

Basics of Strategic Campaign Planning

Strategy => Goal

- The **essence of strategic planning is figuring out:**
 - What is your goal?
 - How can you achieve your goal?
- Sounds simple, but it can be tricky
- **Typical Quick Plan:** Often activists discover that something is bad and then immediately plan a vigil or rally to condemn the bad situation.
 - This is not necessarily an unreasonable plan, but it assumes:
 - The bad situation exists because no one knows about it or has expressed opposition before.
 - Once a few activists express their opposition, the authorities will change the bad situation or someone else with power will force a change.
 - These are big assumptions (that are often wrong), and this way of tackling the problem often leaves much of the work for someone else to do — such as the authorities or other activists
- In contrast, **strategic campaign planning involves:**
 - Figuring out exactly what is bad about the situation and how it might be changed for the better
 - Figuring out how to change the situation yourself — OR — if you are unwilling or unable to:
 - Figuring out who has the power to change the situation
 - Figuring out why they have not already changed the situation — what are the obstacles to positive change (ignorance, a different understanding of the situation, inertia, indifference, feelings of inadequacy or lack of authority to make the change, bureaucratic confusion, lack of skills, lack of resources, arrogance, greed, lust, malevolence, etc.)
 - Figuring out how to inform, challenge, pressure, or help the people with the ability to make the change so they will change it despite the obstacles
 - Deciding how to actually do this work (and who will do it)

Steps in Developing a Strategic Campaign

- The first step is clearly to **research** the answers to these questions. This might involve:
 - Researching documents
 - Asking people, especially the people who you think ought to be making the change
 - Talking with experts
- The next step is to **consider the various ways that the change might come about**. There might be many different ways, including some that are not immediately obvious.
- The next step is to choose a few likely ways to bring the change about.
- Then plan exactly what you will do to bring about the change in these ways.

Some Ways Change Might Come About

- You go out and do it yourself.
- You round up some friends and do it together.
- You give or arrange to provide needed skills or resources.
- You focus on a key decision-maker and pressure that person to decide in your favor.
 - Educate, challenge, and persuade the key decision-maker.
 - Bribe the key decision-maker with money, goods, or desirable services (not recommended!)
 - Threaten the decision-maker with penalties or withdrawal of support.
 - Threaten the decision-maker with loss of power or influence (such as removing her/him from political office).
- Influence the decision-maker indirectly through a family-member, friend, business superior, business associate, or an organization that the decision-maker is dependent on, wants to please, or does not want to upset.
- Influence the decision-maker by pressure or embarrassment through the news media or other public exposure.