

ACTION ORGANIZING

If you've decided it's time to organize an action, great! With some thorough planning, hard work and a little bit of luck, your group will likely be empowered in a way you can't even begin to explain.

Organizing actions is not rocket science. Nor is it as simple as baking a cake. There are many different elements that go into making your action successful. If you take the time at the front end to be clear, really clear about what you are trying to do and why, it can make all the difference.

If your plans are good, if you have a realistic assessment of your numbers and your resources, and if the people working on it are accountable, the only thing to be worried about is the weather. And this is no small matter and should be factored in. Sitting on a street in January in Dublin is not going to quickly move people to stronger actions. So be smart about what you are asking people to do.

The four phases of putting together an action are:

Planning, Preparation, Day Of and Follow Up.

Saul Alinsky, a famous community organizer once said

"The power of the action is in the reaction".

Some Questions to Consider When Planning an Action

Goals: what are we trying to accomplish? Are your goals concrete, tangible, winnable?

Target: who are we trying to impact/move? Do you have an appointment? Have you selected someone to take notes during the action and write the confirmation letter for sending to the target?

Message/Demands: What is your message? Are there other audiences besides the target, what do we want them to know, what do we want them to do? Do the message and target fit together in a way that is easily understandable? Can it be summed up in a "slogan"? What is your slogan, theme, sound bite? Does it fit on a banner? Are your demands clear and simple? Do you have several fallback demands?

Mobilization: How many people can you mobilize? Who is coming? From where? Do you have goals? What is the recruitment, reminder, follow-up plan? Is there a good turnout plan for the action, including last-minute reminder phone calls? How many do you need for the action? How will you change the plan if you don't have enough people?

Scenario: Will your action be both *fun* and based on real power? Is everyone in your group comfortable with the plan? (Is it within the experience of your group?) Will the plan be outside the experience of the target? Are you going outside the "official channels?" What will happen? What does it look like? Is the action symbolic or disruptive? Is it public or secret? How does it begin, middle and end? Does the action scenario communicate your message without words? Is the action or visuals enough? Have you calculated how you will demonstrate your power? Do you plan to have symbols with you Can you design the action so that the visuals or action alone will communicate it. What time are you planning the action? Is this a time people can come? Are you planning arrests? If so, is the action early in the morning to minimize the possibility of people staying in jail over night?

Action Site: How does your action site relate to target? Is it one and the same? If there are multiple action sites which you are considering, which best communicates your message and will accommodate your action. (Some things to consider in choosing an action site are size, visibility, access, proximity to roads, phones etc, fences, security, sidewalks, public space nearby, parking, tenants etc) Have you scouted the building and made a floor plan? Do you know where to find: elevator and stairs, bathrooms, payphone, parking or nearest transit stops, the target's office. Can the site accommodate disabled members? Are there security cameras, how big is the sidewalk, is there a public space nearby? Are there parking garages? Who are the other tenants?

Schedule: break it down, what happens when, by who, from pack up to clean-up...

Program: How are we communicating? Speakers, song, dance, poetry, participatory activities,

Publicity: Getting the word out massively – fliers, postcards, webpages, emails, posters, ads.

Logistics: all the things you need!

- Signs, Banners, Flags
- Day Of leaflet
- Sound System
- Bullhorns and batteries
- Sign In Sheets, clip boards, pens
- Noisemakers, whistles, drums
- Puppets or other visual props
- Legal instructions, marshal! instructions
- Chant sheets
- Cameras, film
- Food, drinks
- Transportation (busses, vans, cars) & routes for drivers
- Set Up crew
- Clean up crew
- Day of Press packets
- Communication equipment (radios, phones)

Props: Make if visible, participatory, a picture is worth 1000 words.

Training: Has the group selected who will present information at the action? Are people prepared for their roles?

Legal/Police: do we seek permits or not, day of liaison team

Direct Action Support: strategy, plan, recruit, training, get out of jail support- food, drivers, court plan etc... Do you have all the legal information you need? Are there lawyers on call?

Security/Traffic Plan: what is needed? Who will coordinate, train, recruit? What are police plans and contingencies, how to protect participants, how to deal with provocateurs

Media: How do we publicize our issues and message? If you want the media, have they been notified? Have you:

- Sent a press advisory including a notice of your photo opportunity and highlighting your gimmick, a week ahead of time?
- Advance calls to reporters pitching story/giving background/spin
- Sent day before press release

- Called assignment editors the day before the action?
- Prepared a release or press packet (including background materials) for distribution on the day of the action?
- ID & train/prep spokespeople to talk with the media at the action itself?

Staffing: -Develop decision-making structure (SpokesCouncil, Tactical Team)

ID all "staffing" needs for action

- Team/march leader
- Police Liaisons
- Marshall, PeaceKeeper, Security, Traffic
- Leafletters
- Media person
- Organizational spokesperson
- Set up crew
- Clean up crew
- Drivers
- Chant leaders
- Prop distribution & collection
- Equipment distribution & collection
- Signer-Iners
- Get out of jail people

Communications: how will we communicate during the action? What equipment will we need, who has want, protocols.

Coordination/Prep– prep meetings, trainings, communications, review maps, getting everybody on board and prepped before the action. Have you held a dress rehearsal for the spokesperson and the participants?

Debrief: Do you know who will debrief the action with participants and where the debriefing will occur?