



RECRUITMENT >> LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT >> GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING >> MEDIA

Activist Toolkit

Student PIRGs

Notes:

A Crash Course In Effective Citizenship

1. RECRUITMENT *PAGE 2*

2. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT *PAGE 10*

3. GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING *PAGE 16*

4. WORKING WITH THE MEDIA *PAGE 26*

Today's college students are going to face big problems when they graduate—from global warming to endangered species, from the escalating cost and declining quality of health care to the plight of the hungry and homeless.

Since 1971, PIRGs on college campuses around the country have given students a vehicle to work on these issues and fight for the public interest by campaigning to protect the environment, performing community service for the campus and the community, uncovering consumer rip-offs, and promoting good government.

In the past 30 years, the PIRGs have registered hundreds of thousands of students to vote, raised more than \$1 million to help the hungry and homeless, and played a key role in mobilizing support for reforms to clean our air and water and protect our environment.

In addition, the PIRGs have provided students with an educational experience in democratic citizenship. By bringing important issues to the campus debate, giving students the opportunity to voice their opinions on those issues, and giving students the skills to make sure their opinions and those of their fellow classmates are heard, the PIRGs encourage life-long civic engagement.

Along with the idealism, energy and creativity of the students and staff who make up the PIRGs, much of the PIRGs' success can be attributed to the systematic approach to organizing detailed in this Activist Toolkit.

This Activist Toolkit provides any intern or volunteer with the basic tools necessary to run strong campaigns and service projects and win reforms both on and off campus for students and the public interest.

Activist Toolkit

1. Recruitment

"...YOU KEEP
PLUGGING AWAY—
THAT'S THE WAY
SOCIAL CHANGE
TAKES PLACE. THAT'S
THE WAY EVERY
SOCIAL CHANGE IN
HISTORY HAS TAKEN
PLACE: BY A LOT
OF PEOPLE, WHO
NOBODY EVER HEARD
OF, DOING WORK."

-NOAM CHOMSKY

TABLING

- Where And When To Table
- What Goes On A Table
- Tabling Goals Worksheet
- Sample Tabling Rap
- Tips On Tabling

CLASS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- How To Set Up Announcements
- Class Announcement Goals Worksheet
- Sample Faculty Rap
- Outline For Class Announcements
- How To Make A Class Announcement
- Sample Interest Card

PHONING

- Outline For A Phone Call
- Elements Of A Successful Phone Bank
- Phone Bank Goals Worksheet
- Sample Phone Rap

VISIBILITY

- Visibility Principles
- Types of Visibility
- Visibility Case Studies

Recruitment ties together organizations as diverse as Greenpeace, Hillel, College Republicans and the PIRGs. Recruitment is the basic building block of any citizen or student organization, since we rely on people for power. And people don't just materialize. They have to be recruited. This is particularly true in 21st century America, where the primary social control is cultural, as opposed to physical. Facing police dogs, people have found the courage to fight back spontaneously. Facing television, few do anything spontaneously.

WHY RECRUIT?

- **Achieve Goals.** You need a certain number of people to accomplish your campaign goals. Recruitment provides the raw number of people needed to get the job done.
- **Visibility.** Recruitment campaigns create visibility for the organization and build numbers. Visibility and numbers translate into grassroots power.
- **Education.** Recruitment campaigns are intrinsically valuable as they get people thinking about the issues. Throughout the campaign, you will articulate your vision to large numbers of people on a regular basis.
- **Develop Skills.** Recruitment campaigns also sharpen your skills and arguments, and keep you in touch with what people are thinking about.

- **Build Community.**

Recruitment campaigns by necessity bring in new people, get people together, and increase the sense of team among those recruiting.

PRINCIPLES OF RECRUITMENT

- **Reach out to a broad constituency.** Don't rely on those who are already predisposed to getting involved. Speak to a wide range of classes and organizations. Don't assume that people won't be interested because of the class they're in or the group they belong to.
- **Multiple methods of recruitment are important.** To reach a broad constituency, you need to be recruiting through posters, tables, classrooms, leaflets, newspapers, etc. Don't assume that everyone will see your table or be in one of the classes your group visits.
- **Have a simple message.** Establish a basic, simple message for recruitment and stick to it. The message should reflect your group, its issues, its goals, and the kind of people you want to recruit.
- **Follow up with new recruits immediately.** Remind people of their commitments. Once someone has taken the first step, create new opportunities for

involvement and growth. Take the time to get to know new recruits. Focus on people with the most potential for growth and take the time to find out where they are coming from and where they hope to go.

- **Ask everyone to do something.** Make sure that everyone contacted not only is asked to do something, but is followed up with and asked to do more. For example, once someone has worked at a table, that person should be asked to coordinate a table.

- **Use other networks.** Build your base of support, but don't ignore other networks and institutions that have the potential to participate in our efforts (e.g., student governments, the Greek system).

- **Have materials ready.** Posters, leaflets, newsletters, contact or general interest cards are all important and useful recruitment tools. Make sure that they are available for both informational purposes and for people to do visibility blitzes.

- **Always be recruiting.** Recruitment is the top priority during the first weeks of the semester, but it is important throughout the semester. Integrate recruitment into everything you do.

RECRUITMENT GOALS MASTER WORKSHEET

When you start your recruitment drive, you should begin by setting some basic goals.

Set the goal for the number of people you want at your kickoff meeting:

attendance goal: _____

In order to get people to that meeting, you'll need to call a lot of people, since not everyone who wants to go will be able to make it.

attendance goal	# who commit to coming
_____	X 2 = _____

About half the people you speak to will agree to come to the meeting.

# who commit to coming	# you will need to contact
_____	X 2 = _____

About half the people you call will be home.

# you will need to contact	# you will need to call
_____	X 2 = _____

That number equals the number of interest cards you will need to collect during your recruitment drive.

interest card goal: _____

You will collect these interest cards through tabling and class announcements. A good rule of thumb is that you can get one-third of your interest cards from tabling and two-thirds from class announcements.

interest card goal	interest cards from tabling
_____	X 1/3 = _____

interest card goal	interest cards from announcements
_____	X 2/3 = _____

Keep good track of your goals for each activity and at each step to make sure that you stay on track to get the number of people you want at your event.

Notes:

RECRUITMENT

Tabling

WHAT GOES ON A TABLE?

When a table is set up well, it can build the reputation of an organization as being credible and active.

- banners
- posters
- fact sheets
- books
- buttons
- newsletters
- internship info
- calendar of events
- sign-in sheets

Tabling is one of the tried and true organizing methods. Ironically, it doesn't necessarily involve a table. Tabling refers to recruiting in any situation where people pass by or congregate. You can table to recruit activists, to build visibility for a campaign, to get signatures on a petition, to distribute literature that will further inform people about an issue, and to train people to do basic civic work. Tabling provides a forum for one-on-one recruitment, but also often draws people over on their own initiative.

WHERE AND WHEN TO TABLE

- Pick high-foot-traffic areas like a dining hall, student union or plaza.
- Make sure that it's not too crowded. You want the table to get noticed and you want people to have the time to stop and talk.
- Table in a variety of places and times so as to get a good mix of people.
- Make sure you table where you are allowed to table—find out how to get the proper permission.

SAMPLE TABLING RAP

You need to write a tabling presentation, or "rap." A basic tabling rap includes an intro question to get attention, a description of the organization, a quick version of the problem you're working on, what you're doing about it, and how the person can help. It should end with a request for them to make a commitment (i.e., fill out an interest card, agree to come to an event).

Sample Rap

Hi! Will you sign a postcard to protect our forests? I'm a volunteer with MASSPIRG, the campus environmental group, and we're campaigning to protect our national forests. Timber companies are lobbying to open up 58 million acres of our national forests to logging and mining. We're sending postcards to the Forest Service to urge them to make sure these forests stay protected. Will you sign?

Thanks! We're working on some other great campaigns this semester, like cleaning up our rivers and streams, fighting hunger, and registering students to vote. Would you be interested in being a volunteer or doing an internship?

Just fill out this card and we'll call you to give you more info on how to get involved.

TABLING GOALS WORKSHEET

On average, you can expect each person to get about six names of students interested in your group in an hour.

goal for interest cards from tabling volunteer hours
_____ / 6 = _____

To get that number of volunteer hours, you'll need to make sure you have your table set up for enough hours, and have enough volunteers for each hour of tabling.

volunteer hours table hours volunteers per hour
_____ / _____ = _____

Remember, students have hectic lives, so for planning purposes, you should schedule twice as many volunteers as needed because only half will show up.

volunteers per hour volunteers to schedule
_____ X 2 = _____

TIPS ON TABLING



1. Make sure the table looks attractive and professional—make a good impression. Materials on the table and a large poster or sign help project your presence into a flow of people and help get people's attention, but it is up to the tablers to actually do the outreach.



2. Use the table as a base, not as a wall to hide behind. Get the more confident tablers to "float" out into the traffic flow to reach more people. Don't be afraid to go up to people.



3. Tabling is a great first activity for a new volunteer. The best way to train them is to have them learn by doing. Have the person watch you table for a few minutes, then alternate and give feedback. Then table near each other so you can give lots of feedback.



4. Make your table fun and high-energy and it will attract more people.

TIP: Don't leave a table unattended, ever. An empty table suggests disorganization or inactivity. If you have a schedule of tablers for the morning, don't leave the table up all afternoon thinking, "People will at least see our materials."

Notes:

RECRUITMENT

Class Announcements

CLASS ANNOUNCEMENT GOALS WORKSHEET

About 15% of the people in a class will fill out an interest card.

OF CARDS NEEDED # OF PEOPLE TO TALK TO
_____ / .15 = _____

Figure out the average class size to determine the estimated number of class raps you must do.

OF PEOPLE TO TALK TO AVERAGE CLASS SIZE
_____ / _____ =
OF CLASS RAPS _____

Plan on scheduling four presentations for each hour of calling faculty members.

OF CLASS RAPS HOURS OF CALLING
_____ / 4 = _____

The most effective way to reach students on a college campus is to speak in their classes. Many professors will allow a short 3-5 minute presentation at the beginning of their class by a representative from your group.

Class announcements allow a group to educate students about the organization and their campaigns, recruit students for internships and volunteer positions, and build support among the faculty.

HOW TO SET UP ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Get a list of faculty, with their office numbers, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses.** Often faculty directories are available free on campus.

- **Get a course schedule.** This will help you figure out which professors teach the largest classes, as well as the classes where the students might be most interested in what your group is working on. It's important to remember to schedule a wide variety of classes, so you reach a variety of audiences.

- **Prepare a short presentation to explain to professors what you want.** Be sure to include who you are, what you want, and how long your announcement will take.

- **Prioritize classes.** Target classes by size, previous support, the presence of seniors, and subjects. Again, it is critical to reach a broad cross-section of students.

- **Have a binder or folder where you keep records of which professors you've contacted.** It's important to track which professors you've talked to and what presentations have been scheduled. Have a notebook with the phone rap, names and numbers of faculty, target classes, and the class announcement scheduling forms so it's easy for volunteers to be trained and start calling.

- **Use e-mail in addition to calling.** You can also e-mail professors to set up class announcements. However, not all professors will respond to e-mail, and it's important to make sure you are using e-mail in addition to calling, not as a replacement for it.

- **Visit during office hours.** If you're having trouble contacting a faculty member, sometimes the quickest solution is to visit their office during their office hours.

SAMPLE FACULTY RAP

Hello, Professor _____.

My name is _____ from MASSPIRG, the student environmental and consumer group. Are you familiar with MASSPIRG?

We are the Massachusetts Student Public Interest Research Group, a statewide student environmental and consumer group. Students voted to create and fund MASSPIRG here at X campus in 19____.

Through MASSPIRG, students gain valuable hands-on experience through course credit internships. This semester we are offering internships doing work on education, research, service and advocacy projects on issues such as wilderness preservation, hunger and homelessness, and voter registration.

One of the best ways we've found to let students know about internship and volunteer opportunities with us is by making a brief announcement in classes. Can we make a brief 3-5 minute announcement at the start of your _____ class tomorrow (next time the class meets)?

(Confirm time, place, and number of students.)

OUTLINE FOR CLASS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Overview: Who you are, how long you're going to take, what information you're going to cover. (15 sec.)

Introduction: Describe your organization, how long it has been on campus, and any other important information about the group. (30 sec.)

Legitimize your group: Describe your group's most recent success or what it's best known for on campus. (15 sec.)

Problem: Describe what's happening that has caused your group to take on its current campaign. (30 sec.)

Solution: What your group is doing about the problem. (30 sec.)

Involvement: What students can do to get involved. (1 min.)

Other Issues: Any other projects or campaigns your group works on. (15 sec.)

Personal Appeal: Why you got involved. (15 sec.)

Thanks: Thank your audience for their time and attention. (5 sec.)

Total Time:
3 min. 35 sec.

HOW TO MAKE A CLASS ANNOUNCEMENT

You should have your presentation memorized, so that you can concentrate on your delivery. Reading from notes will make your presentation less professional and will also tend to make your speech sound less natural.

This means that ahead of time you will need to practice your presentation until you feel comfortable with it and you can remember it without notes. However, be careful not to lapse into a monotonous recitation of your speech.

Keep in mind that your group will be judged based on you—your presentation, your appearance, and your actions. Make sure you dress accordingly. Don't fidget or make nervous gestures.

Arrive at the class a few minutes early, so that you can introduce yourself to the professor and remind him/her that you're there to make an announcement.

Write your group's name and contact information in the corner of the chalkboard.

Speak at a pace that people can keep up with. Many people speak rapidly when nervous. Also make sure you speak clearly, and adjust your voice so that everyone

can hear you. Vary your tone and pace for emphasis.

Make eye contact as much as possible. This helps to build trust between you and your audience.

Be yourself. You should allow your own personality to come across in your presentation.

Bring a newer volunteer with you, so that s/he can pass out the interest cards while you're speaking. Make sure at the end of your announcement to ask people to fill out the cards. Then as the professor starts class, go through the aisles and pick up the cards.

SAMPLE INTEREST CARD

This is the type of card you should pass around when doing class announcements or collect when tabling in order to gather names of students who are interested in your group.

MaryPIRG

Maryland Public Interest
Research Group

www.marypirg.org

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail : _____

Year (circle one) Fr So Jr Sr Gr

Please check all that interest you:

☐ Protect Our Wilderness

☐ Volunteer

☐ Hunger and Homelessness

☐ Internships

☐ Renters' Rights/Off-Campus Housing

☐ Jobs for graduating seniors

RECRUITMENT

Phoning

PHONE BANK GOALS WORKSHEET

Figure out how many people you want to show up at the event or take the action you are phone banking for. Then double it, as only about half of those people who commit will do what you're asking.

attendance goal	goal for "YES's"
_____	_____
X 2 = _____	

On average, you can expect five people per hour of calling to say yes.

goal for "YES's"	phoning hours
_____	_____
/ 5 = _____	

Remember your student volunteers are busy, so you need to double the number of hours you need to schedule.

phoning hours	scheduled hours
_____	_____
X 2 = _____	

A phone call is often the first personal contact you have with a potential activist. In order to make a successful call, you need an organized presentation that incorporates the person's participation.

OUTLINE OF A PHONE CALL

- **Know what you want to get out of the call.** Have a list of upcoming tasks or events to tie people into.
- **Call the day after the initial encounter,** while their interest is still fresh.
- **Don't leave messages.** You can only set the context for involvement personally.
- **Remind the person how you got his/her name.**
- **Find out whether it's a good time to talk.**
- **Listen for cues that indicate the person's area of interest.** Involve the person in the conversation and make a personal connection.
- **Describe your immediate goals and lay out a range of tasks.** Try to recommend options that will match the contact's interest.
- **Get a commitment.** Confirm where and when they will volunteer.
- **Keep records of the contacts you make.** Note name, date, address and phone as well as what s/he volunteered to do on a note card or tracking form.

- **Establish a rating system** for how skilled the contacts are. This can be used later to prioritize calls.

ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL PHONE BANK

- **Have a plan.** From your goals figure out the number of volunteer hours you will need on the phone.
- **Line up phones.** Often you will need to borrow phones from other campus groups, student government, faculty or residence halls.
- **Sign up phoners and phoning coordinators.** Usually volunteers sign up for two-hour shifts. There should be coordinators for each shift and/or the night overall.
- **Make the phone bank fun.** Order pizza or invite banner-makers to come at the same time, for example.
- **Prioritize and organize the names** that are being called by the phoners. Call the most recent and most interested contacts first.
- **Coordinators should check in on phoners periodically.** Listen in and give them feedback and encouragement.
- **Challenge people to do more.** As volunteers finish their shifts, quickly speak with them about their experience and performance, and ask them to sign up again, and to coordinate a shift next time.

SAMPLE PHONE RAP

Hi! My name is Frank. I'm calling from MASSPIRG. Is _____ there?

Hi. How are you doing?

I got your name from a card you filled out in Professor Smith's class today, and I was calling to let you know how you could get involved.

First though, I was wondering what interested you about MASSPIRG and our campaigns?

Well, as you heard in class, our national forests are in danger. These forests contain some of the last habitat for endangered animals and plants, but timber companies are lobbying to open up 58 million acres of our forests to logging, mining and development. So MASSPIRG is working to convince the Forest Service to make sure these forests are protected.

We need to get a lot of people involved in order to win the campaign, so tomorrow we'll be setting up a table on the student union plaza, handing out information about what we're doing, and asking people to get involved.

We'll be out there from 10-2. Do you think you could help out from 10-12?

Great! Just show up a little bit before 10 and ask for Christina. She will be coordinating the event.

Any questions? It was good talking to you, have a great night, and I'll see you at 10 tomorrow on the plaza. Bye!

RECRUITMENT

Visibility

Visibility builds your organization's credibility on campus and demonstrates that your group is worth supporting. It informs the campus about your group's accomplishments, increasing your reputation as a group that gets things done.

Visibility activates the campus community. It sets the stage for students to get involved in your campaigns, increases attendance at your events, and mobilizes your constituency.

VISIBILITY PRINCIPLES

- **Know your audience.** Figure out what positive message appeals to the widest range of people in your audience. Keep your message clear and simple.
- **Promote whatever you are doing.** Use visibility to promote meetings, events, reports, accomplishments, service, and your campaigns. Campus-wide events like Earth Day, career fairs, and voter registration drives are great visibility opportunities.
- **Know the rules.** Some campuses have restrictions on where you can hang posters, where you can set up tables, etc. Make sure you know the rules and follow them.

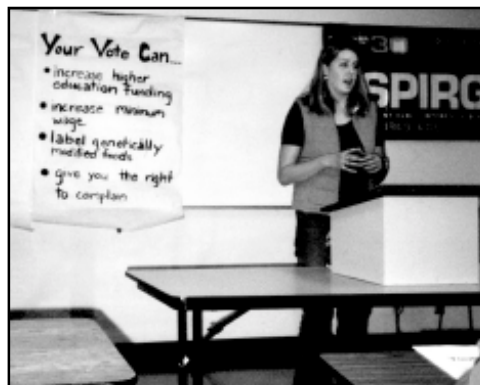
Notes:

TYPES OF VISIBILITY



Passive visibility:

- banners
- leaflets
- table tents
- posters
- chalking
- e-mails



Active visibility:

- class announcements
- group presentations
- tabling
- media coverage

VISIBILITY TIP: A good visibility plan includes both active and passive visibility.

2. Leadership Development

LEADERS
AREN'T BORN,
THEY ARE
MADE. AND
THEY ARE MADE
JUST LIKE
ANYTHING
ELSE, THROUGH
HARD WORK.

-VINCE
LOMBARDI

SKILLS TRAININGS

- Scheduling Trainings
- Questions To Ask When Prepping A Training
- Sample Training Agenda

DEBRIEFS

- How To Debrief
- Debrief Outline

RUNNING A MEETING

- Preparing A Meeting
- Meeting Checklist

As a student or citizen group, you rely on people to volunteer their time and energy on your campaigns. In order to work effectively on a large campaign and coordinate all the volunteers you will have, you will need to develop leaders from within your ranks.

PRINCIPLES OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- **Everyone has leadership potential.** Anybody who supports the campaigns might be interested in getting actively involved. Anybody who gets involved once has the potential to take on more.
- **People who care about these issues need to be motivated to act upon their concerns.** Most people don't know what they can do to make a difference or how their actions will help. You need to communicate that there are solutions as well as problems.
- **You need to create opportunities for people to take on more responsibility.** It is hard for a new volunteer to know what next step to take. You need to develop a leadership ladder for each person, giving him or her opportunities to continue to produce and to continue to learn.

- **People stay involved because they feel challenged personally and because their efforts are making a difference.** Once somebody masters a basic task, he or she should be given something more difficult to tackle—either training other people to do the basic task, or dealing with a more challenging situation themselves.

- **People take on more responsibility because they feel needed.** If you need people to do more, you need to let them know that. If they are the person to do the job, they need to know that you're counting on them. After each activity or event, you should be discussing with volunteers their next activity.

- **People develop as leaders because somebody takes the time to give them meaningful feedback and to build their confidence.** Once a task has been completed, don't just assign another one—stop and talk about how it went, what could have gone better, which pieces went well, how the volunteer felt about the experience, etc.

- **People stay for the long term because they feel like part of a community.** Develop a group culture that is fun and that encourages people to get to know each other.

LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Phonebanking Coordinator:

Oversees all aspects of the phoning, including recruiting and training callers, finding phones, working with day coordinators, and tracking results.

Day Coordinator: Oversees the phonebank for a given day. This person confirms the volunteers, works with the hour coordinators, trains new callers, and tracks the day's results.

Hour Coordinator: Oversees the phonebank for a given hour, trains new callers during that hour, and tracks the hour's results.

Tabling Coordinator:

Oversees all tabling, including recruiting and training tablers, placing the table, working with day coordinators, and tracking results.

Day Coordinator: Oversees the table for a specific day. This person confirms volunteers, works with hour coordinators, trains new tablers, and tracks the day's results.

Hour Coordinator: Oversees the table for a specific hour, trains new tablers during that hour, and tracks the hour's results.

Class Announcements Coordinator: Oversees all aspects of the class announcements, including scheduling, recruiting volunteers to make announcements, training, working with the scheduling coordinator and announcement coordinator, and tracking results.

Scheduling Coordinator: Oversees the faculty calling, training of callers, and tracking of announcements scheduled.

Announcement Coordinator: Makes sure that all scheduled announcements get done, recruits and trains people to do announcements.

HOW TO DEVELOP LEADERS

You'll always want to have more volunteers, but unless you have a lot of leaders, your organization won't be as effective. Leaders are the people who not only participate in campaign activities, but take on the responsibility for planning events, coordinating logistics, and preparing and training other volunteers. Not everyone will choose to be a leader, but by recruiting lots of volunteers and giving everyone the opportunity to take on leadership, you'll find the leaders necessary to be effective.

One way to make leadership opportunities more accessible is to break them down such that even a relatively new volunteer can take on responsibility. For instance, during a petition drive, you might ask a volunteer who has just done petitioning for the first time to come back and help train new petitioners next time. If the volunteer is willing to take on more responsibility, the volunteer could help recruit some additional volunteers for the next petition event, or even take responsibility for creating the visuals for the table.

Over the course of the first few activities, a new volunteer should learn a range of skills, coordinate and lead other students, get individual attention from the organization's leaders, and be invited to participate in group decision-making.

GOALS AND SYSTEMS FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

In the midst of a campaign, it can be difficult to keep track of volunteers. In order to ensure that you are not missing opportunities to develop leaders and to ensure that your group will have enough leaders to meet its organizational and programmatic goals, you need to set leadership development goals and track your progress.

- Set goals for how many leaders your group will need. A good rule of thumb is that for every six students active in your group, you need at least one leader.
- Create a system for keeping track of everyone who volunteers with your group. If you're running a large recruitment drive and inviting lots of new people to volunteer, it can be difficult to keep track of all of your new volunteers. Create a volunteer activity log that lists your volunteers, their contact information and what activities they've done. Update it after each event or activity. Refer to it to make sure volunteers are being invited back, that they're being asked to do a diverse range of activities, and that they are being invited to take on tasks with more responsibility.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIP:

Time is your most valuable commodity. You should be spending your time with the strongest activists. Use your organizing opportunities to spot likely leaders and plug them into positions that enable you to help them develop.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

THE ONLY REAL
TRAINING FOR
LEADERSHIP IS
LEADERSHIP.

-ANTHONY JAY

Skills Trainings

In a big campaign, you will need as many people involved as possible. The more people who understand the overall objectives of the campaign and have the skills to carry out the campaign plan, the more likely it is that the plan will succeed. A training session helps you accomplish these objectives.

Participants learn skills they need to carry out campaign responsibilities effectively, and get a sense of the larger vision of what is being accomplished by the campaign and organization.

SCHEDULING TRAININGS

- You should hold trainings on a regular basis, since you'll constantly have new volunteers coming into the organization who need to be trained. If you are carrying out a recruitment drive, you will need to hold training sessions even more frequently.
- Formal training sessions should be built as events, including advance planning and publicity. In a typical recruitment drive, you should hold at least one formal training session per week. More lengthy sessions should be held on the weekend when people have the time to spend an entire morning or afternoon in training.
- Don't hesitate to have more specific training sessions for individuals like

your project coordinators. This may be a smaller group, but by training them, you will rapidly increase the depth of expertise within your group.

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN PREPPING A TRAINING

- What is your audience? What is their skill level/background? Your training will need to be different if it's for your project coordinators rather than for new volunteers.
- How much time do you have? Sometimes you may only have time to do a 20-minute training, while other times you may set up a training that will last an entire day.
- What are the goals? Decide what skills people should take away from your training.
- Where will this training take place? Ideally, you should make sure you have enough space and privacy to hold the training, extra room to spread out and do role-plays, and a chalkboard or paper for writing up key points.
- Who will help you with this training? Recruit other group leaders who are skilled in the activity to come help run the training, particularly the role-plays.

SAMPLE TRAINING AGENDA

1. Introductions
2. Describe the campaign and why what your group is doing is important
3. Explain why this skill is important
4. Review the skill
5. Give an example of the skill—demonstrate it
6. Set goals for the activity and lay out expectations
7. Role-plays—these should take up the bulk of the training
8. Wrap up

Sample Phonebanking Training Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Campaign To Protect Our Forests:
 - Context—Undeveloped national forests are some of our last wilderness areas and provide homes to rare plants and animals.
 - Problem—Our national forests are threatened by logging, drilling, road-building and other forms of development.
 - Solution—We need strong protections for our national forests—and we need to make sure the administration knows the public supports these protections.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Debriefs

3. Importance of Phonebanking:

- Best way to translate interest cards into volunteers
- Will give us the volunteers we need for upcoming events

4. Phonebanking is just like any other phone conversation. Here are some tips:

- Make a connection
- Get a specific commitment to volunteer
- Be diligent; don't get distracted from dialing
- It's okay that most people aren't home; we'll reach them eventually
- Don't leave messages; you want to actually speak to the person

5. Give example of a phone call

6. Set goals for calling

- Each caller should speak to 10 people an hour
- Five of those people should agree to volunteer

7. Roleplays—practice calling each other

8. Let's hit the phones!

Each time you involve someone in your organizing activities, you have the opportunity to increase that person's ability or interest in continuing to work on your campaign. To maximize this opportunity, you should build in the time to "debrief" volunteers when they finish an activity.

A debriefing consists of a quick evaluation of the success of an activity, immediately upon completion of the activity. A debriefing is done one-on-one. It might be done with someone who just completed his or her first hour of tabling, or it might be with the tabling coordinator who just ran a table for the first time.

HOW TO HOLD A DEBRIEF

- **Debriefs should be built in at the end of every activity** (tabling, class announcements, meetings). They should become so routine that not one of your volunteers would think about leaving before participating in a quick debrief on how things went.

- **Debriefs should be brief**, from one to five minutes.

- **Debriefs should be clear and specific.** Let the volunteer give his or her explanation for what happened before you give yours. Compare the actual results to the goals. Feedback should focus on one or two problems, no

more. This allows for the individual to retain the feedback and to have the confidence that they can do the task again. Emphasize demonstrations and role-plays to show what to do differently.

- **Debriefs should always end on a positive note**, and by asking the person to participate in a future activity.

- **Debriefs are not the time to get into deeper issues;** they should be quick assessments of how things went. Use the debrief meeting to schedule a time to meet later to discuss weightier matters.

- **Also debrief coordinators.** In a big campaign, coordinators of activities should debrief their volunteers; then the organization leaders should debrief the coordinators.

- **Use debriefs as an opportunity to reinforce goals.** So, for instance, the emphasis should be on how the volunteer performed in comparison to the goals set, rather than just how they felt about the experience.

DEBRIEF OUTLINE

Icebreaker: General question about the activity.

"Did you have fun?"

Review: Specific question about how they did.

"How many signatures did you get?"

Evaluation: Why did they do well or not do well?

"Great! What worked for you?" or "That's less than most people got. What do you think went wrong?"

Next Step: What they are going to do coming out of their experience.

"You did really well. What I would like to do is have you coordinate the petitioning at the union tomorrow. Can you make that?" or "You'll find it gets easier the more you do it. What I would suggest is that you come in for the training session on petitioning tomorrow at 4 p.m. We are going to do a lot of role-plays to give people practice. Can you make it?"

Wrap Up: Final note of encouragement and thank-you.

"Thanks for all your help—we're really going to win this campaign with all of these postcards."

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Running A Meeting

SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA

1. Overview of the meeting: go over agenda, outline goals, give context for why meeting is important
2. Introductions
3. Reports: share information and updates with the group
4. Discussion of plans for the week: consensus-building, troubleshooting, brainstorming, planning, voting
5. Delegate tasks: have people sign up for tasks
6. Skills training
7. Review what was accomplished or decided
8. Announcements: chance to announce social plans or other events
9. Adjourn

PLANNING TIP:

Preparing for a meeting takes at least as long as the meeting itself.

During the course of organizing, there are many reasons to have (or not to have) meetings. Meetings are generally the best forum for making group decisions, developing a plan for a group, delegating responsibilities to a group, and building a sense of accountability and community. If your goal is to disseminate information without getting input, or to train an individual in particular skills, or to give a particular student feedback on his or her work, a group meeting may not be your best option. But when meetings are necessary, running good meetings is an important part of an effective campaign.

PREPARING A MEETING

Before organizing a meeting, make sure you need one. Once you have decided that it is appropriate to have a meeting, you need to prepare for it. This includes:

- defining the goals
- preparing an agenda
- developing a list of attendees
- identifying somebody to facilitate the meeting
- preparing the facilitators and attendees
- anticipating pitfalls
- planning an opportunity to debrief with meeting leadership

Figure out the logistics.

The logistics of a meeting often dictate whether the meeting will be successful. Consider the following:

- Is the location easily accessible, is the time convenient, can you avoid conflicts with classes, other meetings, etc.?
- Is the room the right size for the group (it is always better to have lots of people in a smaller room than to have few people in a large room)?
- Are the chairs set up in such a way that make it easy to see each other and to hear each other?
- Is there a chalkboard for brainstorming?
- Is there a sign-up sheet?
- Are there materials for the people to take?
- Are there refreshments or a plan for post-meeting socializing?
- What is the scheduled duration of the meeting?
- How will you ensure that people show up for the meeting (confirmation calls, etc.)?

Know your goals. The agenda should serve two basic functions: enable your group to achieve the identified goals and create an atmosphere that makes attendees comfortable.

Before the meeting, figure out what follow-up will be required after the meeting.

No matter who is at a meeting or what decisions are made,

every meaningful meeting requires follow-up—everything from thanking VIPs who attended, to making sure delegated tasks are actually happening. Before the meeting, make sure that there is a workable plan and timeline for following up on decisions that have been made and tasks that have been delegated.

Prepare all participants.

Everyone coming to the meeting should have a basic sense of the goals of the meeting, how everyone will participate, and who else will be in attendance. The people facilitating the meeting will also need to have a sense of all of the possible outcomes, what needs to be done coming out of the meeting, and who at the meeting is best suited to do each task. Ideally, the facilitators would have role-played the meeting beforehand.

Anticipate pitfalls.

The only way to insure a smooth, well-run meeting is by anticipating problems and developing solutions before the meeting occurs.

The most difficult part of running a successful meeting is dealing with group dynamics. As meeting facilitator, you need to feel comfortable in your role. You may need to encourage some people to speak while discouraging others. You may need to lay out your opinion, or you may want to solicit input from the group.

You are responsible for making all participants feel comfortable, as well as for making sure the meeting accomplishes its goals within the time frame allotted.

The other common problem with meetings is the tension between giving people at the meeting the opportunity to participate while following through on plans developed prior to the meeting. The solution to this problem is twofold. First, you should not create a false sense of power. Participants in a meeting should only brainstorm or offer input into decisions which they truly can influence. It is preferable to lay out a decision that has already been made and ask

for appropriate feedback than to pretend that a decision is about to be made and ask for input which will be disregarded. The second piece of solving this problem is to provide adequate context to any decision or discussion taking place in the meeting. If people know how and why and by whom a decision has been made, they will be able to understand where they fit into the process and what real input they can have.

Debrief after the meeting. Everyone who helped organize the meeting should be part of critiquing it; however, feedback to an individual or small group should be done in an appropriate forum.

The meeting debrief is used to assess a number of factors:

- Was the agenda appropriate?
- Were the people who attended the ones who should have attended?
- Were the facilitators well prepared?
- Were the participants well prepared?
- How were the logistics?
- What is the appropriate follow-up for each person in the group?
- What should be done differently next time to improve the meeting?

Notes:

MEETING CHECKLIST

Agenda And Goals:

- ☐ Have you set concrete, reasonable goals?
- Does the agenda:
 - ☐ Accomplish the goals
 - ☐ Encourage commitment
 - ☐ Provide leadership roles
 - ☐ Have you given the appropriate people a chance to provide feedback on the agenda?
 - ☐ Do you have a turnout plan and enough people making confirmation calls?

Participants:

- Have you asked people to serve as:
 - ☐ Chair-person/facilitator
 - ☐ Note-taker
 - ☐ Timekeeper
 - ☐ Guest Speaker
 - ☐ Has the chair been involved in preparing the agenda or been fully prepared to run it?
 - ☐ Have you spoken with all those who will play a part in the meeting to see if they are prepared?
 - ☐ Have you confirmed guest speakers?

Logistics:

- ☐ Is the meeting site familiar, accessible and adequate?
- ☐ Do people know how to get there?
- Have you lined up:
 - ☐ Chair and table arrangements
 - ☐ Chalkboard
 - ☐ Audio-visual equipment
 - ☐ Sign-in sheet
 - ☐ Sign-up sheets for tasks
- Do you need:
 - ☐ Printed agenda
 - ☐ Background materials
 - ☐ Proposals

3. Grassroots Organizing

DON'T WASTE ANY
TIME MOURNING.
ORGANIZE!

-JOE HILL

COALITIONS

- Why Build Coalitions
- How To Choose A Coalition Model
- Coalition Models
- How To Build A Coalition
- Coalition Call Outline
- What Goes In A Coalition Packet
- Coalition Member Activities

DISTRICT MEETINGS

- How To Schedule A District Meeting
- Timeline For A Meeting
- A Typical Meeting

PETITIONING

- Why Petition
- How To Plan A Petition Drive
- Materials Needed For A Petition Drive
- Helpful Hints For Petitioners
- Petition Drive Goal And Schedule Worksheet

ORGANIZING AN EVENT

- How To Pull Off A Huge Event
- Timeline For An Event

In order for your campaign to succeed, it's usually necessary to demonstrate grassroots support. Occasionally, the decision-maker on your issue will support your campaign on its merits alone. But more often than not, your campaigns will face opposition from powerful, well funded and influential interests.

WHY BUILD GRASSROOTS SUPPORT?

- It demonstrates broad support for the campaign.
- It adds resources and credibility to your group and campaign.
- It builds access and influence with decision makers.

PLANNING A GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGN

When you set out to run a campaign, you first need to answer some basic questions to help figure out the lay of the land.

1. Who has the power to make the decision that will win your campaign? Is it a single individual (e.g. the university president) or a group of people (e.g. the student government)? This will be your campaign target.

2. Who influences the decision-maker on your campaign issue? Who are all of the individuals and institutions that are sources of influence? (e.g. faculty members, political figures, student groups, alumni, etc.)

3. Of these people and groups, which are the most influential?

4. Of the ones who are influential, which of these does your group have influence over? Which of them does your group know or have access to? These are the groups you should recruit into your coalition.

5. Is your campaign likely to have opposition? If so, estimate your opposition's influence. Of the people and groups that influence your decision-maker, which of these does the opposition have influence over?

6. Who of the groups that are influential to the decision-maker is influenced both by your group and by the opposition? These will be the most important, and the most difficult, groups to recruit into your coalition.

7. What things will you need to win this campaign? What are your resources? What other resources can you get from allies? This will determine what resources you need to ask for from your coalition partners.

GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING

Coalition Building

WE MUST ALL
HANG TOGETHER,
OR ASSUREDLY
WE SHALL ALL
HANG SEPARATELY.

-BENJAMIN
FRANKLIN
AT THE
SIGNING OF
THE DECLARATION
OF INDEPENDENCE

By utilizing coalitions, you rely on the old saying “there is strength in numbers.” Coalition building is about getting other groups to support or even join your campaign.

WHY BUILD COALITIONS?

- **Portray strength.** The strength of a coalition is the list of organizations representing diverse interests and greater memberships—the sum of which is greater than the individual parts.
- **Consolidate resources.** Groups may be able to provide technical expertise, financial resources, name recognition or people power.
- **Become more influential.** Regular participation in coalitions establishes your group as a leader, which leads to increased credibility, name recognition and respect within the community.

HOW TO CHOOSE A COALITION MODEL

- 1. Decide if the coalition will be worth putting it together.** Will the decision makers be influenced by the formation of a coalition? Will the coalition’s resources make a dent in the issue?
- 2. Identify the amount of interest in the issue.** How much do groups care about the issue? Does the issue have support a mile wide and an inch deep, or are a few

organizations heavily invested in the success of the effort? In other words, which of the models is feasible?

3. Decide the level of urgency in the campaign. This will often influence the level of resources and the timeline needed to develop the coalition.

4. Identify what resources would be available. What resources can various groups put into the effort (or are willing to)? In looking at the range of groups to work with, consider your resources vs. other groups’. If you are the only group with resources to get the work done, you probably wouldn’t use the partner model.

5. Consider how well the groups would work together. Is there a history of close cooperation or differences in strategy and personalities?

6. Decide how long the coalition should exist. Does the political goal (passing a law vs. pursuing a long-term platform) suggest long-term structures or just working on an issue-by-issue basis?

7. Look at who are the key players on the issue. Who has ownership over the issue? Who deserves credit? Is this something that you created or are you adding your clout to a campaign that’s already underway?

COALITION MODELS

1. Endorsement model: This is the “paper tiger” model—a list of endorsers is built to lend credibility and breadth to the effort. The members of the coalition may do little beyond adding their names to the list of supporters.

2. Associate model: With this model, the groups and their leadership are encouraged to play an active role in the campaign (collect signatures, get letters, etc.), but decision-making still rests with you. This coalition is more active. There may be occasional meetings to share information and cultivate a sense of ownership.

3. Partner model: The partner model assumes power sharing as well as active participation. Groups work closely together on a daily basis. Decisions and input into the coalition are generally based on resources brought to the table. Two options are:

- **Collective:** Representatives from the coalition groups meet frequently to make decisions.
- **Separate organization:** An entirely new organization is created to run the campaign.

WHAT GOES IN A COALITION PACKET

- A cover letter. The cover letter should request their position on the issue. This request needs to be specific (if you want more than just an endorsement, for example). Outline the problem, the solution, the campaign, and your specific request of them.
- Supporting materials like fact sheets, editorials, news clips, current endorser list, etc.
- An endorsement form. Make sure the form can be easily returned.

HOW TO BUILD A COALITION

1. Determine which model to use and set goals. Which model will best suit your plans? Once this is decided, consider how the coalition can be most helpful. Ask yourself:

- What image do you want?
- What resources are needed?
 - financial
 - people power (volunteers)
 - access to decision-makers
 - access to the media
 - issue expertise
- Who can you build relationships with through this campaign?

2. Make a list of organizations to approach. Some organizations will come quickly to mind, but others will require serious thought. Come up with as broad-based a list as possible. Be creative! Work backwards from who needs to be influenced. Also think about which groups you want to work with. Analyze all the advantages and disadvantages of potential coalition partners.

In general, the better you know who's out there, the easier this list will come together. If you are new to an area or the issue, it might be helpful to get some tips from other groups or other issue experts.

3. Prioritize your list. Your strategy might be to get easy groups first to get the

ball rolling, or to spend time only on the major players.

4. Create a coalition packet. If the coalition is to be broad-based with many groups approached, the materials should be mass-produced, with a generic cover letter.

If the coalition is to be smaller and more focused on key leadership in the community, the materials should be personalized for each target.

5. Contact your target groups. Depending on the coalition model you are using, you may want to call each contact prior to sending the materials out. For these first sets of calls, you want to not only let them know you'd like to send them the packets, but also find out more about their process for decision-making. This will also help you establish a contact within the organization.

6. Send out the packet. Make sure you note what happened in the conversation if you've had one. Once they receive the packet, call them within a few days to get their response and pin-down the decision-making process. Do you need to attend any meetings? Do you need to contact another division of the organization?

Be prepared to answer questions, and to provide convincing reasons why the group should endorse the issue or get involved with

COALITION GROUP CALL OUTLINE

- Determine whether you've contacted the proper person. Perhaps there's a board president or an issues chairperson who would be more appropriate.
- Give a brief rap on what you're asking of them. Don't push for any kind of policy decision; instead, determine if there's any interest in the issue, and if so, offer to send them the packet. Focus your pitch, depending on the constituency group you're addressing.
- Find out their process for making this policy decision.
- Confirm the process with them, let them know you will be sending them materials, and let them know when you will be contacting them again to follow up.

the campaign. In addition to thinking through what you want from each group, think about how they will benefit from their involvement in your coalition.

7. Get a commitment. This process can be time consuming since many groups have more than one step before endorsing or getting involved. Persistence and attention to their schedule pays off. Pay most attention to the priority groups—once a core of support has been established, it may become easier to get other groups on board.

When seeking endorsements, try to get specific letters of endorsement from each group in addition to getting permission to use their name on your endorser list. Ideally, the letter includes a brief description of the organization (if necessary), explicit support for your group's campaign, and a call for others to support the campaign.

Get clear permission to use the organization's name on letterhead, in news releases, and to otherwise "speak with its voice." As much as possible, anticipate other opportunities for the group to participate in the coalition and get these approved up front.

8. Maintain structure and communication. How formal will the coalition be? How will decisions be made? How will the members stay

informed on developments in the campaign? Will the coalition meet weekly, monthly or never?

Even in the case of a "paper tiger" coalition, do mailings every couple of months, and invite groups to relevant hearings and meetings.

9. Use the coalition. Hold a news conference to announce its formation. Circulate petitions within the ranks of the organizations. Send targeted decision-makers updated endorser lists and individual letters of support. It's important to encourage the needed involvement as well as accountability within the coalition.

COALITION MEMBER ACTIVITIES

Media

- Generating letter to editors (LTEs)
- Co-signing LTEs
- Co-signing op-eds
- Attending an editorial board meeting or helping to set it up
- Attending or setting up talk shows
- Attending press events
- Helping to organize a news event
 - Making follow-up calls, including to the organization's contacts
 - Doing radio feeds
 - Mailing the advisories or releases
 - Producing the materials
 - Producing the visuals

Grassroots

- Collecting signatures
- Writing letters from the organization to the target
- Generating letters from members to the target
- Making/generating phone calls/faxes to the target
- Putting an article about the campaign in their newsletter
- Turning out members to district meetings and other events

Coalition

- Identifying other groups and getting them involved
- Mailing packets and making follow-up calls
- Doing presentations to potential coalition partners

Direct Advocacy

- Setting up or attending district meetings
- Attending a "lobby day"
- Allocating lobbyist time to the issue

VIPs

- Helping to identify the power players
- Setting up and attending meetings with VIP contacts

Fundraising

- Participating in joint activities from grassroots to grants
- Donating phones, paper, staff time, etc.

Research

- Co-authoring a report
- Providing data
- Collecting surveys

GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING

ONE OF OUR
STRONGEST
WEAPONS IS
DIALOGUE.

-NELSON
MANDELA

District Meetings

Providing citizens the opportunity to communicate with their representatives is a fundamental goal of grassroots organizations. By organizing district meetings, where legislators are invited to meet with their constituents in their constituents' home town or district, you can demonstrate support for your group's position.

HOW TO ORGANIZE A DISTRICT MEETING

1. Decide what type of meeting to have. You may be organizing the meeting to introduce your organization and its program, to educate the legislator on a particular problem, or to present constituent support for an issue.

Depending on the campaign, the legislator and your resources, you may decide to meet at his/her local office, or you may want to organize a large event that includes your members, other groups and the media.

2. Scheduling the meeting. You may need anywhere from two weeks to two months to schedule the meeting. Figure out which of the legislator's staff people does the scheduling. The scheduler may be in the district office or in the capitol office. Over the phone, describe the purpose and type of meeting you want to have and, if

necessary, write a formal request for a meeting with the legislator.

3. Choose the best meeting time. Your best bet is during a legislative recess, but not during prime vacation weeks. While the Legislature is in session, the legislator may still be in the district either on Mondays or Fridays as well as during some weekends. Depending on who will be attending, breakfast or evening meetings may be more convenient than daytime meetings.

4. Choose a good location. The legislator's district office may be a mutually convenient spot. Other options might include a campus meeting hall, the town hall, or the local library.

5. Follow up after scheduling the meeting. As soon as a meeting with your legislator is scheduled, confirm it by sending a letter along with a set of preparatory materials. Depending on the purpose of the meeting, these may include: directions to the meeting, an agenda, fact sheets, related articles, an endorser list, a copy or summary of the reform itself, and a copy of an endorsement form (if an endorsement is the goal).

6. Organizing turnout for the meeting. If you're meeting with the legislator at his/her office and turnout will include just group

TIMELINE FOR A DISTRICT MEETING

At least one month in advance:

- ☐ Decide on purpose and size of meeting
- ☐ Call legislator's office to schedule meeting
- ☐ Send written request for meeting to be scheduled, if necessary
- ☐ Once scheduled, send letter confirming meeting along with relevant materials
- ☐ Secure location for meeting

Two weeks in advance:

- ☐ Distribute posters and flyers to advertise the meeting
- ☐ Call local groups to attend, publicize the meeting
- ☐ Develop meeting agenda
- ☐ Decide on speakers, prepare their presentations

One week in advance:

- ☐ Send out news advisory
- ☐ Call to reconfirm legislator
- ☐ Write news release
- ☐ Role-play meeting presentations
- ☐ Develop materials to distribute and visuals for meeting
- ☐ Make confirmation calls to attendees, groups

The day of the meeting:

- ☐ Get to meeting room 45 minutes in advance
- ☐ Assign greeters and minglers
- ☐ Have the meeting
- ☐ Clean up the room

After the meeting:

- ☐ Do media follow-up
- ☐ Send thank-you letters to legislator and other relevant people
- ☐ Follow up with people who attended to get them further involved in campaign

leaders, then all you have to do is confirm everyone and make sure they attend. If the meeting is going to be a larger gathering, you will need to do more extensive outreach to ensure that a crowd shows up.

Contact the groups that have endorsed your campaign. You may want them to announce the meeting in their newsletters, call through their membership lists, and/or send an invitation. Also make sure you reach out to all the members of your own group and invite them to attend.

Anybody who says they are interested in attending should receive a follow-up phone call approximately one week before the meeting and then a reminder call a night or two before. It can be helpful to send them a copy of the agenda. In general, you can expect that about half the people who promise to come will actually show up.

7. Have a visibility plan.

Develop a plan to generate attention around the event.

8. Day of the meeting.

Get to the location early enough to set it up. Bring along copies of an agenda, press clips, fact sheets, endorsement materials, other campaign materials, membership brochures and petitions to deliver. Have a sign-up sheet at the door as well as packets for the media. Banners and

campaign posters will add a campaign atmosphere to a meeting room.

Have at least one person at the door to greet people as they arrive and to make sure they are signing in and collecting materials. Keep one person on the lookout for the arriving legislator.

Like any meeting, it is preferable for the room to be crowded rather than empty. Set up a few chairs less than you think you will need. In general, the legislator and the meeting organizers/presenters should sit at the front of the room if it is a large meeting. In a smaller meeting, a small circle is best. Everyone in attendance should be able to see and should feel included in the event.

9. Follow up after the meeting. The legislator should receive a thank-you note whether or not s/he agrees to do what you ask. Representatives from other organizations and other VIPs who attend should also receive a thank-you note.

10. Depending on the outcome of the meeting, you may want to follow up in the media. You could issue a news release announcing the legislator's endorsement or submit a letter to the editor letting the community know that the meeting happened.

A TYPICAL MEETING

A typical meeting will last for an hour, and the agenda would include:

- Introductions
- Overview of agenda
- Thank legislator for attending, past support
- Presentation of the problem
- Explanation of the solution
- Update on the campaign
- Presentation of postcards
- Request for support
- Participation from constituents/groups in attendance
- Response from legislator
- Questions and answers
- Wrap-up/thank you

GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING

Petitioning

MATERIALS NEEDED FOR A PETITION DRIVE

- petitions
- pens
- tracking forms for the number of petitions out, and the number of signatures turned in

Petitions (or postcards) are used for many programmatic purposes—from stating grievances to organizing a union to initiating a law. They can be one of the best ways of showing broad support for your campaign and influencing decision-makers.

But, from an organizer's perspective, petitioning is also a recruitment mechanism. Petitioning is the most effective way to reach a large number of people through one-on-one contact.

WHY PETITION?

- Demonstrate wide support for the group or a specific campaign.
- Educate the student body.
- Create visibility for the organization.
- Train students in basic skills.
- Identify and recruit new students to join in the effort.

HOW TO PLAN A PETITION DRIVE

The success of a petition drive depends on a well-planned and concerted effort. It is important to establish a specific timeline and numerical goals for the petition drive as a whole, as well as for each petitioner.

Petitioners should attend a training session that includes a discussion of goals as well as role-plays.

It is also important to have a strategy for where to petition. High-foot-traffic areas are the most obvious spots, like dining halls, major walkways or academic buildings. However, you may need to diversify to reach the widest range of people. Music majors may never eat in the cafeteria, but they may frequent the concert hall. On a residential campus, organizing a dorm-to-dorm, door-by-door, petition drive can be an effective way to reach a majority of students.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR PETITIONERS:

1. Approach people with a short, upbeat opening.
2. Make sure each person reads and understands the petition before signing it.
3. Answer questions concisely.
4. Get the address, telephone number, e-mail address, and other pertinent information from each signer so that you can follow up with supporters.
5. Identify enthusiastic signers to get involved in the campaign.
6. Hand out stickers to those who have signed so they won't be approached again.
7. Be friendly, upbeat and confident in your approach.

PETITIONING DRIVE GOALS & SCHEDULE WORKSHEET

It is most effective to focus people's energy on a short petition drive.

1. SET YOUR GOAL. If the goal is to show majority support for an issue, you need signatures from at least 51% of your campus.

campus size signature goal
_____ X .51 = _____ (round up)

The average petitioner can gather around 25 signatures per hour.

signature goal # of petitioning hours
_____ / 25 = _____

2. SET YOUR SCHEDULE. You want to get half your signatures the first day and the remaining half over the next two days.

DAY 1: signature goal day signature goal
_____ / 2 = _____

DAY 2: signature goal day signature goal
_____ / 4 = _____

DAY 3: signature goal day signature goal
_____ / 4 = _____

GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING

Organizing An Event

Frequently, campaigns include at least one big event. There are a number of reasons for doing big events:

- Wide range of volunteer opportunities for students.
- Good visibility for your group through publicity of the event, media coverage, as well as the direct involvement of the many people who attend the event.
- Good opportunity to advance programmatic goals—by getting participants to take political action, or by using the event for educational purposes.
- Good opportunity to work closely with other organizations or VIPs.
- Big events are frequently the best way for your lead students to learn how to be effective organizers.

HOW TO PULL OFF A HUGE EVENT

Build A Coalition

The larger and broader the coalition sponsoring the event, the more attention and credibility it will receive, and the easier it will be to get a good turnout for the event. As much as possible, you want to involve other groups in organizing the event.

- Create a target list of coalition groups.
- Speak to as many groups as possible and sign them up for some level of involvement (endorsing the event, helping to publicize it, providing volunteers, etc.).

Plan Out The Logistics

It's important to nail the logistics of the event.

- Start planning early.
- Set the date as early as possible.
- As soon as you have the date, set your location. Having a room or location in a central place is key.
- If necessary, line up food, supplies and materials.
- Reserve any necessary equipment (i.e., microphone and speakers).
- Make the necessary visuals.
- Confirm everything!



At large 2002 Hunger Cleanup events like the one above, MASSPIRG students across the state mobilized 1,000 volunteers to help at local homeless shelters and raised \$15,000 for poverty relief.

At EConference, the PIRGs brought together 5000 students from around the country to organize around the environment. In 1999, thousands of students marched through Philadelphia. (top) Leading activists addressed the group in Washington, D.C. in 2001. (bottom)



Getting Presenters, Speakers, Or MCs

Many types of events require you to get speakers or presenters. These include panel discussions, lectures, movie screenings, debates, etc. You might also want a good speaker who can kick off a service event or other activity. Here are the steps for finding presenters:

- Research and prepare a list of speakers to invite. Potential speakers include leaders from coalition groups, or faculty members.
- Call or visit potential speakers to invite them.
- Some speakers will ask you to send them a letter requesting their attendance. In that case, send them the letter, then call after one week to follow up.
- Make sure that all presenters are familiar well in advance with the topics, the format for the event and how much time they will have to speak.

Publicity & Media

Publicity will be critical to turning out people for your event. Start by choosing the message for your event—what will catch peoples' attention and make them want to attend? Once you have a message, design the materials that you'll need. There are lots of types of visibility you should include in your plan:

- Get the media to cover your event—ask them to do an announcement about the

event beforehand, then to come cover the event when it happens.

- Hang posters around campus.
- Chalk the campus sidewalks.
- Hand out flyers.
- Make announcements in classes related to the topic of the event.

Event Turnout

In addition to visibility, there are other more active tactics you should use to ensure turnout:

- Visit meetings of the sponsoring groups to make sure they will attend. Ask them to get the word out to all of their members.
- The night before the event, phonebank people who filled out interest cards to invite them to attend.

Volunteer Turnout

Many big events will require lots of volunteers. With a river cleanup or service event, volunteer turnout and event turnout are the same thing. With other events, like a faculty panel or an Earth Day celebration, you may need lots of volunteers to help with set-up, clean-up or working at a table.

- Your group should be committed to volunteering and running the event.
- Every volunteer needs to get a reminder call the night before.

The Event Itself

- Get there well in advance to set up—arrange chairs, get sound equipment set up, hang banners or signs.
- Greet presenters as they arrive. Assign a volunteer to assist each of them and keep them company.
- Keep the event running on time.
- Have a volunteer coordinator set up who can quickly plug volunteers into their roles as soon as they arrive.

After The Event

- Follow up with the media to confirm coverage.
- Send thank-you letters to presenters.
- Debrief with leaders.
- Check in with coalition partners.

TURNOUT TIP:

Ask professors to give extra credit to students who attend.

THE CALENDAR FOR AN EVENT

A big event requires a lot of advance planning. Some events might take six months to plan. You should be as rigorous in planning this as you are for your recruitment drive. You need to set goals, work backwards from those goals to determine what needs to be accomplished, and then make a week-by-week plan to make sure the event is planned out.

Below is a sample plan for a big river clean-up:

	3/27-4/2	4/3-4/9	4/10-4/16	4/17-4/23	4/24-4/30	GOALS
LOGISTICS	Scout location, reserve site	Make donation calls for gloves, trash bags	Pick up donations, call public works to pick up trash	Identify drivers for carpools	Print out directions, confirm public works	Location, gloves and bags donated, carpools
VISIBILITY/MEDIA	Hang 100 posters	Hang 100 posters, submit 4 LTEs	Chalking, call to confirm LTEs	Advisory sent to all media targets	Media calls, confirm media	200 posters, chalking, 4 media hits, 2 LTEs printed
VOLUNTEERS		Call GIM cards: 40 hours 200 sign-ups	Table: 40 hours 200 sign-ups	Class raps to sign up vols: 20 raps 200 sign-ups	Confirm calls to all vols: 30 hours	75 vols at the event: 150 say yes, 600 signed-up vols
COALITIONS	Make target list of 20 groups, call leaders	Attend meetings of 10 groups	Sign on 5 co-sponsors, get them to set goals for turnout	Confirm groups		5 co-sponsor groups
PRIORITY FOR WEEK	Logistics	Coalitions	Volunteers	Volunteers	Confirm vols, media	

4. Working With The Media

WHOEVER
CONTROLS THE
MEDIA—THE
IMAGES—
CONTROLS THE
CULTURE.

-ALLEN
GINSBERG

NEWS CONFERENCES

- How To Plan A News Conference
- News Conference Visuals
- Writing A News Advisory
- Writing A News Release

OP-EDS

- How To Get An Op-Ed Printed
- Writing Tips
- Sample Op-Ed

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

- How To Submit An LTE
- Writing Tips
- Sample LTE Outline

RADIO FEEDS

- When To Do Radio Feeds
- What You Will Need To Do A Radio Feed
- How To Do Effective Radio Feeds
- Sample Radio Feed

Good media coverage enables you to educate and influence thousands of people within a given media market, helping you to win reforms. Building media relations is the key to getting coverage as well as a critical piece of any power building strategy—the people who determine what's news are people who influence our ability to make things happen.

IMPORTANCE OF THE MEDIA

- Advances the goals of the organization. Effective use of the media in a campaign is one of the most important tools you can use to achieve campaign victories.
- Educates and influences opinion leaders and the public.
- Builds your group by deepening name recognition and credibility.

MEDIA "HANDLES"

Anything you're doing can be made into a media opportunity if you can create an appropriate "handle"—something for the media to latch onto.

- Launching campaigns
- Pressuring an individual or group to take action
- An education or visibility event
- Releasing reports
- Organizing events
- Public criticism or protest when something went wrong
- Commenting on a current event that highlights the need for our campaign
- Influential groups, people or VIPs.



The release of a research report is a good time to hold a press conference. The media will frequently cover these events if your report contains new data on the issue. Press conferences give you a chance to get the results of your report out to far more people than you could contact by any other method.



Community service events make great media opportunities. Here, TV news crews have been invited to join a river cleanup. Any big event that your group is organizing can be a good opportunity to invite the media to come hear your message and show that many people are involved in your campaign.

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

News Conferences

NEWS CONFERENCE VISUALS

Just as important as the materials explaining the event are the visuals at the event itself. Examples of successful visuals are:

- blown-up charts or graphs
- a blown-up copy of a petition
- a sign or banner with your group's name clearly displayed

News conferences are one of the best ways to generate media. In order to decide if it's appropriate to hold a news conference, factors to consider are: Are you releasing new information? Are there good visuals (this is especially important if you want TV coverage)? Is there a local angle? If you cannot answer "yes" to one of these questions, you probably should not be having a news conference.

HOW TO PLAN A NEWS CONFERENCE

1. Figure out the logistics. Timing is critical to a successful event. Know the news deadlines in your city. In general, media events should take place between 9:30 and 11:00 am. For most locations, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and in some places Saturdays, tend to be best. Picking a location is a critical decision. The number one criterion is accessibility to the media. Ideally, the location should provide good opportunities for photographs or be relevant to the press conference. Before choosing a location, check it out in person at the time/day of the planned press conference to check for crowds, noise, parking availability, etc.

2. Get Speakers. It usually takes a few weeks to line up big name speakers. Leave yourself at least two weeks

preparation time. Anybody who agrees to speak at the conference needs to know in advance who the other speakers are, what each speaker is going to say, and what questions to expect. Each presentation should be 2-5 minutes, each speaker should have at least one "quotable quote," and each speaker should be prepared to make her/his presentation without reading notes.

3. Prepare Materials.

Prepare and send out a news advisory three days before the event. The advisory should briefly state the who, where, why and when of the event. Prepare a news release for distribution to members of the media who attend and to send to outlets that don't attend (see "Writing a News Release" and the sample release).

4. Make Sure the Media Turn Out.

Even the best-planned event is a flop if no media show. The only way to ensure good attendance is to follow-up with reporters individually. Everyone who receives a news advisory should receive a personal phone call three days ahead and then one day before the event. Call TV and the AP news service the afternoon before and the morning of the event. Keep good records on whom you call and what they say so you know with whom to follow-up.

5. Be Prepared At the Event. Make sure you arrive early. A greeter should be stationed at the door with a sign-in sheet and a packet for media folks. No matter how many or how few people have arrived, do not start the event more than five minutes after the scheduled time. Introduce yourself and the speakers and be sure to keep things moving along. Leave up to 15 minutes for questions and answers. You may need to stick around to do interviews with various reporters.

6. Follow Up With Reporters. Head back to the office to do radio feeds, answer reporters' questions, and fax releases to key people who did not show. Call through to the reporters who did attend to answer any questions and find out if they will use the story. Call reporters who did not attend to interest them in the story and give interviews. Thank you notes with clips should go to all speakers. Record TV appearances and clip print stories.

WRITING A NEWS ADVISORY

A news advisory is designed to inform a reporter or editor about an upcoming news conference. It is like an invitation to a party.

The advisory should include the date, time, place and purpose of the news conference. If there are important speakers or exemplary visuals, the advisory should mention those. The advisory, however, should not tell the whole story. If it does, nobody will bother to come to the conference itself.



29 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111
(617) 292-4800 ph • (617) 292-8057 fax
www.masspirg.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

November 26, 2002

CONTACT:

Chris Lindstrom, 617-292-4800

CONSUMER GROUP TO RELEASE 17TH ANNUAL REPORT ON POTENTIAL HAZARDS POSED BY TOYS

WHAT: MASSPIRG will release a new toy safety report and a new full-color toy safety brochure. Participants will demonstrate examples of potential hazards to young children that are posed by toys, including choking hazards to children under three, hearing dangers and toxic chemical exposure hazards. The report focuses on toy manufacturer compliance with the 1994 Federal Child Safety Protection Act. Tips for parents and other toy shoppers will be offered.

PIRG toy safety reports have led to more than 100 enforcement actions including recalls by the Consumer Product Safety Commission over the past 15 years.

WHEN: Tuesday, November 26, 2002, 9:30 A.M.

WHO: Chris Lindstrom, MASSPIRG; Dr. Drew, Mass. General

WHERE: Mass. General Hospital emergency room

From the North: Via I-93 or I-1 take the Storrow Drive exit. Take the Government Center exit off Storrow Drive. Follow signs to Downtown and Government Center. At first set of lights, take left onto North Grove Street. Parking is located on both sides of street.

From the South: Via Southeast Expressway (I-93) take the Storrow Drive exit. Take the Government Center exit off Storrow Drive. Follow signs to Downtown and Government Center. At first set of lights, take left onto North Grove Street. Parking is located on both sides of street.

From the West: Via the Massachusetts Turnpike take the Cambridge-Allston exit. Bear right after the toll booth. Make a right at first set of lights onto Storrow Drive. After approximately five miles take the Government Center exit. Follow signs to Downtown and Government Center. At first set of lights, take left onto North Grove Street. Parking is located on both sides of street.

EXCELLENT VISUALS AND EXAMPLES OF HAZARDS POSED BY TOYS

WRITING A NEWS RELEASE

A news release is your way to get a clear, concise, standard message across to any and all interested reporters. It is designed to answer their questions before they are asked and to frame the issue as you want it to appear. Prepare a news release in conjunction with your news conference. The release will give reporters who do and who don't attend a consistent story about what you're doing. You can also write and distribute a news release when something happens that is not visual enough for a news conference. See the sample news release to the right.

OSPIRG

OREGON STUDENT PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP
OSPIRGSTUDENTS.ORG

MORE THAN **30** YEARS OF EDUCATION IN ACTION

Contact: Ben Unger
(503) 231-4181

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
January 23, 2003

OSPIRG RELEASES A SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE

The Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group today released a sample news release calling it "an invaluable guide for citizen activists interested in getting good media coverage." The lead paragraph in the sample news release, just like that in a real release, is two or three sentences containing the who, what, when, where and why of the story.

"An important quote from an OSPIRG spokesperson using active verbs usually is in the second paragraph of the release," said Ben Unger, OSPIRG's Organizing Director. "Reporters like informative, snappy quotes, and also, within the confines of quotation marks you can editorialize and advocate your side of the issue."

The sample news release, which is intended for use as a model, imitates the form and style of an authentic release but lacks real news content. It is two or three pages in length, comprised of short, double-spaced paragraphs.

"The news release is a cornerstone of any publicity effort," according to Unger. "Activists can write a good news release simply by imitating the inverted pyramid style of articles found in newspapers," he said.

The inverted pyramid style places the most important features of the news story at the beginning of the release with each subsequent paragraph containing less important information. Within the news release, parenthetical paragraphs give readers background information that they may not have otherwise known.

It is common practice for citizen groups to issue news releases on a wide range of subjects including Earth Day events, consumer scams and pending legislation. However, few news releases are actually published or broadcast by the news media because "literally hundreds cross a reporters desk each week," according to Unger.

"Since the competition for news coverage is intense, releases must be stylistically correct and contain a hard news hook if they are going to receive coverage," Unger said. "Releases about breaking news, especially if it has a local angle, are more likely to get coverage."

#

OSPIRG is a statewide student organization that works to defend the public interest.

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Op-Eds

A GOOD
NEWSPAPER,
I SUPPOSE,
IS A NATION
TALKING TO
ITSELF.

-ARTHUR
MILLER

HOW TO GET AN OP-ED PRINTED

The normal process is to submit a typed article (average length of 500-800 words) with a cover letter to the Editorial Page Editor.

Keep in mind the usual protocol for submitting to sets of papers. In California, if the LA Times runs a piece, others will also run it. On the other hand, if it is being run by other less-known papers, the LA Times won't.

It's important to follow up ruthlessly: Did they get it? Will they print it (and when)? Can you adjust it to their specifications?

Op-Eds are the editorial pieces that newspapers run on the opinion pages. By closely monitoring the opinion pages, you can get a sense of the articles run by the editor. Pay close attention to any pieces on your issue or by your peers.

WRITING TIPS

- **Have a hook.** You've got to hook the reader—and the editor—in the first couple of paragraphs. Use an interesting anecdote or question, a provocative statement or a colorful quote. Editors often look for creative angles on a topic.

- **Get a co-signer.** Getting a coalition partner, VIP or legislator to co-sign can definitely help get coverage.

- **Use examples.** Make ample use of anecdotes and quotes; they keep the reader going.

- **Show, don't tell.** Wherever possible, give facts or examples rather than using rhetoric—it's more convincing.

- **Back up your assertions with facts.** And double check them. Make sure your quotations are accurate—both the actual words and the context in which they are used.

- **Don't overstate anything.** Overstatement creates distrust in the reader's mind.

- **Imagine yourself as the reader.** Anticipate questions a reader might have.

- **Come full circle.** If you can do it naturally, tie the end of the article to the beginning.

SAMPLE OP-ED

Los Angeles Times

NA / WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2002

Commentary

JOHN BALZAR

Oil Drips With Money for Alaska

ANCHORAGE—Who wants to drill for oil in the far north of Alaska? Alaskans do. And do they ever.

More than the oil companies themselves, more than labor unions, more even than George W. Bush, Alaskans are desperate to get some fresh crude flowing out of the wilderness here. That's because there is a threat on the horizon. Doom is settling in like ice fog. The bears are restless in their dens. Without new oil, goodness, Alaskans might be asked to pay taxes.

For a generation now, Alaskans have been living high off public lands and the royalties from free-flowing petroleum. Instead of having to pay state taxes, Alaskans get a juicy cash kickback every year from their government. But the big North Slope oil fields are slowly drying up.

So, Alaska has dipped into its shrinking state treasury for money to mount the mother of all lobbying campaigns: nearly \$5 million to try to convince other Americans and Congress that it's in the nation's best interests to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling so that Alaskans won't have to shoulder the yoke and actually pay for their schools and hospitals themselves.

For pure self-interest, Alaska beats even Enron in trying to shape government policy. In the last year, the state spent \$3.85 million in its Arctic refuge drilling campaign and appropriated another \$1 million last week.

By comparison, Enron spent \$2.1 million lobbying in 2000 and \$1.9 million the year before, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

I have been kicking around, writing about, playing and working in Alaska on and off for a dozen years now. I love this state and its people, truly.

I also love to pull the fig leaf off their silly myths once in awhile, even though they roar like angry sow bears every time.

For instance, you'll hear plenty about national energy independence in the debate over the Arctic refuge. But the real fight is Alaska's fight for money.

National energy independence? The last time we heard that argument was when federal lands in Prudhoe Bay, west of the refuge, were opened for drilling. Back then, Americans were promised that North Slope crude would lead the country to self-sufficiency.

Funny, but for the benefit of Alaskans who wanted a better price for their oil, Congress later said never mind and allowed this oil to be sold to Asia. Today the U.S. imports a larger share of its oil than ever before.

Forget what the state's lobbyists say; it's solely self-interest that fuels the drive for more drilling.

Funny, too, but if you look close, you don't see much in the way of oil company lobbying to drill in the disputed coastal section of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. To the disappointment of many Alaskans, the giant oil companies are preoccupied elsewhere—in Russia, in Africa, in Latin America, in the Gulf of Mexico and in Central Asia.

So the state has had to shoulder the argument itself, hand in hand with the president.

Why? Well, on the frontier, life has been cushy for a generation now. At least as far as government goes. Alaskans—those hardy and self-reliant frontiersmen—get an annual "dividend" from the Juneau government: the earnings off a \$21-billion "permanent fund" that is the citizenry's share of oil revenues over the years.

Last year, the payout was \$1,963.86 per person, or \$7,855 for a family of four. On top of that, oil pays for 84% of state government, meaning no income or sales taxes.

On the federal front, government also favors Alaskans. For every \$1 they pay in U.S. taxes, they receive \$1.68 back—to provide such cushy services as subsidized airline service to air-freight soda pop to remote villages. This per-capita payout is twice the 86 cents that Californians get back for each \$1 they pay in federal taxes.

Not that Alaskans are grateful, of course. They adhere to the illusion of rugged individualism, which means they are second to none when it comes to complaining about government and taxes.

And right now, the complaints have reached fever pitch. Like many states, Alaska faces a budget deficit: \$1 billion. The governor has proposed an income tax. Other politicians are arguing for a sales tax on the grounds that at least some of the burden would then be sloughed off on tourists rather than to residents. Some state leaders have been so daring as to propose dipping into the permanent fund to pay for government.

But the best hope, at least for the long run, is more oil. So when you hear that drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is going to help America, you'll know exactly which part.

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Letters To The Editor

SAMPLE LTE

Los Angeles Times

LETTERS TO THE TIMES

Save the Commission That Has Saved the Coast

A state appeals court recently ruled that California's Coastal Commission is unconstitutional (Jan. 1). This past September, I drove the entire length of California's coastline from the Tijuana River estuary to Pelican State Beach north of Crescent City. I enjoyed the public access and manicured beaches in Venice and Malibu. Rigs on the horizon and tank farms tucked in the dunes near Santa Barbara reminded me that oil extraction can coexist with other uses of the coast, though the relationship is not always easy. Three miles north of San Simeon, a thriving elephant seal colony lies within sight of the coastal highway. Hundreds of drivers pull over every day to watch and learn about marine mammals at this scenic, protected beach. Near San Francisco, city dwellers enjoy miles and miles of undeveloped, carefully conserved shoreline.

California's coast is a priceless resource enjoyed by all. The Coastal Commission has championed public access, environmental protection and economic development for all the people, not just the few who can afford the high cost of coastal real estate. The governor, the Legislature and the press will digest the court decision. If the actions that result are informed by the Coastal Commission's legacy of conservation for the future and for all, then I am sure that reason will prevail.

CHARLES A. BOOKMAN
Seattle

Letters to the editor (LTEs) are a great way to get easy media coverage for your campaign. Letters are easy to write and have a good chance of being printed. In addition, the letters page is one of the most widely read pages in the newspaper, so you can use LTEs to get your message out to lots of people.

HOW TO SUBMIT AN LTE

Submitting LTEs is much easier than submitting op-eds. However, LTEs should not be seen as fall-backs to submitting op-eds. Most newspapers state their policies for submitting LTEs in the paper (usually on the opinion page). Make sure you follow their procedures exactly.

Follow up with the editor of the letters page to be sure s/he received your letter, that it meets their requirements and to ask when they are planning to print it. Make sure you have a strategy for who signs—whether it should be your group, other groups, local officials, or an average citizen. It's also frequently effective to send in letters from several people on the same issue; this increases the chance that the paper will print one of them.

WRITING TIPS

- **Respond.** Respond to stories. Letters in response to stories that ran recently are more likely to be printed. Read the paper and watch for stories that relate to your campaign.

- **Find a hook.** As with Op-Eds, you've got to hook the reader—and the editor—right away. Use an interesting anecdote or question, a provocative statement or a colorful quote.

- **Show, don't tell.** Wherever possible, give facts or examples rather than using rhetoric. It's more convincing.

- **Back up your assertions with facts.** And double check them. Make sure your quotations are accurate—both the actual words and context in which they are used.

- **Show emotion.** With LTEs it is fine to express feelings of anger or of frustration—but make sure you avoid overstatement.

- **Keep it short.** Short letters are more likely to be printed.

LTE SAMPLE OUTLINE

1. State the problem/topic (why you personally are concerned).

"Landfills are filling up and toxic hazards are leaching into the groundwater."

2. Describe the problem in a way that makes it more real for the reader.

"Our garbage crisis is making Oregon a less livable place."

3. State the solution, both generally and specifically.

"Packaging should no longer burden our landfills. We should expand the recycling program here on campus so that students will be able to recycle and reduce our impact on the environment."

4. Summary: Wrap it up with the final "why"—again, the more personal the better. A single, well-written sentence wins your audience.

"The university should be setting an example for the rest of the community."

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Radio Feeds

OUR VOICES
ARE POWERFUL,
AND WE SHOULD
BE SHOUTING
WITH THEM FROM
MOUNTAINTOPS,
OVER THE AIRWAYS,
ON THE WEB...
WHEREVER.
THE SILENT
SWALLOWING
OF INJUSTICE,
INEQUALITY,
AND GENERAL
ANTIPATHY FOR
THE WORLD
HAS TO STOP.
...TALK HARD.

- PUMP UP THE
VOLUME

A radio feed is a 30 second opportunity to give your opinion and to present your case to thousands of people at work, at home or in their cars.

WHEN TO DO RADIO FEEDS

Radio feeds should be done in conjunction with any news conference, news release, or in response to any relevant event where you can create news.

The target times for the feed to be played are during morning or evening drive time, or mid-day news. So, the best times to call most radio stations are 5:00-6:00 a.m., 10:30-11:30 a.m. and before 4:00p.m.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO DO A RADIO FEED

You need a list of radio stations and their phone numbers. This should be updated with information on who takes the feeds and when and how to present the feed for that station. Have in hand a standard 30 second rap to read. It is also helpful to have a copy of the news release and a fact sheet handy.

If you have a news conference, tape a VIP speaker and use a clip as radio feed.

HOW TO DO EFFECTIVE RADIO FEEDS

1. **Write a rap** that takes 30 seconds to read at a relaxed pace.
2. **Practice** reading the statement before calling.
3. **Call the station** and ask for the newsroom.
4. **Ask to do a radio feed.** Explain that you're from the campaign and want to give them a brief statement.
5. **Introduce yourself.** Once the tape is rolling, give your name and organization.
6. **Read the statement** slowly and clearly.
7. **Answer any questions** briefly and honestly. If necessary, get back to them later with answers to more difficult questions.
8. **Find out when it will be broadcast.** When you're done taping, ask for their name and the most likely time for the story to run.
9. **Write any appropriate notes** on your list of stations for next time.
10. **Listen to the radio and tape the news.**

SAMPLE RADIO FEED

My name is Dan Kohler and I'm with the Massachusetts Student Public Interest Research Group.

Today, the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts announced their final plan to clean up five of the oldest, dirtiest coal-burning power plants in the state.

Air pollution here in Massachusetts causes thousands of asthma attacks and hundreds of premature deaths each year. These five plants, nicknamed the "Filthy Five," create a disproportionate amount of the air pollution in the state.

The new regulations announced today are the strongest power plant rules in the nation and will reduce pollution from these plants by 50% to 75% in the next few years. The rules are also the first in the nation to regulate mercury, a neurotoxin, and carbon dioxide, which causes global warming.

The campaign to adopt these new regulations was spearheaded by MASSPIRG with the support of an unprecedented coalition of more than 150 environmental and public health organizations.

Notes: