

General Strategies for Grassroots Organizing With Medical Students:

**This document is a list of practical suggestions compiled by past and current members of the National AMSA Grassroots Team.*

- 1) Be clear and consistent (with dates and deadlines especially): keep it as simple as possible.
- 2) Set deadlines, enforce deadlines (enforce politely but persistently)
 - a. Try to come up with deadlines collectively when possible.
 - b. Make sure enforcement of deadlines is justified (it helps people to know why they are doing something).
 - c. Keep a spreadsheet of deadlines you have set – when you forget your own deadlines, it quickly sends a message to your team.
- 3) Play the numbers, but improve the numbers
 - a. Recruit high numbers with the expectation that you will lose people
 - b. Strive to minimize loss by soliciting constant feedback (if a general call for feedback doesn't yield responses, try sending out an anonymous survey form to your team).
- 4) Practice "Preparation-time granted" motivational interviewing whenever possible
 - a. Prep Time Granted: Provide an agenda ahead of time, and then seek your team's input – don't put them on the spot.
 - b. Motivational Interviewing: helping people resolve their own ambivalence rather than telling them what to do. Ask the question, and then repeat back their own positive statements in order to move the dialog forward.
- 5) Always start the call by trying to break the ice and by setting time expectations (and then do not go over time).
- 6) Remind people frequently the value of their work (both the intrinsic and extrinsic value).
- 7) Give people an opportunity to say "no" when possible (ask at outset if they can handle the job or if they need more help).
- 8) Use a version of the phrase: "What are you hearing out there?" Then your team is looking WITH you at a landscape instead of you "teaching" them about the landscape. Avoid the teacher-student relationship.
- 9) Let the relationship come first – don't ask for things during every exchange. Give gifts on occasion.
- 10) Keep emails short and provide a summary of what's needed at the beginning of the email.

Last Updated 6/11/10 DM