# ../../../Documents/tCA%20logo.pngElements of strategy

A map that charts the territory between our current position and the achievement of our intended change objectives can help us get there on time and avoid the sense of being overwhelmed that often accompanies social and environmental activism.

Our maps can be simple or complex. Some campaigning organisations develop complex explanations of how they believe their strategies will contribute to change. Others have simple templates to plan and communicate their chosen tactics and keep people on the same page.

In our 'Strategising for Change' workshops, participants share and experiment with several campaign planning templates.

Something we've noticed about strategy is that people are often confused or in conflict about key strategising terms: strategy and tactics, goals and objectives in particular. This is a really simple run down of the way we use some of these words - if it helps! We do not advocate the "one right way" of campaigning but we do feel that community organisers and activists benefit immensely from developing a shared understanding and language.

**Strategy**

*If a strategy is like a stairway that takes us from our present position to where we want to go, tactics are like the individual steps. They are the component parts which together compose a plan of action. There are literally scores of tactics that a group can use. A few examples in ascending order of militancy are: letter writing, petition gathering, giving public testimony, marching, picketing, blocking access and sitting in.*

Lee Staples, Roots to Power

A strategy for a social change campaign can be as simple or complex as you and your group determine. It should communicate your theory of change, the political context you are working in, the problems and solutions, your goals, power analysis, tactics and timeline.

The Midwest Academy (http://www.midwestacademy.org) propose a simple campaign planning grid with columns for each of the following elements of strategy: vision; goals; objectives; organisational considerations; constituents, allies and opponents; tactics; and timeline.

The Democracy Centre (http://www.democracyctr.org/) recommend nine steps to plan advocacy campaigns, based around some simple questions. By answering each question, campaigners develop each element of their strategy.

1. What do we want? (Goals)

2. Who can give it to us? (Audiences)

3. What do they need to hear? (Messages)

4. Who do they need to hear it from? (Messengers)

5. How do we get them to hear it? (Delivery – strategy and tactics)

6. What have we got? (Resources; strengths)

7. What do we need to develop? (Challenges; gaps)

8. How do we begin? (First steps)

9. How will we know it's working, or not working? (Evaluation)

**1. Campaign focus and goals**

‘Cut the issue’ to narrow down bigger picture problems into more manageable parts. What part of the problem or bigger issue do you intend to work on? It might be helpful to frame it as a solution or partial solution. Name the problem, identify issues and justify which one/s you plan to tackle.

The campaign focus might include a ‘problem statement’ that defines the social or environmental justice that your group is most concerned with. What part of the problem are you trying to solve? How does resolving this issue address the underlying problem and root causes?

The ‘cutting the issue’ exercise can help you define your goals. (Note: We tend to use 'goals' as the bigger picture steps toward your vision and 'objectives' to denote the more specific steps you are hoping to achieve along the way.) How do you want things to be? If this issue or problem is resolved, how will the situation have changed? How will justice be achieved? Goals should be discrete and directly linked to the scope. It is generally best to focus on one campaign goal or limit to two or three. If your goals are sufficiently different, it may be worthwhile developing separate campaign plans.

Helpful tools:

* Cutting the issue

**2. Vision**

What does the situation you are working towards look like? What does the social or environmental change that you are working on feel like when you are there? Paint yourself a picture. It's a key to communicating with others about the world you are hoping to create through your campaign or community action.

Helpful tools:

* Key questions for developing your objectives
* What is your political vision?

**3. Situational analysis**

What is the context? What political, economic, cultural or other factors are creating or maintaining this problem? What are the root causes? What factors are likely to help or hinder you in achieving your objectives? Who benefits from the problem being maintained? Who would benefit from it being changed? Are certain groups experiencing these injustices more than others? What are civil society groups doing about the situation?

Helpful tools:

* Forcefield analysis

**4. Critical path analysis**

What sequence of changes or outcomes will take you from here to the vision of your campaign goal area being resolved? What changes need to take place? What assumptions underpin your critical path? What steps can you realistically bring about?

Helpful tools:

* Critical path analysis
* Naming political assumptions

**5. Organisational considerations**

What organisational considerations do you need to bear in mind? What are your philosophies and policies? What are our strengths? Constraints? Consider key organisational priorities such as gender and cultural diversity, and fundraising objectives. What level of priority does this campaign have? What resources are likely to be available for this campaign?

Helpful tools:

* SWOT analysis
* Team Types exercise

**6. Allies, constituents and targets**

When you map out the stakeholders in your campaign, allies are the stakeholders you can work with, build alliances with, and share resources with. Constituents are “the community”, the people you want to side with your position and help apply pressure to your target. Your target is often a decision maker - someone who can give you the change you want, in representative democracies these are often politicians, ministers, or members of parliament. Often these become primary targets and it can useful to identify secondary targets who are stakeholders who have some influence over the primary target. If your primary target is the CEO of a corporation, then your secondary targets might include shareholders or buyers.

We recommend you develop a power map. This is a simple tool to identify where key stakeholders (allies, targets, opponents and constituents) stand in relation to your campaign objective, and their relative levels of influence.

Helpful tools:

* Power mapping exercise
* Spectrum of allies

**7. Objectives**

What specific or tangible outcomes do you aim to achieve to further the campaign goals? Objectives should be strategic, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-specific (SMART). Objectives are based on your situational analysis (looking at the range of potential issues), critical path (how can each issue be resolved) and organisational considerations (how many issues can we tackle and which fit our organisation the best?).

Helpful tools:

* Revisit your critical-path
* Draft then SMARTen your objectives
* Forcefield analysis for each objective

**8. Tactics**

Tactics are the social action activities that you use to achieve your goals and objectives but the strategy is the sequencing of these in a logical and strategic way. List and detail the tactics required to achieve each campaign objective. Decide which tactics will deliver the greatest impact for the energy and resources you invest. Apply agreed tactics criteria to assess and justify tactics.

Many organizations adopt a set of criteria to assess potential tactics. The Midwest Academy (http://www.midwestacademy.com) have developed a checklist for tactics to make sure that

each tactic makes sense given your strategy.

* Can you really do it? Do you have the needed people, time and resources?
* Is it focused on either the primary or secondary target?
* Does it put real power behind a specific demand?
* Does it meet you organisational goals as well as you issue goals?
* Is it outside the experience of the target?
* Is it within the experience of your own members and are they comfortable with it?
* Do you have enough leaders experienced enough to do it?
* Will people enjoy participating in it?
* Will it play positively in the media?

Helpful tools:

* Brainstorm criteria to analyse or assess potential tactics;
* Tactics analysis;
* use the Beginning-Middle-End exercise to develop a sequence for your tactics;
* Movement Action Plan roles and stages analysis
* Tactics relay

**9. Evaluation and success indicators**

What will success look like and how will you know when it’s happening? Be sure not to emphasise the outputs that are easiest to count, focus instead on the outcomes that really matter to your objectives. Success indicators need to be directly linked to your objectives and might include:

* Outputs: What quantitative results will be brought about by your activities. What will be the results?
* Outcomes: What changes will be brought about?
* Impact: What will be longer-term results or changes?
* Indicators: How will you know you have achieved your objectives? What are the changes that you will be able to observe?
* Means of verification: How can you prove these changes have occurred?
* Details of how and when the campaign plan will be revised.
* Identify who will be responsible for gathering the data for monitoring success indicators, how they will do it and how regularly reports will be completed.

**SOURCE**

The Change Agency <http://www.thechangeagency.org/01_cms/details.asp?ID=57>