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THE MARSHALL GANZ ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES

By Irmina Haq

Marshall Ganz, Ph.D. is a lecturer in public policy at [Harvard University](#). He worked on the staff of the [United Farm Workers](#) for sixteen years before becoming a trainer and organizer for political campaigns, unions and nonprofit groups. He is credited with devising the successful [grassroots organizing](#) model[1] and training for [Barack Obama's](#) winning [2008 presidential campaign](#).

Dr. Ganz's core principles of grassroots organizing can be summarized into the five major points below:[2]

I. THE CHOICE

As an organizer, your job is to identify and recruit other leaders to work with you on a campaign to win change. As a leader, you are: "those who take responsibility for enabling others to achieve shared purpose in the face of uncertainty." Rather than a "one" leader structure, the Ganz model stresses an interdependent group of leaders who rely on each others' strengths and share responsibility. And you identify and recruit others by 1) Identifying shared interests 2) Relationships of value to your campaign and 3) Sharing narrative- why you became involved with your cause in the first place.

II. THE STORY

Each of us has a story that can move others to action. As a leader, you create and communicate a narrative about yourself, the community you organize with, and the strategy to motivate others to join you. Just as importantly, you listen and coach others in your team on how to tell a good story. Public narrative is essential to leadership: It's how we motivate others to take action, responsibility, and create change.

III. THE STRUCTURE

We bring structure to organizations by building relationships. These are done in one of four ways: 1) One-to-one meetings to identify and recruit leaders, 2) House meetings to build community and commitment around a core leadership team 3) Organizational meetings to launch a new idea, invite new members, or recommit members to a cause and 4) Team meetings, for fostering strong relationships among leaders as well as decision making, strategy, and accountability.

IV. THE STRATEGY

Strategy is defined as the following: How we turn the resources we have into the power we need to win the change we want. To rephrase: it is how we turn the resources we have into the power we need to achieve a specific, measurable goal. It requires the following: 1) Fixed commitment to a common, clear, measurable goal. 2) Creative use of the unique resources you have at your disposal. 3) Flexibility in tactics- constantly trying new tactics, evaluating and improving them. 4) Lastly, you create a defined timeline with what you will do, with concrete, measurable benchmarks along the way.

V. THE ACTION

Actions are how we execute our strategy on the ground. We develop a hypothesis for action, test it, then revise the strategy as necessary. You select a tactic best fits your goals, based in the culture and experience of your team, and poll your group to select the one that generates the most energy and creativity in your team. Then you create an action plan: WHO will do WHAT by WHEN. Responsibilities allocated to specific individuals with definite deadlines and benchmarks.. You then execute the tactic, and afterwards review the outcome and revise your strategy for the future.

REFERENCES

[1] Marshall Ganz Organizing Notes (Fall 2009). <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/mganz/>

[2] NOI Organizing Toolbox: <http://neworganizing.com/toolbox/>

WHAT IS SINGLE PAYER?

by Leon Vorobeichik

It is a method of financing a health care system where only one entity – the government – is responsible for funding health insurance and covering the costs of hospitals, physicians, and other health professionals. Such funds are derived from the collection of taxes or minor deductions from employees.

ADVANTAGES:

- Coverage of all citizens: guaranteed access to care for all, regardless of ability to pay, regardless of preexisting conditions, regardless of current employment status
- Coverage of all necessary medical services: from primary care to specialists, from outpatient clinics to inpatient hospital care, from medication to rehabilitation
- For Patients: Free choice of physicians and hospitals
- For Physicians: autonomy over patient care and workplace
- Efficiency: Billing and other administrative duties are eliminated, resulting in cost-saving
- Not-for-profit: Unlike current private insurance companies, funds go toward care, not dividends or marketing

MYTHS

- It is socialized medicine: The actual delivery of health care is not necessarily administered by the government, but by private hospitals and physicians who simply bill the government for their services.
- It is more expensive: The General Accounting Office projects an administrative savings of 10 percent through the elimination of private insurance bills and administrative waste, or \$150 billion. Therefore, taxes will not have to be increased to afford a single payer system.

WHY SINGLE-PAYER IN THE UNITED STATES?

- Currently, the U.S. health care system is the most expensive in the world. Yet despite spending the most-
- The United States lags behind all other developed countries and performs poorly on health indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality and immunization rates.
- Leaves 51 million uninsured and millions inadequately covered, with large co-pays and rejected claims.

EXAMPLES AROUND THE WORLD

Britain's National Health Service: Medical treatment is both administered and financed by the government. Hospitals and clinics are owned by the government, and many doctors are government employees. Also found in Italy and Spain, as well as the US Department of Veterans Affairs and Bureau of Indian Affairs.

National Health Insurance Model: The payer is the government, but the providers of health care are private. Found in Canada, Australia and US Medicare

Many other developed countries, such as Germany, Japan, and Switzerland, rely on private insurance companies to provide coverage and on private hospitals and physicians for the delivery of health care. However, these are not-for-profit, and coverage is universal, guaranteed, and regulated by the government.

RESOURCES

- Physicians for A National Health Program <http://www.pnhp.org/>
- TR Reid. The Healing of America: The Quest for Better, Cheaper, and Fairer Health Care.
- Ranking 37th — Measuring the Performance of the U.S. Health Care System. NEJM. <http://healthpolicyandreform.nejm.org/?p=2610>

HOW TO LOBBY 101

by Erica Brode

(Adapted from Advocating for Change: Persuading Decision Makers to Act for Better Health, Center for Healthy Communities, The California Endowment)

The art of persuasion is a key skill in advocacy. It can be used to effect change at all levels of decision making from agencies to a court of law, however this chapter will focus on the persuasion of politicians, otherwise known as lobbying. In order to change law, however, you must not only focus on persuading legislators, but also persuade a majority of community members in order to create a movement that legislators will respond to.

The main steps in persuasion are to:

- Identify the appropriate decision makers who have the authority to make the change which you desire
- Frame your arguments
- Figure out what moves your decision maker
- Determine what action steps need to be taken before, during and after meeting with decision makers
- Watch out for traps

Note: There are restrictions on lobbying by 501 (c) (3) organizations in the legislative branch of government that don't apply in the other forms of health policy decision making, such as bringing a suit to court or petitioning a government agency. In 1976, legislation was passed allowing public charities to lobby up to a certain percentage of their annual expenditures.

IDENTIFY KEY DECISION MAKERS

Make sure the legislators that you are targeting have the authority to make the change you desire. This may require you to right down the specific source of their power.

Once you have determined who to target, you should research their background, what positions they have taken in the past on this issue or related issues, what the voters in their district think about the issue and how they are affected by the issue, who the key staffers are, what the staffers role will likely be, what motivates the legislator, whose opinion does the legislator value, whether anyone in your coalition knows the decision maker or has something in common with the decision maker. This information can be found online on the legislator's websites or in LexisNexis. You can also ask members of your coalition who have been working on this issue for a long time and may bring a bit of institutional memory to your movement.

Note: Staff members can be key in the persuasion process. Most legislators rely on their staff to gather data and analyze the arguments in favor and against issues, and make a recommendation on their course of action. Thus key staff members can be very influential in the persuasion of legislators and are usually more accessible than the legislators themselves.

FRAMING YOUR ARGUMENT

You want to communicate to the decision maker that:

- Your issue is a serious public health problem
- The decision maker is personally responsible for addressing this problem
- The decision maker has the power to make change
- The actions you request are feasible
- There is broad public support
- The arguments against your proposal should be rejected
- The decision makers must act AND follow through

This may require holding large community meetings, doing a letter or phone drive, or sending around a petition. You can also videotape different stakeholders discussing the issue.

WHAT DECISION MAKERS RESPOND TO

Decision makers are of course concerned about doing the right thing for their constituents, however there are many other (sometimes competing) influencing factors including how their supports will be effected by this issue, what their superiors or colleagues would think, how the media will report this issue, does the public support this issue, does something need to be done now or can they wait, and is this the best possible option.

Although facts and research are important and should form the backbone of any movement they are best left to leave behinds and fact sheets. The most moving thing to a decision maker that you can contribute is personal stories of patients you have seen or things that have moved you in the past. Some statistics and facts are useful but displaying them in graphs, pictures and other visual forms can make them much more digestible.

Legislators are also persuaded by public support. Support should be communicated through a list of supporters, town hall meetings, public hearings, letters and phones calls, emails and faxes, and pickets and demonstrations. They also respond to media coverage of an issue as it places a spotlight on the decision maker t act. This may require you to create news releases, news conference, on-site briefings for reporters, and editorials.

Note: When lobbying, it is critical that you are accurate with your statements and that you follow through. If you make a mistake, be the first to acknowledge it and update the decision maker with the accurate information. If the legislator requests information from you or your presence at a hearing on the issue make sure you follow through.

THE ACTUAL LOBBY VISIT

The lobby visit is a time to inform the legislator, show public support for your issue, answer any questions that they may have, gauge the decision makers attitude toward the issue, and directly ask for a specific action or commitment from the decision maker.

Before the meeting you should think through what you would like to get out of the meeting, when you would like the meeting, who should attend the meeting, how much time you would like, and where you would like the meeting (state capitol v. district office v. hospital or clinic site visit). You should also meet with your lobbying group and structure your presentation; tell a story. Also spend some time thinking through the possible arguments against your proposition and come up with responses.

You may also want to assign people roles based on their strengths—someone might be able to speak on the facts with expertise, while someone else may have a particularly strong personal story. Someone should be in charge of getting the discussion back on track if it starts to get off track, someone should be in charge of making “the ask,” and someone else should be responsible for taking notes and listing any items that require follow-up. You may want to spend some time practicing and role-playing.

You should prepare documents that you can leave behind with the legislator or staff member, including graphs and charts, press releases, fact sheets, etc. If you plan to inform the media about the legislative visit inform the legislator beforehand so that they don’t feel ambushed.

Be on time to the meeting. Make sure that everyone is introduced before the meeting begins. If possible, send people in that legislator’s district, however this may not always be possible. Make sure there is at least one person from the district if possible. Ask the legislator how much time they have to meet before the meeting begins as to avoid the legislator having to leave in the middle of your presentation. During the meeting, stay focused, cover all of the critical points, and make sure to ask the legislator for a commitment (from becoming a co-author, to placing their commitment to the legislation on their website). At the end of the meeting, the person taking notes should summarize the points for follow-up. Make sure someone is assigned to each follow-up item and set a deadline.

After the meeting, send a thank you letter to the decision maker. Update the decision maker on any information that you said you would provide and update the legislators on any actions that you have taken since the meeting. Finally, make sure the decision maker follows through on the commitment that they made to you.

TRAPS

- Any document that you provide may make its way to a broader audience, so make sure that it is accurate and won’t undermine or embarrass your campaign.
- Make sure the tone of the document is not offensive or threatening.
- Put a date on the document so that it cannot be used to discredit your movement as outdated.
- There is no such thing as “off the record”
- Never make threats
- Treat each staff member with respect

HOW TO ORGANIZE A VOTING DRIVE, RALLY, OR ACTION

By Mohammad Dar

A large-scale action carried out by your group can be a great way to show the wide level of support that your initiative has and can be a great way to further your strategic goals. However, a poorly-executed action can also backfire by diminishing your credibility in the eyes of others. Careful planning and execution will lead to better results.

KNOW YOUR LOGISTICS:

Reserve the Space:

If you’re going to hold a rally somewhere, make sure that you have properly reserved the space. Federal, State, and City grounds often have specific procedures and schedules that have to be followed to check them out. There may also be rules around whether or not you can use sound equipment. Before you plan anything else, make sure that your date, time, and all of your logistics are scheduled. There’s no point planning an event if you cannot legally be there for it.

Know the laws:

If you’re going to hold voter drives throughout an area, make sure that you know all of the relevant laws about signing up voters and make sure that your volunteers know these thoroughly as well (where can you solicit voter registration, when can you solicit registration, what are the privacy laws around this information, where can I hold a rally, when can we use sound equipment, can we bring food, etc.). When volunteers unwittingly break the law for your cause, your detractors gain a very persuasive avenue to discredit you and all of your work.

KNOW WHY THIS PARTICULAR INITIATIVE IS IMPORTANT:

Know for Your Own Sake:

Taking on a large scale initiative requires a great deal of effort, so be sure that is the best strategic use of your resources. As you plan the finer details, make sure that this will best serve your interests. For example: If you’re planning to go rally on a legislative bill, make sure that your rally will take place while the bill is still relevant and is being discussed. Also make sure that your rally will take place when legislators are present (they spend some days in their home districts). If you’re planning a voter drive, know why more voters will benefit your initiative. Your event will become moot if it’s not relevant to everything else that is going on around it.

Know for the Sake of Everyone Else You Talk To:

Be able to take the justifications you came up with above and be able to convey those to your team and your volunteers. They need to understand why this is important, and more crucially, they need to believe in it just as much as you do. People with full-time jobs are busy, students are busy; and they all have to juggle personal and professional obligations. A strong mass of people will not participate in your event just to be nice to you, they don't have the time. However, they will participate when they feel that they have a personal stake in what happens. Know your strategy, and make it all relevant to the people that you talk to.

Extend those same arguments forward when you contact media about your event. Part of having a strong event or action is that word has to get around. And that requires a significant amount of work on your end. Research on how to write up a press release and send it to all local papers and news stations (don't over-embellish your event, a reporter to whom you promised a 5000 student rally won't write a great story when only 100 show up). In the lead-up to your event, generate a buzz: write op-eds and contact key stakeholders to get their input, advice, and buy-in. As you work to get the word around, these people will tell more people too (and they may have better avenues to get the word around than you do).

CONTROL YOUR MESSAGE:

As your event and initiative gets bigger, it will become much easier for things to get lost in the storm. A volunteer may speak on your goals in a way that makes you look bad. A TV station may report that as your official viewpoint. Detractors may start to look for little mistakes to pigeon-hole you with. You may lose track of logistical necessities that you thought other team members were handling.

To avoid these mistakes, make sure that your communication channels between your team members are clear. Everyone should know who they should report concerns and questions to, and you should make sure that the information always gets to the key organizers so that it is on their radar. If you're passing out written materials, make sure that the proper contact information is noted, etc. Organization of your event does not need to be overly top-down, but it should be clear.

GET OTHERS INVOLVED VIA PEER-TO-PEER CONTACT:

As we noted above, your potential volunteers and allies will be busy, and you will have to demonstrate to them why your action is important. However, you have to put yourself in their shoes when you reach out to people. How likely are you to join a voter registration drive or go to a rally for a cause that you have heard about only through email or by reading a poster? These methods reach a lot of people but they often yield low turn-outs. To get people to care, you need to convince them in person, you need peer-to-peer contact.

Talk to people one on one, speak in classes, phone bank, call everyone you know personally and ask for their help. When people hear your voice and your passion, and when they hear from you why this is important for them, they will be much more likely to want to participate. We all know of recent mass movements like the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street. These movements attracted an incredible amount of people, but also did so under extraordinary circumstances; and even with that, the people involved put a lot of work into organizing. Don't count on a miracle of sympathy to be responsible for your event's high turn-out. Organize well and make it happen.

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS FOR THE ASPIRING ADVOCATE

By Christopher Scannell

WHY USE SOCIAL MEDIA?

Social media provides several advantages over more traditional forms of print and electronic media for the dissemination of ideas. Someone using a social networking website can both post and receive information from other users, whereas newspapers and television only allow for a one-directional flow of information. Ideas are also exchanged at a much faster rate using social media sites. For example, Twitter and Facebook were instrumental in helping activists to organize mass demonstrations and topple oppressive political regimes in Tunisia and Egypt in a matter of months last year. Finally, social media tools are much more accessible than many traditional media sources. Anyone with access to the Internet and a computer or handheld electronic device can write a blog post or update their Twitter account. On the other hand, far fewer people are able to write and successfully submit an Op-ed piece for publication. Given the advantages of social media resources, several relevant websites are listed below with suggested best use practices.

TWITTER

Even with the accessibility of many social media tools, Twitter stands out as being one of the easiest and fastest to use. Each post to a Twitter account is called a “tweet” and consists of 140 characters or less in length. Additionally, each tweet can include video and pictures in the “details pane” and be archived based on a “hashtag” designation. To create a Twitter account, go to twitter.com and create a profile. Your Twitter account can be a personal account or one that you create for the particular group you represent.

To maximize the utility of Twitter for advocacy purposes, here are three guiding principles:

- 1) Update your account frequently with observations or links to news items about your area of interest.
- 2) Add the hashtag symbol (#) before keywords in your post so that your tweet can be categorized and easily searchable by other Twitter users.
- 3) Reach out to other users with similar interests to increase the number of people following your Twitter feed.

FACEBOOK

Although Twitter and Facebook (www.facebook.com) are similar in the sense that users can upload text, video, and pictures to their accounts, Facebook offers a greater number of ways users can interact. With Facebook, a user can e-mail, instant message, create groups and event invites, and tag images and videos of other people. Facebook also has the added feature of being able to find friends on-line based on mutual acquaintances between users. In this way, users can build their friend list and increase the number of people who can view their profile.

The Create Group feature in Facebook (www.facebook.com/groups) is the ideal way to start building an online presence for your advocacy group. You can specify members you want to add and the level of access you want non-members to have to the group. Once you have created the page, you and other members can post commentary and links like you would on Twitter. You can also use the Create Event feature to generate event pages for rallies, lobby days, conferences, and other functions your group may be hosting. And depending on your privacy setting, this page can serve as a point of reference for non-members to find out more about your organization. These added features combined with the same guidelines for effectively using Twitter, can make Facebook a powerful tool for organizing people behind a common cause.

INSPIRATION EXCHANGE

Inspiration Exchange (inspirationexchange.amsa.org/Home) , or InEx for short, is a social networking site designed specifically for AMSA members. The site offers many of the same features that Facebook has with the added benefit of being able to reach out to your premedical and medical school peers. The Create Community feature is analogous to the Create Group feature of Facebook and can be accessed at inspirationexchange.amsa.org/amsa/directory/communities/managegroups. To reach the greatest number of AMSA and non-AMSA members collectively, InEx and Facebook work best when paired together.