

Quick campaign tips

If you haven't got time to read the rest of the good practice section, at least take a look at these top tips!

Trying to be an effective campaigner can sometimes feel overwhelming. This website is full of useful information to help you be effective.

But if you don't have the time to read through our 'Know-How' section, you may find this section quite useful. It features some 'top tips' from a range of individuals and groups. No one 'model' or set of tips is fully comprehensive, but you might find one or more as a useful checklist or guide to help you on your journey.

Good luck with your campaign!

SMK's top 10 campaigning tips

As the people behind the Campaign Central website, it seems like a good idea to give you some of our own campaigning tips!

[Sheila McKechnie Foundation's \(SMK\) top 10 campaigning tips.](#)

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1. **KNOW YOUR STUFF** - Make sure you research your issue area thoroughly. Every argument must be supported by robust evidence if it is to be convincing.
2. **BUILD A TEAM** - A great campaigner is someone who can take people with them on their journey. Build a team of people who have the right mix of skills you will need to achieve your goal.

3. **MAKE A PLAN** - A campaigner should always know, and be able to articulate, precisely what they want their outcomes to be.
4. **SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER**- You will need a campaign target. Who directly has the power to make the change you are campaigning for?
5. **MAP YOUR ISSUE** - It is helpful to map the forces that will influence your campaign target e.g. who and what will be supportive or resistant to your objectives?
6. **BUILD ALLIANCES** - Check out whether other organisations are pursuing similar objectives. Making alliances can be an effective way to strengthen your message and broaden your reach.
7. **USE THE RIGHT TACTICS FOR YOU** - Think carefully whether your proposed tactics will help you achieve your objectives. Tactics that worked for one campaign might not be right for you - there is no one recipe for success.
8. **TIMING IS EVERYTHING** - Timing your tactics to coincide with activities taking place by either supportive or opposing forces can increase your impact or exposure. Always be aware of the environment in which you are operating.
9. **SWOT** - Analyse your **S**trengths **W**eaknesses **O**pportunities and **T**hreats to help strengthen your objectives and mitigate potential problems.
10. **EVALUATION** - Setting clear targets at the beginning of your campaign will allow you to monitor your progress and assess whether you are making not just an impact but the right impact.

Saul Alinsky's Rules for Radicals

Saul Alinsky was an influential thinker, who had some great advice for campaigners, activists and radicals.

Saul Alinsky was an American community organiser and writer. In 1971 he published his influential '[Rules for Radicals: A Pragmatic Primer for Realistic Radicals](#)'. The book imparted his ideas about creating social change through activism.

Alinsky said of his book "What follows is for those who want to change the world from what it is to what they believe it should be. The Prince was written by Machiavelli for the Haves on how to hold power. Rules for Radicals is written for the Have-Nots on how to take it away."

His rules can be summarized as follows:

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1. Power is not only what you have, but what an opponent thinks you have. If your organization is small, hide your numbers in the dark and raise a din that will make everyone think you have many more people than you do.
2. Never go outside the experience of your people. The result is confusion, fear, and retreat.
3. Whenever possible, go outside the experience of an opponent. Here you want to cause confusion, fear, and retreat.
4. Make opponents live up to their own book of rules. "You can kill them with this, for they can no more obey their own rules than the Christian church can live up to Christianity."
5. Ridicule is man's most potent weapon. It's hard to counterattack ridicule, and it infuriates the opposition, which then reacts to your advantage.
6. A good tactic is one your people enjoy. "If your people aren't having a ball doing it, there is something very wrong with the tactic."
7. A tactic that drags on for too long becomes a drag. Commitment may become ritualistic as people turn to other issues.
8. Keep the pressure on. Use different tactics and actions and use all events of the period for your purpose. "The major premise for tactics is the development of operations that will maintain a constant pressure upon the opposition. It is this that will cause the opposition to react to your advantage."
9. The threat is more terrifying than the thing itself. When Alinsky leaked word that large numbers of poor people were going to tie up the washrooms of O'Hare Airport, Chicago city authorities quickly agreed to act on a longstanding commitment to a ghetto organization. They imagined the mayhem as thousands of passengers poured off airplanes to discover every washroom occupied. Then they imagined the international embarrassment and the damage to the city's reputation.
10. The price of a successful attack is a constructive alternative. Avoid being trapped by an opponent or an interviewer who says, "Okay, what would you do?"
11. Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, polarize it. Don't try to attack abstract corporations or bureaucracies. Identify a responsible individual. Ignore attempts to shift or spread the blame.