

Direct Action Strategy

Some of the questions ~we should answer when planning an effective nonviolent direct action:

Campaign goals:

What is your intention? What is your vision for the future? How do you define "winning," especially in terms of your current campaign? What will "winning," mean? What will "winning" look like? When will you claim victory? How will the situation look differently if you "win" the campaign? What stage is your campaign in? Do you need to escalate, draw attention, educate the media, etc.? What is your strategy to win? Are other groups or organizations using different strategies? How do you or your group fit into them? How does it affect the children, health, or well being of people in your community? Are there especially egregious facts, images, data, statements or actions by opponent, etc. that you want to point out to public? Is direct action the best tactic for this stage of your campaign? How/When could the tactics of NVDA be best used in your campaign? What story are you trying to tell?

Audience Who is your audience? Who are you trying to affect? Who are the decision-makers? What do you want them to do? How could you be satisfied?

Timing & Political Climate: What makes this timing strategic? Why now? Is there a more strategic date? What is the political significance of this date? What makes that day special? Is it special just to you, your organization or Movement? Is it a culturally important date? What is the political climate? What has happened recently? How is your campaign relevant to people in your community/state/country? How is it compelling and timely? How soon do you need to take action? What is your timeline?

Goals of Action (Public):

What is the goal of the action? What are you trying to achieve by taking action at this point? Gain leverage for negotiation, sound the general alarm, frame your campaign of the issue in general, prevent greater harm from occurring, etc. What do you want to accomplish? Does this action fit into a larger campaign or more long-term strategy?

Goals of Action (Private):

Build the movement. Inspire others by showing them that individuals can make a difference. Empowering for you and your friends. A morale booster.

Resources:

What resources do you have in terms of people, time, money, equipment, skills, etc. Do you have an affinity group already organized into roles and capable of making quick consensus decisions?

Action planning:

Scouting, budget, logistics, hardware and equipment, roles, training and preparation, staging area, etc.

Strategy:

Is there a way to do this without arrests? How could we accomplish our goals and get our message out without arrests? Should we do a more "mainstream," "soft" action first to build support?

Political Leverage: Who is the decision maker? What person is the target of the action?

Creativity/Theatre: What could we try that has never been tried before? What could we do differently? How could we involve artists or musicians in this action? What is the message? What is your six second sound-byte? What compelling image(s) will accompany your action and reach your audience? What is the money shot? What image would you like to see in the newspaper? What symbols can you use to simplify and stream-line your message to the audience? Could you exploit your opponent's symbols against them?

Why here? Is there a major media market nearby? Have there been actions there b

Target/Location: Before? Would there be a more strategic location? Have you scouted it? Taken pictures?

Media:

What is the angle? What makes it newsworthy? What is new about the action? What makes this significant?

Demands: What are your short-term demands? What are your long-term demands? Make sure that your primary demand can be reasonably expected to be met by the people at the location, given the timeline of you're action.

Outreach: How can we outreach to non-traditional communities for this action? Will your action build or foster community support for your campaign? W31 the tactic alienate or interest the general public?

Tactic: Based on answers to the above questions, which tactic will you and your affinity group use? Will it be a soft (symbolic) or hard (blockade/occupation) action?

Needs? What do you need to know, do, accomplish, or acquire to move forward?

Design your action according to resources of time, money, people, etc.

- 1) Does action/idea address campaign goals?
- 2) Is it directed at the appropriate target? Audience?
- 3) Is the message clear?
- 4) Is it organizationally achievable?
- 5) Who are your allies?
- 6) What/Who is the leverage point? Public, consumers, politicians, industry, community, government, etc.
- 7) Strategy for getting media?
- 8) Which part of the message is for which audience?

«

The Four C's

C: Clarity: communicate with symbol*-

C: Consciousness: Make it about right and wrong. Go for a visceral emotional response'(rather than an intellectual/factual argument). Values. Create cognitive dissonance.

C: Commitment: Your demonstrated commitment may cause them cognitive dissonance.

C: sacrifice: You must be willing to risk something.