

# What is your vision?

Campaigners need to communicate their vision and key messages. We help you get the fundamentals right.

This section looks at the importance of getting some of the fundamentals of a campaign right.

It might sound like stating the obvious to say that a campaign should have a vision, and key messages. Surprisingly a lot of campaigns either lack these things, or they don't communicate them clearly.

Campaigning is all about changing hearts and minds through the strength of your argument. And for your argument to be powerful and remain focused, it must be based on clear vision and messages.

Also, the guide on Influencing decision-makers looks at identifying who has the power to create (or prevent) the change your campaign is about. Identifying your campaign targets is a crucial aspect of your strategy.

## Further information

A useful resource is [Chris Rose's Campaign Strategy website](#). The Campaign Central website did not cover the important area of campaign strategy because this online resource already covers it in considerable detail.

There are a range of other excellent resources about these issues, available online such as: '[Tips on Good Practice in Campaigning](#)' published by NCVO. Look in particular at Tip 4, 'Be clear what you are trying to achieve'.

Also, there a range of books that have a range of information about these areas such as, '[The Good Campaigns Guide](#)', '[The Campaigning Handbook](#)', and '[How to Win Campaigns](#)'.

# Campaign vision

Every campaign must have a vision. Without a clear vision, you're unlikely to succeed in your mission.

A campaign vision is a simple aspirational statement about the future that you want to create – it is broad and overarching.

Your vision is really important, because when someone asks you why you are campaigning on a particular issue, or what the issue is that you are trying to deal with, you need to have a clear, simple statement that they will remember.

Examples of vision statements:

- "London Cycling Campaign's vision is to make London a world-class cycling city"
- "The Stroke Association wants a world where there are fewer strokes and all those touched by stroke get the help they need."

Both these statements present a sense of why the campaign is even needed, and what the problem or gap currently is. So taking each in turn, we can see that:

- London is not currently a world class cycling city, but can be because of this campaign.
- Strokes are avoidable and that for those that do suffer strokes, there may be insufficient support.

## What are your key messages?

Could you sum up your campaign in just three simple messages? If not, help is at hand here...

Relating closely to your vision are your key messages, but they should not simply rephrase or elaborate the vision.

In an information saturated world, even people who are really interested in what you do, are unlikely to grasp your campaign if you don't have simple key messages.

Your key messages could be a mixture of the following:

- Key facts or figures that underpin your campaign
- Things that you are doing to achieve your vision
- Things that you want others (e.g. the Government, a company) to do to tackle the problem you've set out

There is no rule book on how many key messages you should have, but presenting more than five is probably too many.

However, you may want to promote different (or different versions of) key messages to appeal to diverse audiences. In which case you may well want to have a slightly larger bank of key messages.

Let's contrast two different sets of key messages:

### [NothingButNets](#)

- Malaria Kills. Nets save lives. Send a net. Save a life. Visit [www.NothingButNets.net](http://www.NothingButNets.net) to donate and learn more.
- Nothing But Nets – a global, grassroots campaign to save lives by delivering long-lasting insecticide-treated nets to prevent malaria – has engaged over 70,000 individuals, raised more than \$20 million; and distributed over 700,000 nets to date.
- Every 30 seconds a child dies from malaria. And every day 25 million pregnant African women risk severe illness and harm to their unborn children from a malaria infection.

The [It Doesn't Have to Happen](#) campaign messages are:

### **For young people**

1. Most young people don't carry knives.
2. Say 'no' to knives.
3. If you carry a knife, you're more likely to get stabbed yourself. Most people who carry a knife don't think they'll use it.
4. It is illegal to carry a knife - the maximum penalty is four years in prison and a £5,000 fine. It Doesn't Have to Happen - even if a knife wound isn't fatal it can still cause serious harm.

5. The effects of knife crime are devastating - for young people, their families, friends and community.
6. Get involved in It Doesn't Have to Happen and take a stand against knife crime.
7. It Doesn't Have to Happen has been created by young people like you.
8. Tell your friends about It Doesn't Have to Happen - the more people you tell, the stronger we become.

### **For parents and carers**

1. It's time to take a stand together against knife crime.
2. Most young people do not carry knives but it's better to talk to your children earlier on to prevent them from the possibility of getting to this stage.
3. You have a role to play in helping your child make the right choice. If there is one person your child will listen to, it's you. They respect you more than you think.
4. Understand the legal consequences of carrying a knife.
5. Talk to your child and talk to other mothers - you can make a difference.
6. Work together with other parents, teachers and support groups, this is not an issue you have to face on your own.
7. Keep a close eye on your kids, and look out for signs that something might be wrong.
8. Use the help and guidance set out in the website to launch and run your own campaign.
9. Tell us what you're doing and what's going on in your area by emailing [info@itdoesnthavetohappen.co.uk](mailto:info@itdoesnthavetohappen.co.uk).

Both campaigns have very powerful and clear messages – the first has three, the second has 19!

Nothing But Nets essentially communicates three things – that malaria kills, that malaria nets can save lives, and that they provide these nets. Even if you don't remember the statistics the key messages provide, it is quite easy to absorb and retain these three points.

With the 'It Doesn't Have to Happen' campaign, arguably, there are too many messages for each to be considered key messages. That is not to say that all 19 are not clear and important messages. But could you recount all 19? The chances are you will only be able to recall 3-5 of these messages – while this is the

same as the first campaign, you may not be recalling the 3-5 messages that the campaign would most want you to remember!

So, do think carefully about what all your messages are, and then deciding what are the ones that you most want to be understood by others.

# Theory of Change

You may have a great vision but you need a clear plan of how you are going to achieve it. Find out more about Theory of Change here.

**Theory of Change has been written by [Brian Lamb](#), Communications, Policy and Public Affairs Consultant.**

You may have a great vision but you need a clear plan of how you are going to achieve it.

Theory of Change (TOC) provides a powerful tool that helps campaigners be clear about what they are trying to achieve and ensure that their campaigns have a better chance of success. It is based on the best practice in organisational planning, but adds your understanding of what brings about change in the area you are working on.

The basis of the TOC model is to state a final impact you are seeking and then describe what would need to happen in terms of changes to legislation, policy or public attitude to secure that change. The advantage of using TOC is that it immediately points to the interrelationship between the activities you need to take and the outcomes you want to achieve. In doing so, you test your assumptions about how you are going to achieve that change.

## How to go about producing a Theory of Change

### 1 Stating a clear aim or final impact

The first stage of the process is to start with the ultimate aim of your activity. The aim should be a statement that encapsulates the ultimate impact you are seeking to achieve on lives of the people who would benefit.

You also need to identify the assumptions you are making about the environment for bringing about that change. It is also important to identify the barriers to that change.

You then list the ultimate impact at the bottom or top of a page and work backwards from this goal.

Examples of final impacts could be;

- Children have equal opportunities to succeed in school

- Child poverty will be abolished by 2020
- Women are free from violence in the home

## **2. Mapping strategies to achieve your campaign aim**

This stage examines the specific strategies that would be needed to bring about the campaign goal or impact you want to make. These strategies need to have a causal or logical relationship to the end goal that you are trying to achieve and you need to be aware of the appropriate type of strategy to achieve your particular goal. This assumes an overall understanding of what types of actions lead to different types of changes.

## **3. Reverse Mapping**

Once you have your goal then work back up through the causal chain from final impact to inputs and establish “so that” chains for each strategy you are thinking of employing. This process is often called reverse planning or backwards mapping as the idea is start from the goal to be achieved and work backwards to the conditions needed to achieve it.

## **4. Outcomes and how to get there – using ‘so that’ chains**

It is crucial to be clear about outcomes as opposed to the final impact you are trying to achieve. Therefore, it helps to check the linkages between your different activities.

This takes the outcome and associated strategy listed and creates a ‘so that’ chain based on the following question:

‘What activity should we do to result in the change we are seeking? You then repeat this question until you have linked each activity to your final Impact.

Example of a ‘so that’ chain

### **STRATEGY:**

More support for families to care for their disabled children. To do this we need to work together across the sector as one organisation will not be able to deliver change and

We can campaign to establish new rights through legislation establishing a right to short breaks and funding streams and pilot new approaches from local authorities;

*(Activity)*

So that

legislation is passed we need a campaign with MPs to pressure Government;

*(Activity)*

So that

New legislation gives rights to parents to have more support;

*(Outcome)*

So that

Funding streams are established as a result of the legislation and local authorities provide more resources;

*(Outcome)*

So that

parents will have more resilience and a better quality of life and be better able to parent their children through having the additional support.

*(Impact)*

## **5. Capacity of the Organisation to Achieve that Change**

One of the advantages claimed for the TOC model is that it illustrates the various elements that organisations should have in place to ensure they have the capacity to carry out their strategy.

## **6. Evaluation.**

Once you have all the actions it is possible to put milestones on these and measures of what success would look like at each stage. As there is a causal relationship between each of the steps this also implies what the critical path would be between the different actions. It will look like a structure chart for an organisation-only upside down!

It is best to work through this process in a group containing all those people who are most relevant or have the expertise on that issue.

There are a number of organisations that have successfully used Theory of Change mapping for campaigns. See for example [Action Aid's](#) work on violence against women. For a full guide to using TOC in campaigning refer to the guidance referenced at the beginning.

Once you have your completed map you can share it with other stakeholders and test if they also find it convincing. It can then be written up into a narrative plan using the headings from the Map.