release, factsheet, supporting documents, background info, pictures).
- Do not allow enthusiasm to destroy sound planning.** Enthusiastic supporters may want to block the street that Mayor Johnson takes to work every day. If this will only anger Mayor Johnson or if Mayor Johnson has no decision making power on this issue then don't block the street!

ACTION ALERTS

- Purposes:* increase enthusiasm among supporters by allowing individuals to have a role in achieving your goals, overwhelm an individual or office with mail or phone calls, demonstrate to officials that there are a large number of people supporting your goal
- Guidelines:* request a specific action (telephone calls, letters, local meetings, etc.), target alert recipients who are most likely to take action, send accurate information

DEMONSTRATIONS

- Purposes:* get media attention, attract more supporters, draw attention to a particular action, embarrass an agency or official
- Guidelines:* see if permits are required, prepare posters and leaflets to hand to people, don't argue with counter-protesters, don't be rude to people walking by, expect some negative response

DISRUPTIVE TACTICS (flood phone lines with calls, attempt to crash computers with mass e-mail, organize boycotts or sit-ins, demonstrate without a permit)

- Purposes:* disrupt business as usual, force people to meet with your side in order to stop disruption, draw attention to your issue
- Guidelines:* need critical mass of people who are able to sustain the disruption as long as necessary, might bring negative attention to the issue

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

- Purposes:* increase number of supporters, generate sympathy with personal story
- Guidelines:* be brief, catchy, factual; don't exaggerate; don't be overly emotional; be specific

LETTERS FROM YOUR GROUP TO KEY DECISION MAKERS

- Purposes:* provide factual information, establish credibility
- Guidelines:* be brief, specific; use appropriate titles

LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN

- Purposes:* demonstrate that people are paying attention to this event or issue, overwhelm an office with mail

- Guidelines:* sample letters might simply be repeated by supporters and might be disregarded; suggest themes and encourage individual stories

MEETINGS

- Purposes:* gather support, inform people about the issues, organize other events, maintain accountability to supporters
- Guidelines:* have a written agenda that includes time limits on speakers, schedule the meeting at a time that suits the most people, choose a convenient location, consider having childcare available, choose venue accessible by people with disabilities

Q. *There are so many possibilities. How do I choose the correct action?*

A. *There is probably not a single "correct" action for your goal. Choose the action that moves you towards your goal and uses the:*

- Least effort*
- Least money*
- Least time*
- Least aggression*

PETITION DRIVES

- Purposes:* expand number of supporters and volunteers, might influence an elected official if he or she won by a small margin in your district
- Guidelines:* short message on every page (so people know what they are signing), gather numbers or e-mail addresses for those interested in volunteering

PRESS RELEASE

- Purposes:* alert the public about an event, draw attention to the crisis
- Guidelines:* keep it short, factual; include date, contact person; write important things first; describe your group; use catchy headline. Proofread!

PRESS CONFERENCE

- Purposes:* provide a visual for your campaign, allow others to see expert support, gather momentum for the group
- Guidelines:* hold the press conference at a place associated with the issue, include experts, send a press release one week before event

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- ❑ *Purposes:* generate media coverage, inform public about issues, increase credibility
- ❑ *Guidelines:* choose key points to discuss, remember time limits, remain calm

SPECIAL EVENTS (vigils, walks, educational meetings, etc.)

- ❑ *Purposes:* reach a wider audience, generate positive publicity

- ❑ *Guidelines:* advertise through local media outlets, prepare literature to hand to participants and onlookers

TELEVISION OR RADIO INTERVIEWS

- ❑ *Purposes:* broadcast your message
- ❑ *Guidelines:* be well prepared, anticipate difficult questions, memorize good facts, use sound bite, repeat statements, provide your credentials to the interviewer, dress professionally

SUGGESTED READING

Agre, Phil. "Designing Effective Action Alerts for the Internet" (<http://dlis.gseis.ucla.edu/people/pagre/alerts.html>).

Alinsky, Saul. *Rules for Radicals: A Pragmatic Primer for Realistic Radicals*. Vintage Books, 1971. This is the classic guide for activists. If you need inspiration, read the chapter titled "Of Means and Ends."

Beamish, Richard. *Getting the Word Out in the Fight to Save the Earth*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. Chapter 3 ("How to Publicize Your Cause") provides a good overview of media related information including information on advertising, press releases and editorials.

Bobo, Kim. *Organizing for Social Change: Midwest Academy Manual for Activists*. Seven Locks Press, 2001. See Chapter 5 ("A Guide to Tactics") and Chapter 14 ("Using the Media").

Online Conference on Community Organizing and Development. (<http://comm-org.utoledo.edu/train.htm>). This site has a number of links to organizing articles ranging from those promoting passive actions to sites that encourage civil disobedience.

Smiley, Tavis. *Doing What's Right: How to Fight for What You Believe and Make a Difference*. Anchor Books, 2000. Chapter 8 ("Go Tell it on the Mountain") provides solid guidelines for getting the public on your side.

Ryan, Charlotte. *Prime Time Activism: Media Strategies for Grassroots Organizing*. South End Press, 1991. See especially Chapter 10 ("Planning a Media Strategy").
