

The Democracy Center - Citizen Action Series

Excerpts from *The Democracy Owners Manual*
(To preview or purchase the book visit www.democracyctr.org)

Developing Advocacy Strategy

One of the most important parts of effective advocacy is having a strategy – a clear vision of where you are, where you want to go and a plausible plan of action for getting there. Five key questions can help show the way:

What is Your Objective?

What change will actually solve the problem you are concerned about, one which is also winnable? An advocacy objective needs to be compelling to get people interested in working for it. It also needs to be small enough to achieve at least part of your goal within a year or two, to keep people interested.

Who Do You Need to Move?

Who actually has the authority to give you what you want (city council, state legislature, the President)? Who else do you need to woo to your side as a way of influencing those with authority (the media, other citizen groups, etc.)?

What Do They Need to Hear?

What advocacy message will move all those people in your direction? An effective advocacy message has two parts – an appeal on the merits (this bill is important because...) and an appeal to self-interest (hundreds of voters want to know how you'll vote...).

Who Do They Need to Hear it From?

What “messengers” can you recruit who will be most persuasive? An advocacy campaign needs a mix of messengers – people who can speak from personal experience, people with recognized authority, and others who might have some special pull with the people you are targeting.

What Actions Will You Use to Make Your Point?

Finally what will you actually mobilize people to do in order to deliver that message? The options are many. You can lobby officials politely or protest in front of their office. You can get an article in the newspaper, you could hold a town meeting. Generally, the best actions are those requiring the least effort and confrontation, but which still gets the job done.

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