



Campaigning tips

This briefing provides a series of twenty tips for effective campaigning.

1. Don't bite off more than you can chew. Keep it simple and come back for more if it all works well.
2. Be clear what you want the decision maker to do. Perhaps the best measure is: will you know when you have won?
3. Be ready to adapt your objectives as time passes e.g. if circumstances change.
4. Make sure you have compelling evidence of the problem you wish to resolve and that you present it clearly.
5. Work out as part of your strategy what decisions have to be taken by whom and in what order
6. A civic society's collective knowledge of a campaign and of how organisations like local authorities actually work should be written down and widely understood. Don't keep it to yourself.
7. Try to identify who might support your campaign, who might oppose it and who has not made up their mind – but be prepared for surprises.
8. Treat the decision maker as a potential ally who hasn't quite seen the light yet; do not upset people if you don't have to.
9. Most campaigns spend too much time on actions, and not enough on thinking.
10. Run a campaign with a small group rather than through an individual but make sure that anyone who wants to take part is offered tasks appropriate to the contribution they wish to make (in terms of skills and time); avoid being a clique.
11. Always act early rather than leave things to the last moment; remain in control of events rather than struggling to respond to them.
12. Plan campaigns over the longer term: encourage everyone who wants to be involved to do their bit when they can, dipping in or out when they want to.

13. Use a campaign to increase your capacity to campaign; if an initiative can bring in money or members, or raise your society's standing in the community, this will help you to achieve more, but don't compromise the campaign itself.
14. Be cautious about using one sympathetic councillor or senior figure as your mouthpiece in the council the whole time they may be viewed as unrepresentative and too easily in the civic society's pocket. Try to choose the best person to argue your case, not the easiest.
15. Work out at the start: who do you want to reach and why? What do you want them to do once they know about your campaign?
16. Using the mass media can raise awareness of your campaign amongst the general public, but work out if there is anything else you want large numbers of people to do to help the campaign, and adjust your messages accordingly.
17. Journalists will usually have a different agenda than you; they will more often want a story than simply to support your campaign. But they can be vital to success.
18. Writing a good press release is a craft – obtain advice before starting.
19. Make sure your civic society has a good website and it is updated regularly?
20. Communicate effectively with your membership and supporters, using methods appropriate to different groups of people, not only newsletters sent through the post, but especially email; don't forget the interest in blogging, Facebook and Twitter

These campaigning tips were first used in Civic Voice's Street Pride workshops presented by Richard Bate, Green Balance. Please let us have any feedback on how useful they are or your own suggestion info@civicvoice.org.uk

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